



Welcome to Issue 37 – 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

The Summer School Countdown is on!

The countdown is on! We're so excited to welcome 114 students to the University of Stirling next week for a packed programme of learning, creativity, and connection.

By now, all students should have received their Summer School pack with everything they need to know before arriving.

This year, we've trialled a new way to connect before the event through WhatsApp community groups. It's been a brilliant way for attendees to arrange car shares, share their excitement, and make friends before even setting foot on campus.

If you're attending and would like to join the WhatsApp group, email beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk for more information.

Member voices:

*"It's lovely to feel connected with all these new friends we don't know yet! 🥰❤️
It's adding to the eager anticipation of the event!!!"*

"I'm loving the enthusiasm and excitement building up on the Summer School WhatsApp group, can't wait to meet everyone in person!"

We look forward to seeing you all there for what promises to be an inspiring week!

Sneak peek – SWI podcasts!

Members, academics and supporters gather in Glasgow for an important project this month – the recording of SWI's first-ever podcast series!

Much excitement – and a bit of nervousness – was the order of the day as everyone arrived at Up Next Studios in Govan, ready to delve into the rich history of their subject. The video podcasts are a major part of the SWI Heritage Project and are fully funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to players of the National Lottery.

More than 30 members' voices are being captured on ten 'SWI History Makers' video podcasts covering topics from Catherine Blair, and the rise of the largest women's movement in Scotland, to representing the SWI abroad, and why friendship and sharing skills are so important to women across Scotland's communities.

The video podcasts, hosted by BBC1's The One Show's Jennifer Reoch, will launch on our brand-new website in September, and be available globally on all the usual podcast sites, too. Exciting times ahead!

More news next month!

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

Help Shape Next Year's RHS Scottish Handcrafts Championship

The RHS Committee will soon be meeting with the RHASS to propose the draft schedule for next year's show. Every year, the schedule is at the heart of what makes the RHS Scottish Handcrafts Championship such a celebration of creativity, skill, and community, and we want it to reflect your ideas.

This year's draft has been shaped using feedback from both the SWI member survey and the public survey we conducted at the Show itself. Your thoughts have already been invaluable in guiding the committee's work so far, and now is your final opportunity to add your voice before plans are finalised.

🎥 Watch the above video to hear from committee members Anne Kerr, Marjory Tennant, Ann Maitland & Janice Boswell as they share what they're most looking forward to in the 2026 schedule.

If you haven't yet completed the survey, don't miss this chance to influence next year's programme. As a thank you, you'll be entered into our prize draw to win an iPad worth £309!

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

Your Skills, Your Community, Your SWI

Looking to make a meaningful impact in our community? The Buddy Up scheme is the perfect way to get involved — hands-on and heart-first. We're welcoming members who want to share their time and talents, whether that's teaching skills, helping out at events, or joining committees. Every bit of support, big or small, helps the SWI grow stronger and more connected.

How it works

Tell us what you'd like to get involved with, and we'll pair you with a fellow member who has the experience to guide you. It's a friendly, supportive way to learn the ropes and make the most of your volunteering journey.

Here are 4 ways to get involved...

1 Help shape our future

We're preparing to launch the SWI Triennium Plan for 2026, which includes National leadership recruitment and governance opportunities. 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. The Triennium packs will be available to download in the November e-newsletter!

2 Make, Take & Inspire

We're on the lookout for volunteers and demonstrators to join us at Creative Crafts, running 23rd–26th October at the SECC Glasgow.

We need crafty members to lead fun make & take sessions, as well as friendly member helpers to chat to visitors and showcase the best of the SWI. It's a fantastic opportunity to meet fellow members, share skills, and inspire the public.

3 Join the National Finance Committee

Our Finance Committee currently has two vacancies available. If you have a head for figures and an interest in supporting SWI's National work behind the scenes, we'd love to hear from you.

4 Can you help?

We're looking for members to help organise or volunteer at 'new' craft socials, especially those aimed at welcoming new members. These events are a relaxed way to connect, create, and build our community — and we'd love your help to make them a success.

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

Gardening Scotland Show – A Wonderful Weekend!

We were delighted to represent SWI at the recent The National Gardening & Outdoor Living Show held at the Royal Highland Centre. It was a pleasure to meet so many of our existing members and engage with new individuals interested in joining.

Huge thanks to Linda Galloway from Glasserton Institute for her outstanding demonstrations in buttonhole-making, which were greatly admired and very well received.

Growing Together – New Group Launches

At SWI, we're deeply committed to growing and strengthening our membership community. We believe that by creating new groups and opportunities tailored to diverse interests and locations, we can welcome more women and support meaningful connections across Scotland.

Whether you're a long-time member or new to SWI, our expanding network means more chances to learn, create, and share experiences with like-minded friends — all while celebrating the unique spirit that makes our organisation so special.

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.

Where's next?

Haddington Women's Group Launch
2-4PM, Sunday August 31st
MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/164caz9

Galashiels Women's Group Launch
2-4PM, Saturday September 6th
MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/fxspo4o

If you would like to support a new group in your area, get in touch by emailing membership@theswi.org.uk – let's give women across Scotland the chance to make friends, learn new skills and have fun!

Welcome our new Board Trustee

We're delighted to welcome Julie Cribb to the SWI Board of Trustees. With a rich background in higher education, strategic planning, and project management, Julie brings over 25 years of experience supporting growth and development in complex organisations.

A passionate crafter for more than 50 years, Julie recently retired to focus on her arts and crafts business, creating beautiful wall hangings, paintings, feltwork, and textiles. She's also deeply involved locally, active in the Ardross Institute and the Ross-shire and Sutherland Federation.

Julie currently serves on the SWI National Conference Team and is excited to contribute her expertise and enthusiasm to help shape the future of our organisation. Please join us in warmly welcoming Julie to the board!

Oral History Training

The Heritage Project is bursting with life, offering exciting opportunities for you to get involved and help bring history to life.

The Heritage team delivered a successful day in Perth, upskilling members in interviewing and recording – all part of our funded Heritage Project.

Special thanks to the incredible members who travelled from Hawick, Greenock, Glasgow, Glenfarg, Perth, Scone, and beyond to take part.

Training - MUIR OF ORD, AUGUST 15TH: <https://rebrand.ly/hsw03dp>

Training - DUMFRIES, SEPTEMBER 5TH: <https://rebrand.ly/4e00dcw>

With such enthusiasm and talent from across the country, it's clear the history of the SWI is in very good hands! If you fancy getting involved, please email: volunteer@theswi.org.uk
There are a few spaces at other locations, so please book today!

Discover Heritage Talks for Your 2025–26 Syllabus

We're pleased to share a fantastic opportunity for SWI members planning their 2025–26 syllabus. Jackie Sangster, Learning Manager at Historic Environment Scotland offers a wide range of archive image and heritage-based talks designed to inspire and enrich your group's programme.

One of the most popular talks is "Scots Women Who Chose to Challenge," which celebrates remarkable women who shaped Scotland's history — a perfect fit for women's groups looking to explore powerful stories of courage and change.

If you're interested in booking a talk or want more information, please contact the Learning Manager directly using the email below.

This is a wonderful chance to bring fascinating heritage content to your members and add depth and variety to your upcoming sessions.

Email jackie.sangster@hes.scot for more information!

What's on

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**

Letter by Letter – Share the Skill

Evelyn Baxter Scholarship 2026

We're excited to announce that the craft for next year's Evelyn Baxter Scholarship will be Calligraphy.

We're looking for skilled members to take part in this unique opportunity to develop their craft and share it with others.

The selected scholars will attend a two-day 'train the trainer' course to refine their skills and learn techniques for teaching. They'll then have the chance to travel around Scotland, inspiring fellow SWI members and passing on the art of beautiful lettering.

If you have existing calligraphy skills and a passion for teaching others, we'd love to hear from you. More details, including dates and how to apply, will be shared soon — but you can register your interest now to be among the first to receive the information. Email **beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk** to register your interest.

National Outdoor Bowling Competition

Competition | Monday, September 1st | Kirkcudbright Bowling Club

SWI is pleased to announce 10 teams are due to compete at the upcoming Outdoor Bowling Competition. Federations include Midlothian, Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Wigtownshire, Dumfriesshire, Dunbartonshire & Stewartry of Kirkcudbright.

Spectators are welcome to cheer along the competitors! Good luck all.

ENTRY FORM - <https://rebrand.ly/12d729>

RESCHEDULED

National Golf Competition

Competition | Monday, September 8th | Gleddoch Golf Club

SWI is pleased to announce the rescheduled date of the Golf Competition.

We are accepting last minute entries for this competition, with a deadline of Friday 22nd August. If you require more information, please email **beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk**

Spectators welcome!

ENTRY FORM - <https://rebrand.ly/g4hvg7a>

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

Boost Your Local Events with Sale & Return Boxes

Looking for an easy way to add a little extra sparkle – and SWI pride – to your next local event? Our sale & return boxes are the perfect solution, packed with a selection of your choice of popular SWI merchandise, ready for you to sell.

It's a simple way to raise funds, promote SWI in your community, and give event-goers the chance to take home something special. Just ask Banffshire Federation, who recently sold 20 aprons at their local county show – a fantastic result that also raised our profile locally.

Whether it's a craft fair, show, or social gathering, our sale & return boxes make it easy to bring SWI merchandise to your members and the wider public. 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.

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.

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.

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!