



Welcome to Issue 36 – 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

*****Members making a difference*****

We are delighted to celebrate our exceptional SWI members who are generously sharing their expertise at the upcoming SWI Summer School. This year, we have a record number of skilled members serving as tutors, along with 115 members attending, promising a fantastic event filled with learning and enjoyment. Our member tutors exemplify the opportunities available to all SWI members, and their dedication to community and personal growth truly makes SWI special.

This year's fully-booked SWI Summer School takes place in August at Stirling University and features a diverse range of courses, including:

- 3D Decoupage & Iris Folding by Nan Middleton & Aileen Pittuck
- Watercolour & drawing by Brigid Collins
- Temari Balls by Kay Smith
- Stained Glass by Claire Gaunt
- Sanquhar Glove Knitting by May MacCormick
- Felted Art by Lou Washington
- Sew Your Own Jacket by Gill Faragher
- Beginners' Calligraphy by Anette Reed
- Stumpwork by Jane Currie
- Quilt Making by Ann Hill

We look forward to seeing all students and tutors in August!

Members' memories recorded for posterity

Members are involved in an exciting new series of 10 podcasts being recorded this summer.

The series, called Scotland's Women: Craft, Courage, and Culture, will cover SWI's core role in Scottish women's history and be hosted by Jennifer Reoch.

You may know Jennifer from Heart Radio's breakfast show and BBC1's The One Show. She's fabulous!

The podcasts aim to capture key elements of the SWI story. Topics include:

- SWI's suffrage links – our foremothers and how it all began
- How SWI members coped during the Covid pandemic
- SWI's Royal connections
- Crafting and showing, and what it means to Scottish communities
- Scotland's heritage crafts and the importance of keeping them alive

A huge thank you to all members who have agreed to take part so far!

This podcast series is part of our SWI Heritage Project which has been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Can you help?

We'd like to talk to members who have been with us for many, many years – is this you, or do you know someone who remembers the SWI in the 60s, 70s or 80s? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch at [**hello@theswi.org.uk**](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk)

Missed “The Perfect Scone” masterclass? Catch up now!

Did you miss our delicious online baking masterclass by Linda McTurk? No worries! You can now watch the highlights and learn all the tips and tricks from our expert baker.

Whether you're a beginner or a baking enthusiast, this session was filled with tasty insights and friendly advice and tips.

Watch the full video direct from Linda's kitchen and recreate that perfect scone in your own home. Stay inspired, get baking, and enjoy the perfect scone!

Watch here – rebrand.ly/j6mrl1j

A successful Scottish Handcrafts Championship?

“You betcha!”, say SWI members!

This year's Scottish Handcrafts Championship was once again made possible by SWI volunteers. Members of the Show Committee are responsible for the set up and smooth running of the Championships at the Royal Highland Show, and 45 members also volunteered to be stewards at the 4-day event.

Their responsibilities included guiding visitors, managing exhibitor entries, assisting with event logistics, providing information about the SWI, and helping with specific activities or demonstrations. Their involvement not only enhanced the visitor experience but also promotes the SWI and its community values.

The Royal Highland Show's Scottish Handcrafts Championship has long celebrated the creativity and skill of crafters across Scotland. Now, the Championship faces challenges to its sustainability and relevance, so we're asking for your help in “ReCrafting” it for the future. Your feedback will ensure the event is inspiring, inclusive, and enjoyable for everyone – and by completing this survey, you'll be entered into our prize draw for a chance to win an iPad worth £309!

Closing date: Sunday 31st August | Have your say here: rebrand.ly/polvcpz

How to get involved through our ‘Buddy Up’ scheme

Want to make a real difference in our community? The ‘Buddy Up’ scheme is a great way to get involved in a meaningful, hands-on way. We're actively seeking members who are ready to share their time and talents, whether that's through passing on skills, volunteering at events, or participating on committees. Every contribution, big or small, helps SWI grow stronger and more connected.

How it works

When you let us know what you would like to get involved with, you'll be paired with a fellow member with the relevant experience. It's a great way to learn the ropes from a friendly, supportive buddy and get the most out of volunteering.

Here are 5 ways to get involved...

1 Help shape our future

We're preparing to launch the SWI Triennium Plan for 2026, which includes leadership recruitment and key governance activities. This process ensures we fill Board and Committee roles, promote transparency, and support strong member representation. It's a great chance to get involved and help shape the future of SWI, more details coming soon!

2 Can you crochet?

We're seeking talented crochet tutors in the Edinburgh area for an upcoming craft social event aimed at recruiting new members. If you're passionate about crochet and eager to share your expertise, we'd love to hear from you!

3 Finance minded?

We currently have two vacancies on our Finance Committee, and seek individuals who have a background in finance and can contribute to the financial oversight and strategic planning of the organisation.

4 Have a skill?

Whether it's crafts, floral art, baking, or gardening, your talent can become a member demonstrator, inspire others, and help us create fantastic workshops and social events.

5 Can you help?

We are planning craft social events aimed at attracting new members. If you're interested in volunteering them or helping to organise the events we'd love to hear from you.

Email hello@theswi.org.uk for more information on getting involved!

Get crafty for the Vaughan Nash Trophy 2026!

Whether you're a knitting pro, a patchwork enthusiast, or just love trying new creative things with friends, the Vaughan Nash Trophy is the perfect opportunity to get crafting! It's open to all members – no matter your level of experience.

This special SWI community competition brings people together from their own Institutes and groups across Scotland to work together to create and display five handmade items based on a fun theme.

For 2026, the theme is Festivals – and you can get as creative as you like! Think music festivals, arts festivals, harvest, Easter, or Christmas... or go global with colourful celebrations like Holi, Mardi Gras, or Carnival. The goal is to craft a display full of colour, culture, and creativity.

What you'll make

Each group entry consists of five items made by your team, and will include:

- One knitted or crocheted item
- One item using a sewing technique (e.g. patchwork or appliqué)
- Three items of your own choice, using any handcraft techniques you like

Who can enter?

You only need at least two people to form a group (there's no maximum number). Your team can be members of your own Institute or group, or be made up of members from different Institutes or Federations – perfect for meeting new people and teaming up with friends. You have to be a member to enter.

Why enter?

The Vaughan Nash Trophy is more than a competition – it's a celebration of creativity, teamwork, and community spirit. The entries are judged as a group display, and all the work is showcased at the SWI National Conference – a fabulous event held every three years.

So whether you're a crafting veteran or just starting out, now's the time to gather your team, get inspired, and start creating!

More details to follow soon – watch this space!

Who's your Member of the Year?

Deadline for nominations: July 25th

The deadline is fast approaching for nominees for the Outstanding Member of the Year. This celebrates members who go above and beyond for their SWI communities. Members who are great ambassadors for everything we hold dear – supporting others, friendship, lifelong learning and sharing skills. Go on, nominate one of our special women and make their day!

NOMINATE A MEMBER here – rebrand.ly/9qkbpzd

*****Our commitment to SWI's growth*****

It's great to see SWI's new groups taking off! Both the Biggar and Winchburgh groups have had a fantastic response so far. Our pictures are from Women of Winchburgh who formed in April – they kicked off with a quiz in May, had a night of craft and cooking in June, and a hands-on session from local beauticians in July. Wonderful to see new groups thriving alongside traditional Institutes! Thanks to all of the Federations who are helping to make this happen!

Our other newly formed groups are busy planning meetings for the new season, and the office team is working on the programme of new launches for autumn which will include East Lothian, Argyll, the North East and the West Coast.

Dunfermline & Rosyth Women's Group Launch

2-4PM, Saturday July 12th

MORE INFO – **rebrand.ly/164caz9**

Galashiels Women's Group Launch

2-4PM, Saturday September 6th

MORE INFO – **rebrand.ly/fxspo4o**

Working with children?

On 1st July 2025, new legal requirements under the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 took effect, requiring all individuals in 'regulated roles' with children or protected adults to hold a valid PVG. SWI Federations and Institutes with SWI Junior Dippers groups, or overseeing activities for children must ensure compliance, including proper PVG checks for demonstrators and supervisors. This legislation emphasises the importance of safeguarding and maintains that members working with children or protected groups must have completed the PVG process. Click the link to download guidance.

See the guidance here: rebrand.ly/b3b6v3u

Membership fees deadline news

Federation Office bearers are advised that all National membership fees must be paid in full before 1st November 2025.

To ensure the SWI remains fully compliant with OSCR regulatory and audit requirements, all National membership fees must be paid in full, accompanied by a fully completed and accurate payment form, before **1st November 2025**. Incomplete or late submissions may compromise our financial reporting obligations. Prompt and accurate payment is essential to support audit readiness and regulatory compliance.

A National membership fee of £30 per member and £10 per Junior member is mandatory and must be paid in full no later than 1st November 2025.

Submission of this form is compulsory. All sections must be fully and accurately completed at the time of submission. Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

Questions

All Federation Office Bearers are welcome to email Jacqui McGuire on jacqui.mcguire@theswi.org.uk for guidance.

Our commitment to communities

As part of the SWI Heritage Project, SWI members have been sharing their skills with younger women in Scotland. SWI member Helen Bissett delivered a fascinating **Pyrography for Beginners** session to members of the Young Women's Movement. The event, at SWI's Edinburgh office, was for women aged 16-30 and proved a great success.

This month will see the launch of five pilot sessions for Online Archives' Volunteers and In Person Archives' Volunteers at The Ballast Trust. These sessions are fully booked but further training places for archives' volunteers will be made available over the summer, likely to start in September and in November.

More news in next month's Heritage News e-newsletter.

Oral History training

Would you like to interview members to collect their memories for posterity? It's fun and rewarding and will make sure SWI's story is preserved for future generations.

We have a series of in-person and online training sessions around the country, so you're prepared for action before going out with your recorder.

Watch SWI member Doreen Cuthbert to see what she enjoyed about the training, and click the links to find out more and book your place... SPACES LIMITED, SO BOOK TODAY!

PERTH, AUGUST 6TH - rebrand.ly/100wj6a

MUIR OF ORD, AUGUST 15TH - rebrand.ly/tihdxgk

DUMFRIES, SEPTEMBER 5TH - rebrand.ly/lt7jxr0

Creative Collisions: A mixed media masterclass

7pm, July 9th | Online | FREE for members | £5 Non-members

Join us for a creative and calming class with Jo Lochhead, founder of The Crafty Kit Company. In this online session, Jo will demonstrate how to create an atmospheric woodland scene using a blend of watercolour painting, needle felting, and simple embroidery. BOOK HERE - rebrand.ly/4blpgy8

National Gardening and Outdoor Living Show

Lowland Hall, The Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh | 26th & 27th July

The SWI will have a stall at the National Gardening & Outdoor Living Show and we'll be sharing our work with the public and hopefully chatting to potential new members. If you're attending, do pop by and say hello! Find out more - rebrand.ly/p5i92r9

Dementia Awareness Workshop

Tuesday 12th August | 7-9pm | Online

Join us for an interactive Dementia Awareness Workshop with Age Scotland. You'll learn about the signs and types of dementia, practical communication tips, and ways to reduce risk and support those living with dementia. Open and free to all SWI members. Book here - rebrand.ly/6k3bumd

Curious Festival: Tea Party

12-2pm, Saturday 6th September | Crichton Central, The Crichton Estate, Backend Road, Dumfries DG1 4TA | In-person | FREE

A date for your diary We are hosting an event called MakMerry as part of Curious, the Royal Society of Edinburgh's festival of knowledge. Our event will include a talk about SWI history from SWI's Heritage Project Manager, Valentina Bold, and SWI member May MacCormick will demonstrate Sanquhar knitting. MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/3xbf7ql

Catch up with online events

You can catch-up on all online talks on our YouTube channel.

WATCH NOW - rebrand.ly/g94ombp

Competitions & benefits

National Writing Competition

Warnock Trophy | Deadline September 15th 2025 | Open for entries

Unlock the power of your pen in this year's writing competition. We invite participants to explore the theme of 'The Weather' by submitting captivating written pieces in the form of a poem (max 20 lines). Email your poem (on a Word document if possible) to

hello@theswi.org.uk before 15th September, 2024. **ENTRY FORM** - rebrand.ly/ulzco4w

National Outdoor Bowling Competition

Competition | Monday, September 1st | Kirkcudbright Bowling Club

SWI is pleased to announce entries are now open for this year's Outdoor Bowling Competition. There is a new rule format – teams will play on one green for four games (instead of five). If you wish to enter more than two teams email hello@theswi.org.uk

ENTRY FORM - rebrand.ly/20w7pbi

National Photography Competition

Competition | Deadline October 27th | Open for entries

Harness the potential of your camera in this year's photography competition. We encourage members to delve into the theme of 'The Natural World' by entering your compelling photos.

Please email your photographs as Jpegs to hello@theswi.org.uk before the deadline.

ENTRY FORM - rebrand.ly/7lht8bb

Your exclusive member benefits

Here at the SWI you know we love a bargain and you know we love bringing members exclusive perks and benefits. That's why we've partnered with the brilliant Crafty Kit Company – an award-winning, female-led Scottish business – to bring all members a fantastic 20% discount!

The Crafty Kit Company has lots to offer – beautiful, easy-to-follow craft kits designed to inspire creativity and well-being. Based in East Lothian (home of the SWI!), they're passionate about supporting mindful making and sharing the joy of crafting. Whether you're a beginner or an expert, their kits bring a little moment of calm – one project at a time.

The Crafty Kit Company

<https://www.craftykitcompany.co.uk/>

20% off craft kits, supplies and gifts

CODE: SWI20

The Edinburgh Woollen Mill

<http://www.ewm.co.uk/>

20% off all products, except sale and gift vouchers at Edinburgh Woollen Mill.

CODE: SW25

Wendy Wu tours

<https://www.wendywutours.co.uk/>

5% off tours

Can be used in conjunction with offers for huge discounts on last-minute trips to Asia and beyond!

Bloom and Wild

<http://www.bloomandwild.com/>

15% off flowers and gifts

CODE: THESWI15B&W

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

<http://www.fredolsencruises.com/>

5% off all cruises

CODE: WIScot10

Willowberry skincare

www.willowberry.co.uk

10% off products

CODE: 10offSWI

Don't miss the new SWI apron

Crafted from high-quality navy cotton, this durable apron features a beautifully embroidered SWI logo for a touch of elegance. Designed for practicality, it includes a spacious front pocket, adjustable strap, and secure waist ties. In stock now – just £16.95. One size fits all.

SHOP NOW – rebrand.ly/iqgzjsi

Sale or return boxes are available – great for any upcoming SWI Shows! Email hello@theswi.org.uk to order.

Member extras

NEW SWI website

A brand-new website is currently being developed for Summer 2025 which will provide a one-stop shop for all things SWI, making your membership even better.

New joiners

From now on all new joiners will receive an email with their joining information, including membership number, rather than a letter and a membership card. This helps modernise our services and work towards goals in our strategic plan.

NEW SWI Heritage quarterly e-newsletter

Now that the SWI Heritage Project has received major funding there will be lots more to report on, so SWI Heritage News will be released quarterly to keep you updated.

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 at www.theswi.org.uk/event-diary.html.

Monthly newsletter

Email hello@theswi.org.uk 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 at www.facebook.com/ScottishWomensInstitutes

Do you want to receive event alerts?

Subscribe to SWI's Eventbrite page at <https://shorturl.at/2btoh> 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

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Thank you!