

Welcome to Issue 28 - 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 registered SCIO SC053058

Welcome to October's newsletter! We've had a busy month with our first-ever hybrid Office Bearers' Gathering as we welcomed members in Edinburgh and online, crowned 2024's Outstanding Member of the Year, and had all the fun, laughter (and serious competition!) of the National Ruralympics final as well!

The next few months will be busy too – with the Creative Craft Show coming to Glasgow and SWI Evening Natters – a special series of online events for autumn – bringing some fabulously interesting speakers to you for intimate chats.

These are FREE for members and £5 for non-members – get your tickets before they're gone!

Members create Community Action Plan

<https://youtu.be/7KibzruLy1U>

SWI Office Bearers from all over the country met for an important afternoon of creating a countrywide SWI Community Action Plan to protect the future of the organisation,

This – our first-ever hybrid event – saw 140 members gather in-person in Edinburgh and another 40 members join online to discuss the theme 'Preventing Institute Closures'. Members created ideas to rejuvenate Institutes, maximise fundraising opportunities, appeal to more women, and talked about what had worked in their areas. These ideas are now being collated into an SWI Community Action Plan, and a draft, written by members for members, will be sent to all Office Bearers this month for consultation on how useful it seems, before a finalised plan is released.

A member survey will follow shortly afterwards, where all members can have their say on the SWI. Your feedback is important as the Board of Trustees move forward to make the SWI sustainable for the future.

We are pleased to say the Office Bearer Gathering 2024 was a huge success, with a raffle raising £359 for future SWI Junior Dippers projects, and members enjoying the new hybrid format of the event. Here's what attendees said...

“Normally I do not attend national meetings as I find they can be just talking shops but this meeting was different.”

“Good to see the acknowledgement of the key role of Federations in supporting and sustaining new groups/Institutes.”

“An excellent event which refreshed my aim to keep the SWI in existence for many years to come.”

“Thoroughly enjoyed the day. Great idea to have people sit at a table with people one did not know. This led to lots of new issues and opportunities experienced in other Institutes. Questions to be debated were on point.”

“The opportunity to meet with representatives from other Institutes outwith our own Federation and share good practice was extremely helpful.”

“Perhaps it’s time to learn from successful Institutes where membership has grown. What are they are doing that others are not?”

Resolis romp to victory at Ruralympics

As it’s an Olympics year, SWI Ruralympics fever had swept Scotland once again in 2024, with heats in Federations across the country! The National Final, hosted by Angus Federation in Kirriemuir, saw 14 teams compete for gold, silver and bronze.

After a day of fierce competition, laughter and noise, Ross-shire & Sutherland Federation’s Resolis SWI took gold for the Highland lassies! Congratulations to Karen Ellis, Margie Campbell, Allison Bissett, and Annessa Najjar. They did themselves, their Institute and their Federation proud!

Well done to Angus 2 who scooped the silver and Stewartry of Kirkcudbright who bagged the bronze.

Thanks to Angus Federation for a fabulous day!

Special online events for autumn

A series of live and intimate chats with some of the hottest stars is coming your way this autumn! The SWI Evening Natters will let you get up close to the stars from the comfort of your own home.

First up is Andrew Crummy MBE, the creative genius behind The Great Tapestry of Scotland, then we have top Scottish foodies The Hebridean Baker and Sarah Rankin, before The Teddy Bear Ladies from BBC1’s The Repair Shop take us up to Christmas with a special chat about the bears that mean so much to them.

These special online autumn events are all FREE for members, £5 for non-members – what a great membership benefit! See the EVENTS section of this newsletter to book!

Not going to be in? Don't worry, all events will be available on our YouTube channel Scottish Women's Institutes TV (www.youtube.com/@ScottishWomensInstitutesTV) for catch-up shortly afterwards

SWI Outstanding Member of the Year

The Margaret Whiteford Trophy for Outstanding Member of the Year celebrates the members who go above and beyond for their SWI communities. Members who are great ambassadors for everything we hold dear – friendship, lifelong learning, and sharing skills – and who get the most out of volunteering for the charity.

This year the standard was very high, and judges had a hard job, so to avoid argument decided three runners-up would share the honours. The overall winner, however, was an easy choice, so congratulations go to Rosemary Duncan of King Edward Institute, Aberdeenshire Federation – see her reaction in the video below!

Mary Burney, SWI National President, said: "Rosemary's Institute closed its doors after Covid, but because of her love for the SWI, she found another Institute to join. While getting used to new routines and different ways. she reacted to a very immediate need to support the Turriff Group who were also struggling post-Covid. As part of that support, and with a very small committee she took on the mammoth task of resurrecting the bulb show.

When we looked at all the nominations for the Outstanding Member of the Year, we all agreed that Rosemary was the epitome of a member who responded willingly to a very present need and is a fantastic example of the motto 'if you know a good thing , pass it on'. We felt that because she agreed to help for one specific event, and the way she did it, she produced a fantastic grounding for moving forward – and she said she enjoyed it!

While giving unstintingly of her own time she also guided the team, including three newbies, through the process but, moreover, she recorded everything electronically in an understandable format so that details of the work required for the lead up, the show day and follow up are available for future use.

We felt Rosemary's willingness to share her skills, encourage others to learn and give them the confidence to try new ventures is a huge part of what the SWI stands for."

Huge congratulations also goes to three runners up... Margaret Leiper, Elsrickle Institute, Lanarkshire, May MacCormick, Mennock Institute, Dumfriesshire, and Pat MacLeod, Dingwall Institute, Ross-shire and Sutherland. And to all of the great women nominated by their friends and SWI families.

See next month's SWI members' magazine, Women Together, for more details of all nominees – and how to nominate someone you think is special!

#swiwomentogether #swilifelonglearning #SWICommunity

<https://youtu.be/yVvd7y0cEvU>

This year's national prizes

The Barbara Brookshire Trophy is for the Institute with the greatest number of new members goes to Corstorphine SWI, Midlothian Federation, with 21 new members. All of your community outreach worked wonders, well done everyone!

The Stoneycreek Trophy which goes to the Institute with the second highest increase in membership is shared by two institutes this year. The proud joint winners are Killin SWI, Perth and Kinross Federation, and Dollar SWI, SC&WP Federation as they have 15 new members each.

Ayrshire Federation President Nan Brown collected the Linda Retson Family Trophy on behalf of Largs SWI. The trophy honours the newest Institute with the most members. This year it goes to Largs who have 54 members.

The Evelyn Baxter Trophy for 2024, awarded to the best example of this year's theme of Temari Balls, was judged by Evelyn Baxter Scholars Kay Smith and Kirsty Robb. It goes to Maybelle Coltart of Haugh of Urr Institute in Stewartry Federation.

Member training sessions announced

Using Canva to promote SWI events

Tuesday 22nd Oct | 2pm

Canva is a great free design tool which you can use to create eye-catching event announcements.

You will learn:

- How to upload images and logos to Canva
- How to use templates
- How to make Facebook posts
- How to make effective layouts

Book now (<https://shorturl.at/PuEEen>)

Using Facebook to promote SWI events

Tuesday 12th Nov | 2pm

Facebook is a great tool for connecting with members and your community.

You will learn:

- How to write the perfect message
- The difference between Facebook pages and groups
- How to use local Facebook groups
- How to tell if your content is working

Book now (<https://shorturl.at/YU5wv>)

Oral histories now being gathered by members

The SWI Heritage Group will be out and about in communities over the next few months, gathering members' recollections for use in the SWI Heritage Project.

The project aims to capture the personal histories of members, their memories of early SWI life, and preserve them for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

The project was kickstarted by SWI member Marion Dawson, an Honorary Member of Houston & Crosslee, who had been a member for no less than 90 years.

Now our member team of volunteers are keen to talk to members in your area – perhaps they were a member during the war? Or represented the SWI overseas or at a national event? Or had a recipe published in an SWI Cookery Book?

If you or another member has a story to tell, we'd love to hear it. Please email hello@theswi.org.uk

SWI Shop

SWI 2025 calendar

The Scottish Women's Institutes 2025 calendar has landed and is packed with beautiful photographs taken by SWI members from across the country.

Mouthwatering baking recipes from Aberdeenshire Federation's Centenary Cookbook will give you inspiration every month. Grab one for yourself, and treat your friends and family too!

Shop now (<https://shorturl.at/Pm2FC>)

2025 SWI diary

Our ever-popular diary is now in stock – get yours before they're gone!

The diary features: Week per page, plenty of room for notes, handbag-sized, on-trend colour

Shop now (<https://shorturl.at/t1Eas>)

SWI member special offers

20% off for all SWI members

A great deal on all clothing including dresses, tops and trousers, plus beautiful lambswool and cashmere items. Learn more (<http://www.ewm.co.uk>)

15% off for all SWI members

The SWI has teamed up with Bloom & Wild, the UK's most loved online florist, to bring you 15% off up to three orders of flowers, plants and gifts. Learn more (<http://www.bloomandwild.com>)

5% off for all SWI members

This unique member offer can be used in conjunction with other offers and save you up to 10% on all Fred. Olsen Cruises. Learn more (<https://www.fredolsencruises.com/>)

Events

Meet The Great Tapestry of Scotland's Andrew Crummy MBE

SWI Evening Natter | Weds 9th October

FREE FOR MEMBERS | £5 NON-MEMBERS

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!

Book now (<https://shorturl.at/XwpHb>)

Monthly SWI Heritage Group

SWI Skill Share | Thurs 24th October

MEMBERS ONLY

The SWI Heritage Group meets on a monthly basis to progress and contribute to the wider SWI Heritage Project, with a focus on preparing the SWI heritage for a Visitor Learning Centre in Scotland. We welcome all members to join the group – you can join us at any time – and keep abreast of developments.

Book now (<https://rb.gy/jnel4s>)

The Creative Craft Show 2024

This month the SWI returns to the Creative Craft Show at Glasgow's SECC. A fabulous event with 100+ stalls and demonstrations, it's a great way to show just what we do at the SWI.

SWI members will be leading our popular Make & Take sessions each day.

- Thursday 11-12pm and 1-2pm: Brenda MacLeod will be making felted brooches.
- Friday 11-12pm and 1-2pm: Margaret Crawford will lead classes in fabric mini landscapes (postcard size).
- Saturday 11-12pm and 1-2pm: Maz Thorn will create fabric craft ornaments.
- Sunday 11-12pm and 1-2pm: Pam Goodwin will make macramé bookmarks.

TBC Come and join in the fun – use our special SWI member discount code CRAFTSTITCH to get 30% off entry.

Book now (<http://www.creativecraftshow.co.uk>)

Christmas delights with The Hebridean Baker and Sarah Rankin

SWI Evening Natter | Mon 18th November

FREE FOR MEMBERS | £5 NON-MEMBERS

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! The chat will be followed by a Q&A session, so bring your queries!

Book now (<https://rb.gy/6gxt3w>)

Meet The Repair Shop's Teddy Bear Ladies

SWI Evening Natter | December 3rd

FREE FOR MEMBERS | £5 NON-MEMBERS

The Teddy Bear Ladies from BBC1's The Repair Shop – AKA Julie Tatchell and Amanda Middleditch – will 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! Click the link below to be notified when tickets become available.

Book now (<https://rb.gy/0pzlfg>)

Christmas quiz & fizz

Thurs 12th December

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 and bring along your favourite fizzy tippie – the winning quizzier will win a £50 Marks & Spencer voucher!

Book now (<https://rb.gy/csz9nf>)

Chutneys & jellies – catch up now

Join Jean Miller as she guides you through the step-by-step process of making your own chutney and bramble jelly. While we won't be able to make it in real time due to the length of the process, Jean will demonstrate each stage and the all-important setting points.

Catch up now (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ke3KIGKjNGg>)

National competitions

Photography

National competition | Deadline Nov 4

We encourage members to delve into the theme Our Fragile World by entering compelling photos. You could win up to £25 in SWI Shop vouchers.

Learn more (<https://rb.gy/j9qvho>)

Don't forget the 2024 Membership Drive Toolkit!

A friendly reminder that the SWI Members' Toolkit is available for you to download and use to promote your activity in your area. As many groups and Institutes get back together this September this membership drive campaign will help you attract new members. This free-to-use promo material can be downloaded and shared as many times as you like – you're in control.

What's in the Toolkit?

- * SWI promo video – share it on your Facebook and Instagram feeds.
- * Posters and leaflets – we have print-ready files which can be ordered online, or print-friendly versions you can print at home.
- * SWI social posts – share them across your social media channels.

Please use all or any asset in your community and across social media, so we really showcase what a wonderful resource the SWI is for Scotland's women! Some members have seen 15+ enquiries as a result of using the new assets. We'll evaluate the campaign in March 2025 and use learnings for the next membership drive.

Get the Toolkit (<https://rb.gy/v4qmek>)

Member extras

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 (<https://www.facebook.com/ScottishWomensInstitutes>)

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

Alternatively, if you have a grumble to share, please follow our complaints procedure (<https://rb.gy/a6a06j>) to ensure that you receive an appropriate and timely response.

Thank you!