



Welcome to Issue 38 – 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

Be part of our “Stitched with Love” appeal!

We’re thrilled to announce a brand-new charity partnership between Scottish Women’s Institutes and Home-Start UK! We’re inviting members to knit or crochet hats in baby/toddler, child and adult sizes which will be gifted to families right in your own communities who may struggle to stay warm this winter.

Home-Start are an amazing charity powered by volunteers who help young families through adverse circumstances and life-changing events. We’re so proud to partner with them and bring some of that homemade love to struggling families this winter.

With an exclusive pattern from the brilliant [Bow Fiddle Yarns](#) just for SWI members, we’ve got everything you need to get involved available to download using the button below.

See more here: rebrand.ly/v8l5hkt

Summer School 2025 – Reflections & Recollections

Looking back to last month, SWI members enjoyed inspiring workshops, lively social evenings, and the chance to learn new skills while making lifelong friends. This year’s Summer School brought together members across Scotland for days filled with skill-sharing, laughter, and connection. Between 3 days of learning, shared mealtimes and evening get-togethers, every moment was brimming with the spirit of fellowship & fun!

Member Voices from the Week:

“It was so nice meeting up with old friends and meeting new – I enjoyed seeing women from all over with similar interests.”

“This was a very enjoyable and productive weekend – sharing experiences with fellow members from all around the country was enlightening!”

It’s clear from these reflections that something special happens when members come together. The photos in this newsletter capture that energy – the smiles, the friendships, and the moments that made Summer School unforgettable.

Podcast Series – Sneak Peek Behind the Scenes

Last month we shared our exciting plans for the brand-new SWI Podcast Series as part of the SWI Heritage Project, and we’re delighted to let you know the project is moving forward at pace!

Over the past month, we’ve been busy recording conversations – it’s been a joy capturing the voices, stories, and skills that make our community so special, and we can’t wait for you to hear them.

We’ve also put together a short behind-the-scenes video so you can get a feel for the process—from the fun of being in the studio to the laughter in between takes. It’s a little sneak peek into what will soon be coming your way.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part – it's been wonderful to see such enthusiasm. Keep an eye out in the months ahead for the official launch date, and in the meantime, enjoy this glimpse into what's been happening behind the mic!

See more here: rebrand.ly/nw091qh

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

Study Tour Awaits – Dublin & Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

Next month, 51 members will set off on a special Study Tour to Ireland, and the itinerary promises a rich mix of culture, history, and breathtaking scenery.

The journey begins in Dublin, where members will enjoy the city's vibrant atmosphere before venturing into Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Here, the group will discover the Westmeath Lakelands – a serene region of sparkling lakes and rolling countryside, perfect for soaking up the slower pace of rural Ireland.

Along the way, the tour will bring history and folklore to life with visits to ancient castles, monastic sites, and historic estates, offering plenty of opportunities to learn, explore, and be inspired.

As with every SWI trip, we know the memories won't just come from the sights themselves, but from the friendships, conversations, and shared laughter along the way. We can't wait to share photos and stories from this adventure in our next edition – keep an eye out for the highlights!

Member Toolkit – Now Available to Download

We're excited to share that the refreshed Member Toolkit is now ready – and you can download it straight from this newsletter!

In line with Institutes returning from Summer holidays, the Membership Team has worked hard behind the scenes to refresh some resources that will help Institutes promote themselves locally, celebrate their activities, and spread the word about the benefits of SWI membership. Inside, you'll find posters, leaflets, social media graphics, and useful templates – all designed to make it easier to showcase your Institute and attract new members.

This toolkit has been created with you in mind, and we hope it will be a practical, inspiring aid for growing your Institute and raising awareness of the SWI. Download your copy and start exploring today!

Download here: rebrand.ly/8wuq46t

Blossoming New Groups

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.

We're excited to share a successful first event for our new Dumbarton Group last month and a programme of new group launches in Argyll, Midlothian and Aberdeenshire in October.

Where's next?

Dunoon Women's Group Launch

2-4PM, Saturday October 4th

More info here: rebrand.ly/dkbrjis

Bonnyrigg Women's Group Launch

2-4PM, Saturday October 11th

More info here: rebrand.ly/b92zf49

Banchory Women's Group Launch

2-4PM, Saturday October 25th

More info here: rebrand.ly/gcu0nh9

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

The Creative Crafts Show – Volunteers & Demonstrators Needed

Our preparations are well underway for this year's Creative Crafts, taking place from 23rd–26th October at the SEC, Glasgow, and we would love your help to make the SWI stand a real highlight of the weekend.

We're looking for:

- One demonstrator per day to run two short "make & take" sessions on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. These sessions are always hugely popular with visitors and provide a wonderful way to showcase the creative skills at the heart of SWI.
- 3–4 volunteers each day to give just a 2-hour stint helping at the stand. Whether it's chatting with visitors, handing out leaflets, or giving a warm welcome, every pair of hands makes a difference.

As a thank you for your support, all volunteers will receive a free entry ticket to Creative Crafts for the day of your shift – so once you’ve finished helping, you’ll be free to enjoy the rest of the show!

These events are such an important way of raising awareness of SWI, connecting with new audiences, and celebrating the skills and creativity of our members. If you can spare a little time, please get in touch – we would be delighted to have you on board.

Email **anna.bain@theswi.org.uk** to volunteer!

SWI Heritage Project events

The Heritage Team continues to bring SWI’s history to life with a series of events and training sessions.

The first monthly Online Oral History Clinic with Dr. Valentina Bold for trained volunteers is due to take place on 10th September, and on 23rd September, Valentina will introduce the Heritage Project to Leith SWI, helping members explore how to capture and share their Institute’s stories.

Looking ahead, from 26th–28th November, Valentina will be joined by National President, Mary Burney, and National Vice President, Susie Finlayson for a visit to the Orkney Federation, featuring workshops, oral history training, and a Heritage evening event.

These activities are part of a wider journey to preserve and celebrate 100 years of SWI heritage, and we look forward to sharing more stories and opportunities in the months ahead.

If you are yet to get involved in our Heritage Project, why not join a special Oral History Training session with Valentina on 17th September. Sign up here: **rebrand.ly/f3uwcqz**

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**

From Our Friends in the Sector

We’re excited to share that Farmstrong Scotland is launching a campaign dedicated to Women’s Health.

In honour of Menopause Month, a range of resources will be released to support women who are approaching or experiencing menopause. These materials aim to empower the farming and crofting communities to have open conversations about the effects of menopause on women and those around them.

As part of the campaign, Farmstrong Scotland will host a 'Blether Together Live: Menopause Special' panel event on Thursday, 16th October at Guardswell Farm, Kinnard, Inchture. Attendance is free, and you can register via the button below.

Additionally, there will be both printed and digital resources, as well as a special 'Blether Together' Podcast featuring Dr. Heather Currie MBE, Gynaecologist and Founder of Menopause Matters.

For more information and to keep up to date with the campaign, visit: [**www.farmstrongscotland.org.uk**](http://www.farmstrongscotland.org.uk)

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We're pleased to share updates from ACWW, a valued international partner of SWI.

The ACWW World Triennial Conference will take place in Ottawa, Canada, from 26th April to 2nd May 2026. This inspiring global gathering allows women from around the world to meet, share experiences, and participate in workshops and discussions.

Registration is open on the ACWW website, closing 31st October 2025. The "Early Bird" discount has been extended to 30th September, giving a final opportunity to secure the reduced fee. At present, fourteen SWI members from Scotland will be attending.

Meanwhile, the ACWW European Area Conference will take place this October in Bucharest, Romania, with five SWI members attending.

To book your place: [**rebrand.ly/ekh2gid**](https://rebrand.ly/ekh2gid)

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Looking after our health and wellbeing is important at every stage of life, and Age Scotland regularly pull together useful updates, resources, and news to help support older people across the country.

Their latest Health and Wellbeing Update is packed with information that some of our members may find especially helpful. Inside, you'll find:

- Practical advice on looking after your physical and mental health
- Updates on current campaigns and support services for older people in Scotland
- Tips and resources to help you stay connected and engaged with your community

Whether you're looking for information to support yourself, a family member, or someone in your community, Age Scotland's e-newsletter is a great place to start.

Read more here: [**rebrand.ly/ijbdz5d**](https://rebrand.ly/ijbdz5d)

What's On in the SWI

Outdoor Bowling Competition – Winners Announced!

We were delighted to gather for this year's SWI National Outdoor Bowling Competition, kindly hosted by Stewartry of Kirkcudbright Federation. A huge thank you to them for all their hard work in making the day such a success!

The competition brought together ten fantastic teams, all eager to showcase their skills and enjoy some friendly rivalry. The atmosphere was full of excitement, laughter, and the true spirit of SWI community.

Congratulations to our winners:

Ayrshire (Team One)

- Morag Auld
- Catherine McInnes
- Nancy Gelliburn

Runners-Up – Dumfriesshire

- Nancy McLure
- Helen Bell
- Isabel Moffat

Well done to everyone who took part—whether you were competing or cheering on your team, you helped make it a truly memorable day.

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 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

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.

Your exclusive member benefits

A little reminder that SWI members have a special 5% discount on any Wendy Wu Tour – and the best part is that this can be used in conjunction with all the fantastic offers shown below. Explore offers here: **www.wendywutours.co.uk**

From cherry blossoms in Japan to vibrant adventures across Southeast Asia and beyond, Wendy Wu Tours take care of every detail – including flights, hotels, meals, expert guides, transport, sightseeing and entrance fees.

It's the perfect way to explore the world with confidence, and now with even more value as an SWI member.

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

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.

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.

Order yours today and see how much you can sell! 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.

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!