

**Women Together**

**Autumn 2023**

*The magazine for SWI members*

**SWI NATIONAL CONFERENCE SPECIAL**

**Songs, stories & shortbread**

SWI Board Trustee Susie Finlayson meets The Hebridean Baker

-----

**Page 2**

**Exclusive member offer**

15% off all flowers, plants, and gifts

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.

That's a fantastic offer which could save you up to £35!

All orders are delivered in 100% recyclable packaging, too!

SWI MEMBER CODE: THESWI15B&W

Go to [www.bloomandwild](http://www.bloomandwild) to order

This code can only be used by SWI members.

This code can be used up to a maximum of 3 times per member.

This code can only be redeemed on one-off plants, flowers, and gifts.

This code cannot be redeemed on subscriptions and bundles.

This code cannot be used in conjunction with other codes.

-----

**Page 4**

**PIC OF THE SEASON**

**Darling buds at play**

A PANDEMIC ZOOM GET-TOGETHER HAS LED TO A LASTING FRIENDSHIP FOR MEMBERS AS FAR AFIELD AS ORKNEY AND THE BORDERS!

Since March 2020 this bunch have been meeting online to share stories, how-tos and a whole lot of laughs but the National Conference gave them the first opportunity to meet en masse.

And what a delight it was – lots of comments such as “Ooh, you look taller / shorter / younger in real life,” and lots of hugs were shared. Of course, not all of the SWI Friday Craft & Chat crowd could be in the room, but the decibel level was still challenging!

Left-right are: Margaret Robb, Evelyn Balfour, Evelyn Scobie, Fiona McKenzie, Shelagh Lightbody, Mary Stewart, Phyllis Hannah, Mary Burney, Elizabeth MacGregor, Lesley Birney, Linda Wallace, Avice McQueen, Margaret MacArthur, Donita Davis, Alison Prentice, Anne Fiddes, Christine Kyle, Linda McTurk, Annette Torbet, Lynne Davidson and Anne Kerr.

Much missed were Caroline Stuart, May Macdonald, Heather Coutts, Sandra MacArthur, Janet Wallace, Janette McKirdy, Kath Hewson, Joan Murfitt, Margaret Gordon, Fiona Campbell and “Canada Ann”.

----

## **MEMBER NEWS**

### **A century of friendship**

When Perceton SWI, Ayrshire Federation, celebrated their 100th anniversary lunch at The Riverside Hotel, Irvine, 34 ladies, members and past members attended.

Guests included Anne Kerr, then National President, and Kay Young, Ayrshire President. It was an excellent day – good meal, good company, and a film show of past activities of the institute. Five members were presented with loyalty certificates, having been members of Perceton for 50 years.

Perceton Rural began on 6th February 1923, and the first meeting was held in an “auld stane barn” when 62 women were present. The ladies then raised £200 and built a wooden hut, called “Cheepieneuk”, which was their meeting place for 52 years.

Unfortunately, vandals burned it down and since then members have had various meeting venues. However, they are now happy with Girdle Toll Church Hall, which is very comfortable and has good facilities.

The first President was Miss Kerr, who held the position for 16 years and went to the meetings by pony and trap.

After the war, Mrs McGinn held the position for 10 years before Mrs Sword took over in 1955 and was Perceton President for 40 years!

These days Presidents are elected every three years and members take part in Ayrshire competitions, to keep up the good name of Perceton SWI.

----

### **Magnificent seven mark annual date**

The past chairmen and Presidents of the Dumfriesshire Federation met for their annual lunch recently. The ladies have served a total of 350 years for the organisation and still serving on committees and giving their valued support. What a fabulous group of women!

Dumfriesshire Federation's stalwarts are Betty Burns, Marion Bell, Jean Wilson, May MacCormick, Elspeth Kennedy, Irela Hamilton and Ella Renicks.

----

### **Largs has lift off**

The first meeting of newly formed Largs SWI was a wonderful night with an amazing 66 ladies in attendance. There was a craft session and a short quiz and great enthusiasm for the next meeting. All thanks to the newly formed committee who worked so hard to get the group up and running – well done Wendy, Sharon, Susan and all the committee, and to Kay and Nan from Ayrshire Federation for being so supportive.

-----

### **Remembering**

Sheila Adam, aged 70 years, sadly passed away in August. She was a member of Cullerlie-Garlogie SWI in Aberdeenshire for more than 35 years having previously been a member of Fintray-Dyce. During her time at Cullerlie-Garlogie she held all office bearer roles – Treasurer for many years and President on numerous occasions. Sheila was an all-rounder excelling in floral art, baking and crafts and took many prizes, cups, and silverware at local shows. She was a great asset to the group and an example of all the SWI stands for. She will be sadly missed.

Cumbernauld Institute was sad to hear of the death of Jenny Lorrimer. Jenny and her sister Margaret joined Cumbernauld Rural a number of years ago and remained supportive throughout. Born in Condorrat, Jenny loved all sports and was very competitive but chose accountancy as a career. Jenny soon became a Chartered Accountant and remained dedicated to her work until retirement. Latterly, Jenny very kindly carried out Cumbernauld Institute's annual audit which was much appreciated. Jenny was well liked and respected and will be sorely missed by her many friends.

Cumbernauld Rural was also very saddened to learn of the death of Jen Gallacher, one of its longest-serving members. Jen joined the SWI in 1971 and during the past 52 years held the position of President, Secretary, Treasurer, H&H rep and committee member several times. Jen entered Institute and Federation competitions, winning many prizes along the way. In the early Seventies, Cumbernauld Institute had to seek new premises and during the ensuing turmoil Jen proved a pillar of strength, holding things together until new premises were found in Kildrum. Jen attended meetings until recently when ill health precluded her from doing so. She was a quiet but a well-known and respected member. A line from our Rural Song reads 'Friendship and caring forever will stay in the heart of our home and our country'. Just as Jen's friendship and caring will be remembered (and missed) by all her many friends from the old Central Group and at Cumbernauld Rural.

Nan Arthur was a loyal, kind, generous and popular member of Craigrothie Rural. She was fiercely proud of Craigrothie's achievements and was never slow to show her appreciation of the fun and friendship she enjoyed there. As far back as 1996, Nan was on committee. She could be relied upon to make her infamous light as a feather sponge and although the recipe was shared cakes never seemed the same as Nan's. Her outgoing and enthusiastic personality was in evidence when she joined other Rural ladies on overseas study tours... one

such trip to Austria was often spoken about. At Craigrothie's 100th birthday lunch earlier this year, Nan was in great form regaling all with stories. She will be sorely missed by all her Rural friends.

-----

### **Sun, sea, steps, and scones**

Anne Artis on Ruskie Rural's walking trip to Portsoy

**Tuesday 11th July** Fifteen excited members and friends of Ruskie Rural ventured North on the A9, heading for the North coast of Banffshire. First stop – House of Bruar for coffee, cake and a browse. Much chatter!

Next stop was the Speyside Centre for a tasty lunch. We arrived at the pretty harbour village of Portsoy, and our home for three nights, the Sail Loft Hostel.

We were amazed to find a beautifully renovated former house and sail store, with traditional lime plaster outside and a huge modern kitchen, dining room and sitting room inside. We had quiet shared and single rooms with access to lovely showers and loos. We soon found charming gardens and a sunny deck. However, several ladies eyed the beach only 50m across the lawns and were off for a 'dook' in the sea.

Tesco delivered, so we ate a sumptuous salad, and eventually took ourselves off to bed.

**Wednesday 12th July** Our day began with a sunny yoga session on the lawns in warm sunshine. All loosened up and ready for breakfast! Thank you, Linda!

Walking today, 14 miles, 7 miles and strolls to more pretty villages of Crovie and Pennan. We used local buses and felt sorry for those without bus passes! The Moray Coastal Path proved to be less of a path and more a discovery route in places.

One group started from Cullen, where we were fortified by delicious Cullen Skink at the Royal Oak Hotel. As we set off, a local man assured us the path was

fine, and just to ignore the sign the path was closed. Interesting coastal ascents and descents, with a lovely sandy beach, took us to the precarious remains of Findlater Castle. Path or no path, we got to Sandend (Sannen), with a sensible route to Portsoy over the headland.

Fish and chips and ice cream for supper. Perfect! And for those needing a warm-up, a bubble in the steaming hot tub. Luxury!

**Thursday 13th July** Some ladies went off walking again, some decided to have coffee down at the picturesque harbour. The little café here offered quirky surroundings, as we sat next to a gently splashing mini waterfall next to a sheltered 'sitootterie' and ate very good cheese scones.

Afternoon took us along the coast West to Findochty (Finechty), and the exquisite new planting in the old walled garden of Gordon Castle. The garden has been redesigned by Piet Oudulph, a Dutch gardener famous for his soft planting. The garden produces vegetables, herbs, fruit and cut flowers. Old apple trees on the walls promise autumn harvests, and sweet peas scent the air.

Lovely. Inspirational.

We dined that evening in the Aspire Restaurant, where Liz reminded us of what we ordered months ago!

Friday 15th July Although home beckoned, most of us visited Logie Steading, near Grantown on Spey, for morning coffee... also bacon rolls, scones, and cakes! There were purchases to be made here too, from second-hand books, crafts, great plants from the garden centre, and beef from the Longhorn cattle grazing nearby.

We all returned home happy, surprisingly 'sunkissed', considering the wet weather elsewhere, and for me at least, a little plumper. We had a lovely time in a beautiful area with new and old friends. Great! Thanks for the super photographs, mostly from Seona and Sharon!

----

## PRESIDENT'S VIEW

### Busy but exciting times

REPRESENTING THE SWI AT HOME AND ABROAD HAS BEEN A JOY FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT, MARY BURNEY

Since succeeding Anne Kerr as National President in May, the year seems to have flown past.

Following the AGM in May, I started my journey to the ACWW World Conference in Malaysia as part of a strong contingent of ladies from Scotland. An unforgettable experience there was followed closely by a prolonged stay in Edinburgh as we set up and managed the Scottish Handcraft Championships at the Royal Highland Show. The 2024 syllabus has been published at <https://shorturl.at/rsuJT> – why not have a go at entering?

I have also enjoyed travelling to all the National competition finals and especially enjoyed two very special centenary celebrations – Berwickshire Federation in Duns in July and Minto Institute in Denholm in September – my geography is improving, and my satnav is being put to good use!

The National face to face events culminated in the fantastic new-look SWI Conference held in Perth over two days in September. You will see lots of photographs and features throughout the magazine showing our members and friends enjoying the opportunity to get together once more.

In addition to a variety of wonderful speakers we were honoured to be joined by Ann Jones, chair of the National Federation of Women's Institutes for England, Wales and the Islands and Margaret Broome, Federation Chairman of the Federation of Women's Institutes for Northern Ireland.

Federations pulled out all the stops to promote articles and activities of interest in their local areas making for a spectacular show as delegates entered the foyer, and along with competition entries for the Evelyn Baxter Trophy, the

Warnock Trophy and the Morgan trophy, the Vaughan Nash community competition entries filled the Norrie Miller room with Christmas spirit!

The Junior Dippers were a triumph at the evening market, a brand-new addition to the National Conference. They demonstrated some of the skills they have learned at their meetings and had a ball doing it. I would love to see more of these groups springing up across Scotland and we invite all Federations to consider starting one in their area. We have experienced members who will help support any new initiative.

These groups improve children's skills and wellbeing and help to build confidence and resilience. They also plant the seed of what our wonderful organisation can offer by way of lifelong learning, lasting friendships and having fun together. Will your Federation take up the challenge of starting a Junior Dippers' group?

With Heriot Row finally sold, and the staff relocated to a new office, our thoughts now turn to becoming a SCIO. This will not only protect the Board of Trustees but make the SWI more attractive to funding bodies and potential partners. This will help us achieve our strategic priority of developing a visitor learning centre.

The Board of Trustees, staff and heritage groups will continue to work hard to turn the vision of a building which is worthy of housing our valuable artefacts while generating an additional income stream and providing a vibrant, modern meeting space, into a reality.

I invite you all to come on this journey with us as we all play our part in shaping the SWI for generations of women to come.

### **Magazine success**

I'm delighted to say that more than 7,000 members now read the online version of the magazine – a huge improvement on the paper version which reached just 1,500. With a print-friendly version available as well as the digital copy, now every member has access to this fantastic member benefit.

### **Member benefits**



Staff have been hard at work securing special member-only offers. Don't miss our 15% discount at online florist Bloom and Wild, or a special discounted rate on The Hebridean Baker's new book, The Hebridean Baker At Home – it's signed, too!

-----

**Page 12**

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

### **A year of huge achievements**

The staff have been busy meeting strategic priorities to help secure the overall goal of our strategy, which is to change. We want to preserve the past and involve the present in shaping the future.

Read the strategic plan at <https://bitly.ws/WRgU>

### **1 MOVING OFFICE**

Since the 1950s, the SWI had called Edinburgh's 42 Heriot Row home. However, the building had become increasingly costly to run. With four floors to heat, clean and care for, and substantial exterior repair work becoming more and more common, a great deal of members' levies were required for its upkeep.

The building, on one of Edinburgh's most prestigious streets, was sold in September for £1.625 million and much of this income will be ringfenced to secure the development of a new Visitor Learning Centre.

A new rented office in Edinburgh offers huge savings as the heating bill alone for the Heriot Row building is equivalent to the lease for a full year. The office provides the small team of staff with a modern accessible space and up-to-date facilities, so they can work efficiently and effectively on members' behalf.

A seamless move was carried out just before the SWI National Conference in mid-September and a couple of open doors days will be planned for members to come along and see our new spot for themselves.

**Meets strategic priority #3 Reduce costs and overheads**

## 2 PRESERVING OUR ARCHIVE

The SWI's collection is very special – it helps tell the story of not just the SWI, but the story of women in Scotland, particularly rural women.

The Heriot Row office held a treasure trove of documents, crafted items, pictures, and files, and these will be professionally archived for future generations. These items will become the basis of an SWI collection for the Visitor Learning Centre.

Last year, a knowledgeable group of members volunteered to catalogue the crafted items at Heriot Row, and we are very grateful for their expertise and time.

Museum curators and university academics were then invited to view these items and there is a huge amount of interest in the collection, and we are delighted to announce that funding has been secured to initially relocate and store the items at Ballast Trust in Glasgow.

A new Heritage and Culture members' group has been set up and it will take forward the heritage aspect of the centre. If you would like to take part, please book at <https://bitly.ws/WPmB>

**Meets strategic priority #4 Develop an ambitious plan for a Visitor Learning Centre**

## 3 TRANSITIONING TO BECOME A SCIO

As the national organisation, the Board of Trustees has decided to pursue the transformation into a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

An Extraordinary Board Meeting was held in September to approve and pass a special resolution to apply to OSCR to transition the SWI National Body from an unincorporated charity to a new Scottish Charity Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and transfer its assets.

This marks phase one of the legal process, which will have no impact on members.

Once the application is approved, phase two of the transition will involve incorporating the wider Federations and Institutes into the SCIO entity.

This process is scheduled for member communication and consultation in early 2024.

**Meets strategic priority #1 Implement significant change in the constitution and internal operations**

#### **4 MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**

Following an extensive membership drive and appointment of a new Membership Development Officer, Ashmita Bhattarai, in 2022, membership numbers are seeing their first prolonged growth in decades.

From January-July 2023, more than 1020 members have been added to the SWI family. Each new member receives a free gift and details of their local groups and Institutes, plus information on SWI's online talks and classes.

Thanks to all members who act as ambassadors for the SWI, as many new members are coming to us through existing Institutes. New groups are also continuing to flourish – Largs recently had its first meeting with 66 ladies in attendance – and the next new group launch is planned for Fort William this autumn.

Monthly peer support meetings have been launched to provide assistance to the newly established SWI groups and Institutes, and a collaborative guide has been developed in partnership with new and existing members to address issues and help establish these new groups.

To improve our service and increase value for money for all members, the membership team now uses a new customer relationship management (CRM) system. Federations and Institutes are asked to submit up-to-date members' information for the 23-24 session.

**Meets strategic priority #2 Develop a comprehensive member-centric culture**

See the *New Groups guide* at <https://bitly.ws/WPpg>

## **5 NEW SKILLS & EVENTS COMMITTEE**

Lifelong learning is hugely important to the SWI's past, present and future. From our earliest days in 1917 when rural women made MakMerry pottery on our founder Catherine Blair's farm, the organisation has been built on women learning, creating, and sharing their skills.

Now, members are travelling the country to carry out demonstrations, sharing their skills to new audiences online, and helping to save endangered craft techniques.

To develop this hugely important arm of the SWI further, a new committee has been formed. The Skills & Events committee now takes on the responsibilities of the old Handcrafts & Homeskills and Education & International committees and is working to modernise existing learning pathways such as the Evelyn Baxter programme and develop new routes to education.

The National Convenor of this new Skills & Events committee is Anne Howat, former Board Trustee and National Handcrafts & Homeskills convenor. She said: "I welcome the opportunity to be involved in putting together a programme of events that meets the needs of the members and appeals to potential new members. We will ensure the new approach complies with our SWI constitution and meets the SWI strategy going forward."

**Meets strategic priority #2 Develop a comprehensive member-centric culture for a Visitor Learning Centre**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS: WHO'S WHO?**

>> Anne Howat, Convenor, Ayrshire

>> Joyce Carnegie, Vice Convenor, Perth & Kinross

- >> Brenda Macleod, Vice Convenor, Argyll
- >> Dorothy Morris, Vice Convenor, Perth & Kinross
- >> Lynne Bilton, Berwickshire
- >> Pat Cooper, Kincardineshire
- >> Margaret Dick, Dunbartonshire
- >> Kathleen Ferrier, Angus
- >> Clare Greig, Dunbartonshire
- >> Jessie Meikle, Lanarkshire
- >> Sheelagh Still, Mull
- >> Mima Telfer, Dumfriesshire

## **6 VISITOR LEARNING CENTRE**

As part of the SWI's strategic vision for a Visitor Learning Centre, the Board of Trustees has agreed for the CEO to progress exploratory talks with The Crichton Trust, which has plans to develop a centre focused on women within Crichton's heritage campus in Dumfries.

The aim of this scoping exercise is to explore any opportunity to bring together and co-locate two powerful parallel stories of rural women's lives and their influence on Scottish society and well-being.

Federation Office Bearers have been invited to visit The Crichton campus in November to get a first-hand view of the site and what opportunities may be available.

**Meets strategic priority #4 Develop an ambitious plan for a Visitor Learning Centre**

## **7 NEW MEMBER BENEFITS**

The SWI is keen to develop member benefits for all, so a new partnership means you can get 15% off up to three orders of flowers, plants, and gifts from Bloom & Wild, the UK's most-loved online florist. This could save each member up to £35.

**Meets strategic priority #2 Develop a comprehensive member-centric culture**

-----

**Events special**  
**What will you do?**

**Page 16**  
**AUGUST 15TH -19TH, 2024**  
**Strathallan School, Perthshire**  
**Summer School is back**

After a break due to the pandemic, we're delighted to announce a new Summer School for 2024.

### **What's on offer?**

A variety of expert tutors across a range of handcrafts and activities. The new Skills & Events committee is currently considering options and a full schedule of three-day courses will be announced in November, but here's a sneak peek of what will be on offer.

### **About the location**

Strathallan School is set in 153 acres of rural Perthshire and is an award-winning boarding school with comfortable, well-appointed dorms and modern classrooms and facilities.

### **How much will it cost?**

Our very competitive rates are...

**Members residential £490**

**Non-members residential £570**

Costs include all tuition and materials, single room accommodation and breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

**Member non-residential £365**

**Non-members non-residential £445**

Costs include all tuition and materials plus lunch each day.

Expressions of interest are required now, so email [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk) by October 31st if you wish to attend. We have 49 so far but need 60 for the event to go ahead.

## THE SCHEDULE

### Thursday 15th August

Arrive, settle in, and enjoy an evening meal with fellow students.

### Friday 16th, Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th August

Participate in your choice of three-day courses from 10am-4pm each day, then relax in the school's beautiful grounds and library before your evening meal.

### Monday 19th

Enjoy breakfast before heading home with a brand-new skill to share!

## What's on offer...

### 3-day workshop: Willow basket making

**Tutors: Christine Davies & Pascal Carr | Heritage craft**

Make a willow woven basket under the expert guidance of Catherine Davies and Pascal Carr of Allaboutwillow. The pair are award-winning master basketmakers with more than 25 years' experience. The artisans work with opera, ballet, TV and film companies and are the basketmakers for the Outlander TV series.

See *Allaboutwillow* at [all-about-willow.co.uk](http://all-about-willow.co.uk)

### 3-day workshop: Shetland lace knitting

**Tutor: Elizabeth Williamson | Heritage craft**

Native Shetlander Elizabeth Williamson will take you through the basic stitches, history, and techniques of Shetland lace knitting. During the workshop you will knit at least one item in Shetland lace and be taught the skills required for a variety of stitches. Suitable for intermediate knitters or beginner lace knitters.

See *Elizabeth's work* at [www.elizabethwilliamsonknitting.co.uk](http://www.elizabethwilliamsonknitting.co.uk)

### 3-day workshop: Improvers' crochet

### **Tutor: Fiona Meade | Crochet**

After learning the basics of the craft as a child, SWI member Fiona taught herself to read patterns and now designs her own makes for her Ravelry, Etsy and LoveCrafts stores. She now teaches courses locally in Aberdeenshire and globally on her YouTube channel. She will share her techniques with you.

See Fiona's work at [www.fionameadecrochet.com/](http://www.fionameadecrochet.com/)

### **3-day workshop: Sashiko for beginners**

#### **Tutor: Lorraine McCafferty | Japanese embroidery**

When SWI member Lorraine McCafferty shared her love of Sashiko, a beautiful Japanese technique for visibly mending clothes and adding decoration, she had no idea her YouTube video would be viewed more than 14,000 times. She will share her skills, passion, and knowledge of the craft and its origins.

See Lorraine's work at <https://bitly.ws/WPsp>

### **3-day workshop: Painting**

#### **Tutor: Sarah Spofforth-McOuat | Art**

Sarah is a unique artist specialising in large scale textual animal artwork, using materials such as fabric samples and plaster to add texture and character. Her work is currently on display at Blair Drummond Safari Park, The Lake at the Port of Menteith restaurant, Kings Home, Bar 10, and homes from New Zealand to America.

See Sarah's work at [mcspoffart.com](http://mcspoffart.com)

**More classes to be added | Expressions of interest required now | Booking opens November**

----

**Page 18**

**Unmissable events**

**OCTOBER 26TH-29TH**

**The Creative Craft Show**



## **PUBLIC EVENT | SECC, Glasgow**

The SWI will be joining the hoardes of crafters and exhibitors at the Christmas Creative Crafts Show. If you haven't been it's well worth popping down to fill your boots and empty your pockets!

The SWI will be offering drop-in Make & Take sessions led by talented members at 11am, 1pm and 3pm each day.

Plus! We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join us at the event. If you would like to be a 'member helper' and receive a free ticket to the show on the day of volunteering, get in touch! Email [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk) to let us know your preferred day of choice and whether you would like a morning or an afternoon slot.

Book at <https://bitly.ws/WPtR>

## **Action Appeal Grant update**

This scheme has been providing grants to Federations for assistance with 100% of travel expenses for national sporting and educational competitions. In order to reduce the financial loss for national competitions, the Board of Trustees decided that this scheme will be phased out over the next three years. In 2024, claims of up to 60% will be paid.

## **SWI National Charity for 2023-2024**

Federations and Institutes are reminded that this year's chosen charity is Mountain View School for the Deaf in Malawi. All donations will go to enabling boys and girls the opportunity to be taught arts, crafts, and practical skills to offer them better life chances.

See all events and more than 35 events for 2024 at [www.theswi.org.uk/event-diary.html](http://www.theswi.org.uk/event-diary.html)

## **OCTOBER 14TH**

**Wild Swim & marshmallow bonfire**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING | GROYNE 5, PORTOBELLO BEACH, EDINBURGH |**

**11AM | £14**

We invite you to come and join us to welcome the start of the autumn weather with our last wild swim of 2023 at Portobello Beach. This will be followed by warming up around a bonfire with hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows – and maybe even a bit of cake!! Wild swimming expert Maree Rudd, of Wild Swim Scotland, will lead the session and introduce the benefits and exhilaration of taking a dook!

## **OCTOBER 19TH**

### **Skincare masterclass to Age Without Apology**

**SKILL SHARE | ONLINE | 7PM | Free for members, £5 for non members**

The SWI has teamed up with skincare brand Willowberry to help celebrate their 'Age Without Apology' campaign and bring you a fun and informative online skincare masterclass by Willowberry's Founder, Jenni Retourné (left), which celebrates the beauty of maturity. Loved by top international make-up artists, Willowberry has appeared in Vogue, Independent, The Telegraph, Daily Mail, This Morning and many more. This skincare masterclass is designed to empower you with the knowledge you need to feel fabulous at any age. Discover effective skincare routines, get skincare tips, watch product demonstrations, and find out how to confidently care for your skin as you age.

## **OCTOBER 24TH**

### **SWI Heritage & Culture Group**

**SKILL SHARE SESSION | ONLINE | 6PM | Free (members only)**

We're now diving into our second meeting, dedicated to the collation and preservation of SWI Heritage for the preparation of a Visitor Learning Centre in Scotland. We warmly invite all members who have an interest in this project, whether they have a specific story to tell or would just like to know what's happening, to join us for this informal online evening session.

## **NOVEMBER 1ST**

### **Surviving Breast Cancer**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING | ONLINE | 7pm | Free for members, £5 for non members**

Pennie Latin-Stuart will talk about her journey through breast cancer, the many highs and lows it has brought into her life and in particular what she sees as the huge value in sharing our stories, honestly, openly, painfully, both on the page

and through podcasting. Whether you have lived experience of breast cancer, or know someone who is going through it, this talk from Pennie will help you on how to support your loved one, and to find comfort in the fact that you are not alone.

## **NOVEMBER 9TH**

### **Royal Highland Show Winner's Journey**

**SKILL SHARE | ONLINE | 7PM | Free for members, £5 for non members**

What does it take to wow the Handcraft judges at the Royal Highland Show two years in a row? SWI member, Lou Washington, will reveal all in this online session followed by a Q&A. Lou, from Coldstream SWI, will talk about her fabulous makes and give advice to future entrants to the Royal Highland Show's prestigious competition. Come along and be amazed and inspired by her beautiful work – and consider entering the Scottish Handcraft Competition yourself!

## **NOVEMBER 15TH**

### **Online safety: A guide for parents and grandparents**

**MEMBER TRAINING | ONLINE | 7pm | Free for members, £5 for non members**

What practical steps can we take to minimise the risks when children and teens are online? Experts from children's charity the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) will host this online event focussed on keeping children safe online. You will gain valuable insights and practical tips to ensure the online safety of children and teens in your family. This event will provide valuable information to parents, grandparents, caregivers, and anyone interested in protecting children online.

## **NOVEMBER 28TH**

### **Scottish Festive Myths & Lore**

**EXPERT TALK | ONLINE | 7PM | Free for members, £5 for non members**

The SWI has teamed up with Scottish content creator and TikTok superstar, Andy the Highlander, to bring tales of old and new Scottish traditions, myths, and lore surrounding the festive season. Andy is a Scottish tour guide who is passionate about sharing Scotland with the world. He runs a tour company called Highlander Tours and dresses in full 18th century regalia, taking people all over the country and showing them the best of what Scotland has to offer.

Whether you are already immersed in Scottish culture, or you want to learn more about Scottish traditions, you're bound to take something away from this talk. Oh, and if you're lucky, you might even get a wee féileadh-mór demonstration from Andy as he shows how he puts on his 18th century kit!

## **DECEMBER 6TH**

### **Mette Baillie: Dressing for your body type**

**EXPERT TALK | ONLINE | 7PM | Free for members, £5 for non members**

The SWI has teamed up with Mette Baillie, award-winning designer and owner of Freja Designer Dressmaking in Edinburgh, to provide an informative and inclusive session for people looking to improve their sense of style and feel good through the power of fashion. Mette has an extensive knowledge of pattern cutting, colouring analysis, and assessment of body types which helps to leave women confident in their clothes. She will reveal how to get started in personalising your wardrobe, so it suits your character, and offer helpful tips on how to choose colours and build a capsule wardrobe that can take you from daytime to evening seamlessly.

-----

## **Page 20**

### **Save the date**

All members are invited to a dinner dance with a great band at The Crichton in Dumfries. The event will be a great chance to learn a few new moves, too, as expert dance tutors will lead classes before the evening festivities.

You can choose from an hour's Salsa session or an hour's line dancing class!

### **Where can I stay?**

Accommodation is available at The Holiday Inn on the Crichton campus, or at the Premier Inn or Travelodge nearby, with room rates from £40-£130.

### **Option 1**

#### **Dance tuition and buffet dinner**

SWI member £75

Non-member £85

## Option 2

### Buffet dinner only

SWI member £23

Non-member £28

## SALSA DANCING

### Tutor: Yamil Cuedo Ferrera

Yamil was a lead dancer for five years with the professional Cuban company Ballet Folklorico Cutumba until he came to live in Scotland in March 2009.

He comes from Santiago de Cuba where the tradition of Afro-Cuban music and dance is still very much alive.

He has performed Afro folkloric dances for more than 20 years and his teaching style is fun, energetic and creative – he'll leave you feeling recharged and alive!

## LINE DANCING

### Tutor: Audrey Brown

Line dancing tutor Audrey loves a fun, energetic, good stomp! As Audrey's Sidesteppers she holds regular classes in Dumfries and will teach you a fun dance to light up the dancefloor with.

Expressions of interest are required, so please email [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk) by October 31st if you wish to attend as a minimum number of participants is required to make this event go ahead. Bookings open in November.

----

## Evelyn Baxter tutors all set for January

### Subject Basic Dressmaking

**Tutors** Jessie Meikle, Ravenstruther Institute, Lanarkshire Federation, and Lesley Robinson, independent member, Glasgow

Jessie and Lesley begin their tour of Federations in January 2024, with a basic dressmaking workshop for sewers who want to expand their skillset. They will help pupils develop an understanding of the basics of pattern fitting, cutting, and making a simple garment.

By the end of the workshop pupils will know the basics and have confidence to make their own unique garments. Most importantly, the aim of all Evelyn Baxter classes is to inspire and ignite creativity.

How do I book a class?

SWI staff will be in touch with Federation Secretaries shortly to take note of preferred class date. Classes will be confirmed by the end of 2023 and will be bookable with your Federation Secretary.

-----

**Page 21**

**SHOP**

**Special member offer**

**YOUR CHANCE TO BAG A SIGNED COPY OF THE HEBRIDEAN BAKER AT HOME EXCLUSIVE MEMBER PRICE £21 (RRP £26)**

Friend of the SWI, Coinneach Macleod, has just released his brand-new collection of recipes and stories, *The Hebridean Baker At Home*, and it's a must-have!

The international bestselling author shares stories and adventures alongside his best selection of recipes yet. You'll be whisked away to his island home where he brings delightful savoury dishes and Scottish favourites to fill your kitchen with Hebridean Hygge. Full of songs, stories, and beautiful photography, you'll be inspired to get in the kitchen or book your next visit to the Hebrides!

As Coinneach so enjoyed being part of our recent Women In Scotland event, he has offered to sign 100 copies of the new collection just for SWI members.

These books are at a great special member rate of just £21, saving £5 on the high street price.

It's a fabulous Christmas present to friends and family – or even a wee treat for yourself!

Get your copy at <https://bitly.ws/WPvZ>

-----

**Page 22**

**SWI National Conference special**

**"The relaxed friendliness of the event was great!"**

Women In Scotland – SWI National Conference & Exhibition was a new-look event which showcased everything the SWI holds dear.

Fabulous speakers highlighted strategic themes during the two-day event which took place from September 15th-16th at Perth Concert Hall. Friendship, lifelong learning, preserving our heritage and crafts all on the menu.

For the first time, members were involved in hosting panel sessions with speakers, to great effect. This is just another string for our facilitators Anne Howat, Linda Retson, and Susie Finlayson to add to their bow!

Global celebrities and stars of some of our best-loved programmes such as Great British Bake Off and The Great British Sewing Bee were all part of the exciting programme, too, with members enjoying their stories, tips and enthusiasm.

A Civic Reception, hosted by Perth & Kinross Provost Xander McDade, and Family Evening Market were new additions, too, offering non-members the chance to get a taste of the SWI while viewing exhibitions from Federations from across Scotland, and members' competition entries.

Evening guests were also treated to demonstrations by Perth & Kinross Junior Dippers and Elaine Lindsay of Something Corny, plus a pre-loved clothes shop which raised money to support the SWI's charitable aims.

What a blast – enjoy the pics in this special report and we'll see you at the next one!

### **"Gillian was an inspired highlight!"**

SWI member Gillian Paterson's day job is as a storyteller performer for National Museums Scotland, so who better to bring the SWI's heritage to life? Gillian read the documents detailing the set-up of the organisation in 1917 and did an incredible job of linking the past to present issues. In short 5-minute vignettes, her insight and humour had delegates laughing and loving her stories. Great work, Gillian!

### **Page 24**

#### **"The speakers were excellent!"**

Key themes were explored throughout the event, all intended to inspire, educate and delight delegates.

Global inspirational speaker, Mike Stevenson, opened proceedings with rousing talk on friendship, urging members to be the change they want to see for the organisation.

The following day Adele Patrick, co-founder of Glasgow Women's Library, shared her passion for ensuring women's voices are heard and gave alarming insight into how women were perceived in the period around the SWI's set-up in 1917 (see below).

The expert panels were a huge success, with themes of pursuing passions and sharing skills at their core.

The first, an inspirational panel session on pursuing passions no matter what age you are, was facilitated by Linda Retson, Past President of the SWI. Mary Lewis, Endangered Crafts Manager at Heritage Crafts, Elaine Lindsay of Something Corny and Dr Isabella Moore CBE, who founded The Olderpreneurs Alliance,



were asked to give their advice on saving crafts for future generations, and making income, too. Anne Howat, Convenor of the new Skills & Events committee, ably hosted a session on Sharing Skills with our celebrity guests Jen Hogg of The Great British Sewing Bee and Helen Vass from Great British Bake Off: Creme de la Creme.

The ladies gave a great account of what life on TV is like – and how they continue to be passionate about sewing and pastry!

And The Hebridean Baker? Well, everyone raved about him, too – see the next story!

## **Page 26**

### **"Wow – what about The Hebridean Baker?!!"**

As soon as Coinneach Macleod, The Hebridean Baker, walked on stage, it was clear that he and SWI Board Trustee Susie Finlayson were going to get along! A big bear hug was the order of the day before the global cookery sensation settled down to be interviewed by Susie.

Coinneach, of course, was a dream to interview and the pair discussed his life in the Hebrides, his family tall tales (or were they?!), his Westie Seoras being more famous than him, and his success at the Royal National Mòd.

With a new book, The Hebridean Baker At Home, out this month, talk turned to the stories, recipes and inspirations it contains. He wants to revive the fern cake and threw down a gauntlet to delegates to help bring it back to centre stage in Scottish baking.

Susie's masterful interviewing technique belied the fact it wasn't something she did every day – she was clearly having a ball – and threw it open to the delegates to ask questions, too. Of course, the highlight of the interview was when Coinneach invited his partner Peter on stage to sing some of the fabulous songs which won them Gold at previous Mòds – you can hear their beautiful voices at the link below.

After a great conversation, spectacular singing and some “cheeky” questions and answers (“Can I have a hug?” “You’re in luck – they’re half price today!”), members were delighted to meet Coinneach while he signed copies of *The Hebridean Baker At Home*.

What a star – and well done Susie!

See Coinneach and Peter sing at <https://bitly.ws/WPxN>

## Page 30

### **“It was great to hear about what's going on”**

To ensure a thriving and sustainable future for the SWI, the Board of Trustees developed new strategic priorities which were agreed by members in 2022. These goals can be seen by clicking the link below.

A special session, hosted by Julie Hutchison, of SWI’s investment managers LGT Wealth Management, featured National President, Mary Burney, SWI’s CEO Diane Cooper, and Board Trustees May Tosh, Karen Johnson and Linda McTurk.

Diane provided updates on progress to date before Julie opened the panel discussion with the Board Trustees and offered delegates the chance to have any questions answered. Here are just some of the queries...

### **How much did Heriot Row sell for?**

The building raised £1.625 million and much of this income will be ringfenced to secure the development of a new Visitor Learning Centre.

### **Do new groups pay levies?**

Yes, the Board has decided that all new members pay on sign up rather than having a year’s grace as before.

### **When is there going to be a Vice President to support Mary?**

All Board Trustees agreed to act as Vice Presidents until further notice.

**How can SWI say it is helping endangered heritage crafts when it is minimising members’ opportunities to progress and refine such skills?**

The new Skills & Events committee is working on a refreshed programme of events which have a focus on keeping traditional skills alive (see *more than 35 events for 2024* at [www.theswi.org.uk/event-diary.html](http://www.theswi.org.uk/event-diary.html)).

## Page 32

### "I loved seeing members' work"

Perth Concert Hall's foyer was a superb showcase as Federations from around Scotland highlighted their region's most notable features and members' outstanding creations.

Entries for the Vaughan Nash community competition, and the Evelyn Baxter, Morgan Trophy and Warnock Trophy competitions were displayed, too – all much enjoyed by delegates.

### Thanks to our army of helpers!

Anne Kerr was a great chief steward, making sure everyone was happy. Our wonderful panel facilitators Anne Howat, Linda Retson, and Susie Finlayson showed just how varied life as an SWI member can be as they navigated public speaking and interviewing guests in front of a few hundred guests!

Thanks to Jennifer Brodie and Annette Torbet for being our microphone minxes, and Ann McGhee for keeping everyone to time! And we couldn't have done it without the National Conference committee – especially Rachel Bisset who manned the pop-up shop, and Nan, Jessie, Liz and Dorothy for the raffle! Well done all!

----

## Page 34

### OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE YEAR

#### An emotion-filled award ceremony

There was barely a dry eye in the house when the nominees for the brand-new Margaret Whiteford Trophy for Outstanding Member of the Year were announced.

This award 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.

The award is named after the late Margaret Whiteford. Margaret was a well-kent face as she worked at the SWI central office for around 15 years. She was passionate about the SWI and became a member of Ratho SWI.

To honour Margaret's love of the SWI her brothers, nieces, and nephews have gifted the Margaret Whiteford trophy to ensure that she is not forgotten.

Ten members from across Scotland were nominated and the National Conference committee had the tricky task of choosing three of these incredible ladies for the shortlist.

We are delighted to reveal the winner of the first Margaret Whiteford trophy is Maz Thorn, of Powmill SWI, Perth & Kinross.

Maz is an inspirational woman who has spent the past few years supporting fellow members. She has dedicated hours to getting members online and created simple user guides for Zoom and the Chromebook and iPads rolled out to members in 2022.

As one of SWI's Digital Champions Maz has truly embraced the transition to digital which was accelerated during the pandemic. She was nominated by eleven members – members she has helped get online, feel connected, and feel less isolated.

Thank you Maz, well done to Ruth and Lynne for being fabulous ambassadors for the SWI, and to all the nominees. We know these wonderful women all represent so many more members who are volunteering their time, skills, and enthusiasm in SWI communities across Scotland. Thank you all!

## **THE THREE SHORTLISTED MEMBERS**

**Ruth Williams, Orkney Federation**

Ruth has dedicated almost 30 years of her life to being Federation Treasurer for Orkney Federation – only standing down this year just before her 82nd birthday!

### **Maz Thorn, Perth & Kinross Federation**

Maz is one of SWI's Digital Champions and was nominated by many members for her dedication and skill in teaching women across Scotland how to get online and enjoy Zoom.

### **Lynne Davidson, Moray & Nairn Federation**

Lynne was nominated for her can-do attitude, superb organisational skills, and for being such a passionate ambassador of the SWI at both local Institute and Federation level.

---

## **Page 36**

### **OUR FABULOUS PRIZE WINNERS**

**What talent!**

#### **The Vaughan Nash community competition**

All Institutes and groups were invited to create five items on a Christmas theme and show as wide a range of crafts as possible.

Hawksland Institute in Lanarkshire Federation won the competition with Craigie Institute, Ayrshire Federation claiming second spot. Well done ladies!

1st Silver Medallions - Hawksland Institute, Lanarkshire

2nd Bronze Medallions - Craigie Institute, Ayrshire

3rd Blairingone Institute, Perth & Kinross

4th Fintry Turriff Institute, Aberdeenshire

= 5th Cleish Institute, Perth & Kinross

= 5th Menock Institute, Dumfriesshire

= 5th Whitebridge Institute, Peeblesshire

6th Wilton Dean Institute, Roxburghshire

**The Nancy MacMillan Trophy for the Most outstanding Exhibit outwith the winning team**

Sheila Steele, Fintry Turrif SWI, for her beautiful patchwork gift box.

### **President's Choice**

Elizabeth Wallace, Port William Institute, Wigtownshire, collected her award from National President Mary Burney. Mary chose Elizabeth's blackwork picture as her star of the display.

---

### **The Warnock Trophy competition**

The theme for this year's competition was "My childhood" and members were invited to write 500 words. *You can see all of the entries at <https://bitly.ws/WPzU>*

1st Alison Smellie, Ruskie SWI, SC&WP

2nd Isobel Mary McGuire, Ruskie SWI, SC&WP

3rd Diane Ryan, Eassie & Nevey SWI, Angus

Very Highly Commended Doreen Peace, Holm SWI, Orkney

Highly Commended Claire Totton, Monquhitter SWI, Aberdeenshire

Commended Margaret Wilson, Mennock SWI, Dumfriesshire

### **Alison Smellie of Ruskie SWI's winning story**

At 3.45pm on the school day the 'home bell' rang and everyone raced to get on the buses for the best seats, upstairs at the front where the windows could open.

Bus full we headed down to Greenock Esplanade and turned east where, keeping the River Clyde on our left we headed for home.

Passing Princes Pier we noticed the Paddle Steamer Waverley waiting to board passengers for an evening cruise to the Kyles of Bute.

Next came the Great Harbour and the James Watt Dock full of working boats. Tugs, puffers, the Pilot boat and the Torch which maintained the buoyage system on the River Clyde.

On up the road past the Kingston Shipyard where our bus was stopped to let 4000 men pour out the gates with their wages, some to go home, some to the pub!!

Next came the banana boats docked to discharge their cargo of small sweet yellow bananas from the Canaries and the sugar boats releasing their cargo of West Indian raw cane sugar directly into waiting lorries.

We got caught behind one of those lorries as it was taking its load to the Tate and Lyle sugar refinery and the sweet sticky contents blew in the windows of the bus and stuck to our hair, eyelashes, lips, and blazers but it was a lovely taste and smell. We wrinkled our noses for the next smell as we approached the turning for the glue factory. Fumes from the slaughtered animals which were brought here for processing into glue – not so nice as the sugar.

We then changed buses at the Inchinnan Bus depot and yet more smells, oil, diesel, cigarettes where all around but bleach, leather cleaner and chrome polish on a newly serviced bus encouraged us to get on board.

The newest of the dry docks came into view. The new QEII was fitted out here before has sea trials on the 'measured mile' just off Arran. At last, we entered Port Glasgow, my home town, past the replica of The Comet, the first commercial steamship in the world and built here.

---

### **Morgan Trophy competition**

Members were invited to share their best original recipe for hot or cold soup.

1st Margaret McIntyre, Sandhead SWI, Wigtownshire

2nd Mary Connolly, Harray SWI, Orkney

3rd Mary Hogg, Crosshill SWI, Ayrshire

4th Alison Morris, Cleish SWI, Perth & Kinross

See all recipes at <https://bitly.ws/WPAP>

---

## **Evelyn Baxter competition**

Christine Pokorniecki, Ferintosh SWI, Ross-shire & Sutherland scooped first prize.

**Well done, everyone!**

**Scottish Women's Institutes is a registered Scottish charity**

**Charity No SC011901 | VAT Reg No 270 1424 94**

**Registered address SWI, Suite 8, 1 Carmichael Place, Edinburgh EH6 5PH**