



Welcome to Issue 29 – Members' news

This is a print-friendly version of the Scottish Women's Institutes monthly member newsletter.

Scottish Women's Institutes was established in 1917 and is an inclusive and inspirational membership-based organisation. We are here to build an inclusive community, to have fun and form friendships, to campaign, to learn, to share and to socialise. We provide a platform for social activities and networking, and champion women's issues.

Find out more about us at **www.theswi.org.uk**

Scottish Women's Institutes is a SCIO, SC053058

Welcome to Issue 29!

Wow! 2024 has come and gone in the blink of an eye... but what a year it has been for the SWI... and for the very first time in our history major funding has been secured to help enable our future is bright, too. New faces, new roles and new events make for an exciting time ahead, so enjoy this e-newsletter – it's full of Christmas crackers to bring you good cheer!

The SWI team wishes you a Happy Christmas and hopes your Christmas parties are jolly, merry and bright!

Christmas cracker #1 – Flagship events return for 2025

SWI Study Tour

13th – 17th October 2025 | Dublin, Ireland

Next year's SWI Study Tour will take you across the sea to Ireland to spend 5 days exploring the Hidden Heartlands and Dublin. You can expect to see the sights of Athlone Castle and Bellvedere House, and even catch a river cruise in Athlone!

Expressions of interest are now being sought – there's no obligation but we can make sure you're the first to know further details – just email hello@theswi.org.uk

SWI Summer School

21st–25th August | University of Stirling

Following 2024's hugely successful event, next year's SWI Summer School will feature a range of heritage and contemporary crafts led by expert tutors from around Scotland. Expressions of interest are now being sought – there's no obligation but we can make sure you're the first to know further details – just email hello@theswi.org.uk

Please note: In the new year, we are pleased to offer flexible payment plans for Study Tour and Summer School, allowing you the option to spread out payments and secure your booking with ease.

Our Skills & Events Committee wrapped up 2024 with a meeting full of decisions about exciting events coming in 2025! You can see all their 2024 achievements **here** – <https://rb.gy/6cdv89>

Christmas cracker #2 – New Vice-President for SWI

We're delighted to announce that current SWI Board Trustee Susie Finlayson has agreed to take on the role of SWI Vice-President to assist our National President, Mary Burney.

Susie, who is currently Roxburghshire Federation President, is a well-kent face for many SWI members and her enthusiasm for the organisation and knowledge of it is boundless.

Susie is the first Vice-President who currently works, too, so her workload and commitments will reflect that. This is important as the SWI adapts to cater for and attract modern women to contribute their time, energy and skills to shaping the SWI for future generations.

Our Board of Trustees ended the year with another first for the SWI – a hybrid Board meeting with seven members around the boardroom table and three attending from home.

Christmas cracker #3 – SWI Heritage Project funded

The SWI is thrilled to announce a £127,175 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund will help us to protect and conserve our nationally significant archive and collection and secure it for future generations to learn from and be inspired by.

The SWI collection is an unrivalled record of women’s role in Scotland’s society for the past century and more, illustrating their place at the heart of Scottish communities, their emerging voice and decision-making skills, and their key part in keeping Scottish crafting and cultural traditions alive. Without this funding from the Heritage Fund thanks to National Lottery players, the collection could be lost forever and fascinating stories key to Scotland’s history would remain unheard.

There will be lots of ways for members to get involved with helping to get our archive and collection exhibition-ready, so please sign up as a volunteer if you can – it will be a wonderful journey! Find out more here <https://rb.gy/8jms8i> or email hello@theswi.org.uk to become a heritage volunteer.

Christmas cracker #4 – SWI team welcomes Lyndsey

Meet Lyndsey Alexander, SWI’s new Membership Development Officer.

Lyndsey joins us to ensure members’ experience is as good as possible, and build on our recent membership growth.

With 12 years in the third and public sectors, Lyndsey brings a wealth of experience. Project management, communications, event management and administration across the creative and heritage industries will stand her in good stead!

Lyndsey says: “I’m looking forward to getting out there and meeting members in lots of Institutes around the country.”

We wish her well! You can say ‘hi’ to Lyndsey by emailing lyndsey.alexander@theswi.org.uk

Christmas cracker #5 – Bumper prize draw added

What does the SWI mean to you? Your feedback helps the SWI make sure your membership is bringing you joy, so please share your thoughts, praise and grumbles by December 13th.

We've added great new prizes too – now you have FIVE chances to win!

- £100 SWI voucher for next year's SWI Summer School
- £100 SWI voucher for 2025's SWI Study Tour
- £50 SWI voucher for any national SWI in-person class
- £50 SWI voucher for any SWI event or workshop in your area

PLUS! The original £100 shopping voucher to spend in high street stores

Everyone who has contributed to the SWI Membership Consultation so far will be included in the new bumper prize draw, too. Winners will be selected at random. Prizes are non-transferable and no cash alternative will be offered. Good luck everyone!

Have your say here – <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SWIMEMBER2024>

Christmas cracker #6 – SWI Shop Christmas flash sale

You'll find great deals in the SWI Shop this Christmas... *Order by December 13th to beat the Christmas posting deadline!*

- 2025 Diaries and Calendars – **now 33% off!**
- Aprons (white) and cookbooks – **get 37% off!**
- Big bundles – **save a whopping 40%!**

PLUS! Big savings on mugs, bags, pens and ribbon – and SWI Junior Dippers bears and badges. Great for gifting – great for you! Shop here – <https://shop.theswi.org.uk/>

Christmas cracker #7 – Great new events added

Christmas Quiz & Fizz

Thursday 12th December | Online

MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS WELCOME

Roll on the SWI's Christmas quiz, hosted by SWI members! Meet with friends from across Scotland and enjoy this lively, festive event... Wear your best Christmas jumper (the best one bags an extra 5 points!) and bring your fave fizzy tippie.

The winning quizzer wins a £50 Marks & Spencer voucher!

Book here – <https://rb.gy/hgou40>

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SWI Inspirational talk: Confidence coaching

Thursday 27th February | Online

MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS WELCOME

Join life coach Dee Maclean to explore how coaching can unlock potential, boost confidence, and help you embrace life's challenges with a fresh perspective.

Book your space here! <https://rb.gy/sa3mw5>

SWI Tummy talks: Healthy veggie eating

Thursday 17th April | Online

MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS WELCOME

Richard of The Vegetarian Society will highlight the health advantages of vegetarian diet, and provide practical tips for incorporating more fruits, vegetables, and fibre into your meals.

Book your space here! <https://shorturl.at/vjc6N>

1-day beginners' felting workshop

10am-3pm, Friday 28th February | In-person | Edinburgh

£45 FOR MEMBERS | £50 FOR NON-MEMBERS | LUNCH PROVIDED

Join us for a fun-filled day of creativity and learn the art of felting with [Fiona Finlayson](#), a talented felting artist with more than 1.8K followers on Facebook – and you may have seen her on Kirstie's Handmade Christmas. Fiona has been felting for many years and focusing on creating realistic felt portraits of animals. The event will be held at SWI central office in Edinburgh and it's for beginners, so no experience necessary – Fiona will guide you every step of the way so you create your own unique masterpieces.

Everything you need to start your needlefelting journey will be provided, with enough materials to create a gorgeous felted blue tit, and be able to take home your kit after the workshop to keep on crafting!

Book your space here! <https://shorturl.at/EDJMn>

Christmas cracker #8 - Catch-up events available

Meet The Great Tapestry of Scotland's Andrew Crummy MBE

Andrew is the creative genius behind major Scottish artworks including The Great Tapestry of Scotland, the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry, and the latest Dundee Tapestry completed this year. He'll reveal the secrets behind them – and the strong links to the SWI! – Catch up now: <https://shorturl.at/yNDMt>

SWI Skill Share: Chutneys & jellies demonstration

Join Jean Miller as she guides you through the step-by-step process of making your own chutney and bramble jelly. Jean demonstrates each stage and the all-important setting points. You'll learn tips and tricks too – why a wine cork and a long handled sundae spoon? – Catch up now: <https://shorturl.at/wqx72>

Christmas delights with The Hebridean Baker and Sarah Rankin

Join two of Scotland's finest foodies to get inspired about fabulous Christmas food, drinks and treats. Expect expert advice, and great tips and ideas! – Catch up now: <https://shorturl.at/lepYD>

Meet The Repair Shop's Teddy Bear Ladies

Spend a delightful hour with The Teddy Bear Ladies from BBC1's The Repair Shop – AKA Julie Tatchell and Amanda Middleditch – share their unique spin on the world of soft toys. They're passionate about preserving old and dying crafting traditions, and their new book Bartie Bristle! Catch up now: <https://rb.gy/u28k9r>

Christmas cracker #9 – Evelyn Baxter Federation Schools

This year, the SWI's flagship learning programme sees four fabulous members heading your way!

The Evelyn Baxter Scholarship programme has been expanded for 2025 and will see a record number of scholars touring the country to teach members the fabulous art of macramé.

The scholarship, which has been offered by the SWI since 1961, sees scholars taught by an expert and then tasked with touring the country to pass on their skills.

This year's scholars were taught by macramé artist Becky McGill, and now have the remainder of the year to further study and prepare their two-day class which will be delivered next year at Federations countrywide.

Federations can now apply for a 2-day workshop here – <https://rb.gy/svtq19>. If you are interested in attending a class in your local area, get in touch with your Federation for more information!

And finally... some housekeeping!

Bank of Scotland bank charges: our response

News of Bank of Scotland charges impacting Institutes across the country has led us to write to Stan Stevenson, Bank of Scotland's Managing Director, to appeal for leniency for all Institutes. You can read the letter [HERE](https://rb.gy/zo6vqb) – <https://rb.gy/zo6vqb> and we will keep you posted when we receive a reply.

SWI Action Appeal grants

SWI Action Appeal grants for participant travel expenses to SWI National competitions will be provided for 30% of the total claim in 2025. Please ensure all claim forms are submitted within 28 days of any event to avoid disappointment as no reimbursement will be provided thereafter.

Christmas opening times

SWI central office will be closed from 23rd December–6th January. We wish you a happy Christmas and a guid New Year!

SWI Member Insurance

- Members are covered through SWI Public Liability Insurance when working with non-members (children and adults) such as the Junior Dippers workshops.

Please note: It's important to ensure that any event involving non-members (adults or children) is branded as a SWI event, and it is recommended to confirm that any event venue you use has public liability insurance.

Access to SWI events

- Keep up-to-date with the exciting range of in-person and online events here - bit.ly/3KiCrPd

Monthly newsletter

- Click here - bit.ly/3ENy7EC to subscribe to receive the latest news direct to your inbox. You won't be bombarded by spam. We are committed to keeping our members informed so your help makes all the difference!

Communities on Facebook

- Don't miss out, join us on Facebook and keep abreast of what's happening for the SWI and across the membership in Scotland. Follow us here - bit.ly/3u7BDoM

Do you want to receive event alerts?

- Subscribe to SWI's Eventbrite page here - bit.ly/3VhO652 and never miss a thing.

Do you want general news?

- Visit www.theswi.org.uk for updates.

Not a member yet?

- If you want to find out more about joining the SWI, please visit www.theswi.org.uk/join-the-swi

Contact us for any further information at SWI, Unit 8, 1 Carmichael Place, Edinburgh EH6 5PH or hello@theswi.org.uk or call 0131 225 1724

Thank you!