



## **Welcome to Issue 23 – 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](http://www.theswi.org.uk)**

Scottish Women's Institutes SCIO SC053058

## Progressing our Rural Roots

SWI's Board of Trustees met in Edinburgh last week to progress a unique partnership with The Crichton Trust. Trustees from both Boards met to plan the safeguarding our fabulous archive in a national visitor learning centre on the 85-acre Crichton Estate on the outskirts of Dumfries. You can read the full statement by going here: [rb.gy/s7wrr5](https://rb.gy/s7wrr5)

Establishing a visitor centre for SWI's heritage serves as a strategic move to safeguard our organisation's legacy, create a sustainable revenue stream, and provide current and future members with invaluable resource. By preserving our heritage and developing a legacy, we ensure that our contributions to rural Scotland are remembered, recognised and celebrated for years to come.

Through exhibitions and events offered at the centre, both members and visitors can enhance their skills and deepen their understanding of women in rural Scotland. Furthermore, the revenue generated from the centre directly supports SWI's activities, ensuring that members continue to receive events and opportunities. Overall, the establishment of a visitor centre not only safeguards our heritage but also enriches the experience of our members, positioning SWI for sustained growth and relevance in the future,

Our Heritage journey - Rural Roots Roadmap

This diagram describes the steps the SWI is taking - it shows where we are and where we are going, Go here to download your copy - [rb.gy/c1869o](https://rb.gy/c1869o)

### Want to get involved?

The next Heritage Group meeting takes place on Thursday 11th April. All members are welcome and you can book your place here [rb.gy/wt0cx5](https://rb.gy/wt0cx5)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Updated SWI Strategic Plan launched

Exciting news! We're thrilled to unveil the updated SWI Strategic Plan for 2024-26.

The original Strategic Plan in 2022 identified key priorities which were endorsed by SWI members through a Scotland-wide consultation and we're pleased to say that now we are in 2024 many significant outcomes supporting those key priorities have been made. These include:

- A membership drive which led to the first growth since the 1950s
- The sale of SWI offices at 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, and safe storage of SWI Heritage items
- A collaborative partnership with The Crichton Trust to establish a Visitor Learning Centre

Our focus remains on preserving the past while shaping the future and our updated key priorities are:

- Maintain organisational growth and development
- Prioritise members
- Achieve financial sustainability
- Protect and preserve SWI Heritage

By continuing to work together our enthusiastic, skilled, and knowledgeable members are paving the way to a sustainable future.

Please take some time and download the updated SWI Strategic Plan here [rb.gy/hak0r9](https://rb.gy/hak0r9)

### **Your questions answered**

Members are invited to a Q&A session with SWI Trustees on Monday May 26th. This will offer you a chance to find out the exciting steps we have taken so far, and what happens next to support the SWI Strategic Plan, and of course ask any questions you may have.

Book your place here [rb.gy/0ge6kh](https://rb.gy/0ge6kh)

If you would like further information please contact [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **SWI intern programme enters its second year**

#### **Welcome, Annie!**

We're delighted to welcome Annie Stallings to the team as a student intern ad the SWI collaboration with The University of Edinburgh is enters its second year.

The programme, which welcomes students to gain insights into our unique organisation, saw Erica Shuttera from Florida join us last year and we're happy to say that members helped her gain her Master's in Sociology and Global Change.

Now it's Annie's turn! Originally from California, she is in Scotland to study for a Master's degree in International Development and is delving into the SWI for her thesis. It aims to answer the question: How does studying the history of the Scottish Women's Institutes, including its artefacts, photos, documents, and interviews with members, help preserve their heritage and empower Scottish women moving forward?

Members will have the opportunity to meet Annie at forthcoming events and meetings over the next couple of months as she works to complete her research.

It's a big task and Annie will be kept busy, but in her free time she enjoys reading and exploring her new home in Edinburgh – if you would like to help her with her studies or have any tips on sightseeing, email [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk).

We look forward to seeing the outcome of her research!

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Hot off the press!**

We are delighted to announce this year's National Ruralympics Competition will be hosted by Angus Federation. We will release more details soon, so watch this space!

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Summer School – Update**

Wow! More than 100 members have already booked a place at this year's SWI Summer School – thank you all!

There's still time to join us for a long weekend of learning and friendship with like-minded women all in the picturesque rural setting at Strathallan School in Perthshire.

### **What's in store at SWI Summer School?**

We've carefully selected expert tutors to lead engaging 3-day workshops, offering diverse courses in arts and crafts. Choose a single course for the entire school duration, from heritage crafts like Willow Basketry and Shetland Lace Knitting to needlecraft courses such as Quilting, Sashiko, and Crochet. Or unleash your artistic flair with 3D Decoupage, Painting, Floral Art, and Beadwork.

Residential and non-residential options are available. You can stay at Strathallan School for four nights or come to classes on a daily basis – the choice is yours!

### **Accommodation and meals**

Residential pupils enjoy full bed and board from August 15th to 19th. Breakfast, lunches and dinners will be provided and all rooms are single-occupancy in a dormitory with shared common spaces. Shared bathroom facilities are available in each dorm.

Non-residential pupils will receive lunch on each class day.

### **About the location**

Nestled in 153 acres of rural Perthshire, Strathallan School is an award-winning boarding school with comfortable dorms, modern classrooms, and facilities. Residential participants have exclusive access to the school's grounds, tennis courts, and golf course throughout their stay. Summer School pupils can explore scenic walks around the campus for a relaxing experience.

### **What can I learn?**

#### **3-day Floral Art**

*Spaces available*

Your tutor is Jillian Page, of Something Special Flowers, a multi-award-winning florist who has achieved almost a full collection of medals at RHS Chelsea (Silver, Silver Gilt, and Gold). Her latest was Florist of the Year! During this 3-day floral art course you will make a cut-flower presentation bouquet, cut-flower hand-tie bouquet, hat-box arrangement, floral corsage & buttonhole, and a Pedestal arrangement!

#### **3-day Beadwork for Beginners & Improvers**

*Spaces available*

Your tutor, Mairi Carlton, is the Chair of Trustees for the Beadworkers Guild. This 3-day workshop concentrates on learning a variety of different Beadwork stitches including a variation of a Daisy stitch, Apache leaf chains, Peyote stitch, Ladder stitch, Right Angle weave, and spiral Herringbone. Participants will be taught how to make several different components which can either be made into one necklace or can be made into several smaller items that can be worn independently.

We will begin with basic techniques and move on to more advanced methods as we all get up to speed. We strive to create a friendly and relaxed learning environment, where every learner can work at their own pace.

### **3-day Improver's Crochet**

*Spaces available*

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. This course is aimed at participants who already know the basics of crochet (UK double and treble crochet). You will be taught how to read crochet patterns and charts through the process of making a pair of cosy wrist warmers/mitts. You will learn how to add colour, texture, and lace detail to your projects. Participants will be given great tips for getting a professional finish on your projects as well as how to block for the perfect shape. Everyone will be able to work at their own pace in a relaxed environment.

### **3-day Willow Basketry**

*Last few spaces available*

Making things by hand is Karen Collins' passion. The founder of Naturally Useful, a company based in Morayshire that grows willow and plant dyes for the wool, makes beautiful useful products from local natural materials. Transforming this raw material into beautiful useful products is Karen's inspiration and she will guide you to make a beautiful basket. This course will be split between Karen and one of her co-workers from Naturally useful.

### **3-day Shetland Lace Knitting**

*Last few spaces available*

Elizabeth Johnston is a handspinner, handknitter and handweaver. During this 3 day course you will not only knit a Hap in Shetland lace but you will also look at Hap construction and how it is worked in one piece. You will be shown how to include colour in the borders, and see examples to guide you in this process. Elizabeth will give you a history of these everyday essential garments, discuss how they were used, and who wore them.

### **3-day 3D Decoupage**

*Last few spaces available*

Nan Middleton BEM has been teaching 3d Decoupage for over 45 years. She taught Further Education classes in Bearsden and Milngavie and following several television appearances was offered the use of Milngavie Town Hall to bring all classes under one roof. Numbers grew under the name The Scottish School of 3d Decoupage. Three-dimensional decoupage is a relaxing therapeutic hobby suitable for all ages and abilities. Using multiple copies of the same paper image, participants learn the unique process of cutting, shaping, and gluing paper to bring an image to life.

### **3-day Painting on canvas**

*1 place remaining*

Sarah Spofforth-McOuat is a unique artist specialising in large-scale textual animal artwork, using materials such as fabric samples and plaster to add texture and character.

### **3-day Sashiko for Beginners**

*1 place remaining*

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 21,000 times. In this 3-day workshop you will explore the beautiful world of Japanese Sashiko embroidery, looking at the different groups of Sashiko patterns and how to create and stitch these patterns using Japanese Sashiko fabric and threads. At the end of this workshop not only will you have some new-found stitching skills and techniques, but you'll also have a small Sashiko sampler which you can finish into a wall hanging at home.

The following workshops are fully booked, but if you would like to be put on a waiting list, please email [\*\*hello@theswi.org.uk\*\*](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk).

- 3-day Willow Basket Making workshop by All About Willow
- 3-day Quilting for Improvers by Pat Archibald
- 3-day Shetland Lace Knitting by Elizabeth and Betsy Williamson

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

**Residential** - Costs include all your tuition, accommodation and meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner.

- SWI Members £500 or non-members £600

**Non-Residential** - Costs include all tuition and lunch each day

- SWI Members £400 or non-members £500

### **How do I book?**

Don't miss out on this opportunity to follow your passion!

To book your place, please go here [\*\*www.theswi.org.uk/summer-school-bookable/\*\*](http://www.theswi.org.uk/summer-school-bookable/) or you can telephone the office on 0131 225 1724 and pay by card over the phone. The deadline for bookings is Monday 20th May 2024, so be sure to spread the word and reserve your space soon!

### **Refund Policy**

Cancellations made one month or more in advance of the event date will receive a full refund. Cancellations made 3-4 weeks before the event will receive a 50% refund. Cancellations made 2 weeks before the event will not be refunded. Refunds will be sent to the card used at time of purchase.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Invitation to attend SWI Annual General Meeting**

*Online | Saturday, May 18th | 10.30am-12pm*

All members are warmly invited to register to attend the 2024 Scottish Women's Institutes Annual General Meeting.

The AGM will be online to enable as many SWI members as possible to attend.

This year's AGM will continue with the new format:

- Welcome
- President's report including 2024 Federations Report
- Winners of the Barbara Brookshire, Stoneycreek and Retson Family awards
- Annual Report and Accounts 2023
- Discussion panel with members

Book your place here [rb.gy/3vjkl](https://rb.gy/3vjkl)

We look forward to seeing you there!

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Wormit joins the SWI**

We are thrilled to announce the successful launch of new SWI women's group in Wormit. The event on March 17th was led by Jane Smith, President of the Fife Federation, and Catherine Williamson, Fife Federation Treasurer, it was a great success and couldn't have hoped for a better turnout.

Women were full of excitement and creativity as they got together and brainstormed everything from crafting workshops, expert speakers, wild swimming and gardening to local history. It was inspiring to see women of all ages and walks of life eager to contribute their talents and expertise towards building a vibrant and inclusive community.

Massive thanks to everyone who came out and made the day such a success. We're just getting started, and we can't wait to see where this journey takes us!

Please continue to suggest potential locations and talk to your Federation for ideas email: [\*\*membership@theswi.org.uk\*\*](mailto:membership@theswi.org.uk)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **New groups announced**

SWI is eagerly preparing to expand its reach by introducing two new women's groups in Falkirk and Newhaven. These upcoming SWI groups signify another significant step in our mission to unite women, foster friendships, and build vibrant communities across Scotland.

Both launches promise fantastic opportunities to connect with like-minded women, share experiences, and be part of something special right in your community. Whether you're a seasoned SWI member or completely new to the organisation, everyone is welcome, so spread the word and invite your friends and family to join us for these exciting events. Remember, the more, the merrier!

### **Falkirk SWI Women's Group**

**Where?** Eleven Lounge, Falkirk Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Grangemouth, Falkirk FK2 9EE

**When?** Sunday April 28th | 2-4PM

**How?** Book here [\*\*bit.ly/3PEIWA1\*\*](https://bit.ly/3PEIWA1)

## **Newhaven SWI Women's Group**

**Where?** Anchor West Room, The Heart of Newhaven Community, 4-6 Main Street, Newhaven, Edinburgh EH6 4HY

**When?** Sunday, May 26th, 2:30-4:30PM.

**How?** Book here [bit.ly/4cAHeIZ](https://bit.ly/4cAHeIZ)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **SWI Tour 2024: The Peak District | Update**

The SWI Tour to the Peak District this May is set to be a huge success thanks to members who snapped up tickets. All tickets are now sold but if you missed out on a chance to book and would like to be placed on a waiting list in the case of a last-minute cancellation, please email [charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk) with 'Study Tour waiting list' in the subject line.

Members will be based in the heart of Derby and the 3-night tour will take in Buxton and Bakewell. Members will be able to take in art, culture and gardens at the fabulous Chatsworth House stately home and enjoy the fabulous sights the Peak District has to offer at the Heights of Abraham.

An information pack with all necessary details will be sent out to travellers shortly.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Entries now open for the Scottish Handcraft Championship**

The Scottish Handcrafts Championship at the Royal Highland Show is a huge date in the SWI diary as members volunteer to judge, set up, steward and demonstrate throughout Show week.

If you would like to volunteer for this year's Show (20th-23rd June) please email [charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk) and we will get in touch to let you know what dates and time are available. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered so far!

Entries are, of course, now open for the Scottish Handcrafts Championship 2024. Details on how to enter can be found here [rb.gy/uycvyr](https://rb.gy/uycvyr), along with the competition schedule here [rb.gy/30x7zt](https://rb.gy/30x7zt). The deadline for entries is Monday 20th May, so get crafting!

Bookings are also now open to attend the Royal Highland Show as a spectator here [rb.gy/1k4ct0](https://rb.gy/1k4ct0)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Upcoming events**

### **SWI National Competitions: Stadium Bowling**

*In person | Saturday, April 13th | 10am | Garioch Indoor Bowling Club*

Federations are invited to send one or two teams to the national final.

Bookings closed. Spectators welcome.

## **SWI National Competitions: Variations on a Theme (online)**

*Online | Saturday, April 20th | 12pm*

Federations are invited to send one or two teams to the national final.

Booking can be made through Eventbrite.

**This competition entry fee is £40 per team and a spectator ticket is free. Book here: [rb.gy/tlc5pn](https://rb.gy/tlc5pn)**

## **Skill Health & Wellbeing session: 'Take some Breathing Space'**

*Online event | April 24th | 7pm-8pm*

During this webinar you will find out about their latest campaign 'You Matter, We Care – for better mental health in Scotland' and Lisa-Jane will talk about Scotland's free phone line and webchat services available throughout Scotland.

**This event is free for members and £5 for non-members. To book click here [rb.gy/t34ryl](https://rb.gy/t34ryl)**

## **Margaret Whiteford – Outstanding Member of the Year 2024**

*Competition | Deadline 26th July*

Make sure you don't overlook the opportunity to nominate that outstanding member who consistently goes the extra mile for everyone!

Take a moment to consider who is indispensable and consistently exceeds your expectations and contributes significantly to your Institute or Federation?

This year's recipient will follow in the footsteps of Maz Thorn (right) from Powmill SWI, who proudly received the trophy last year. You can hear from last year's nominees here [rb.gy/zpsokt](https://rb.gy/zpsokt)

It is as simple as filling out this form here [shorturl.at/sxHI9](https://shorturl.at/sxHI9) and sending it to [charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk) before the deadline of Friday 26th of July 2024.

All nominations are confidential. Both individual and group nominations are accepted!

## **SWI National Photography competition 2024**

*Competition | Deadline 4th November | Theme – Our Fragile World*

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

The competition prizes are:

**1st place – £25 voucher for SWI's online shop**

**2nd place – £15 voucher for SWI's online shop**

**3rd place – £10 voucher for SWI's online shop**

Please email your photographs as Jpegs to [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk) before the deadline of Monday the 4th of November 2024. Entries will be judged after the deadline and the winners will be announced by the end of November 2024.

Click here [shorturl.at/rtSY3](https://shorturl.at/rtSY3) to register and pay on Beacon – if you need a form emailed to you separately, please contact us to request one. Have fun and good luck!

### **SWI National Writing competition 2024**

*Competition | Deadline 30th September | Theme – If you know a good thing, pass it on*

Unlock the power of your pen in this year's writing competition. We invite participants to explore the theme of 'If you know a good thing, pass it on' by submitting your captivating written pieces in the form of an inspirational letter.

The competition prizes are:

**1st place – £25 voucher for SWI's online shop**

**2nd place – £15 voucher for SWI's online shop**

**3rd place – £10 voucher for SWI's online shop**

Please email your inspirational letter on a Word document to [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk) before the deadline of Monday the 30th of September, 2024. Entries will be judged after the deadline and the winners will be announced by the end of October 2024.

Click here [shorturl.at/ozLPR](https://shorturl.at/ozLPR) to register and pay on Beacon – if you need a form emailed to you separately, please contact us to request one. Have fun and good luck!

### **SWI Evelyn Baxter Competition**

*Competition | Deadline tbc. | Subject – Temari Balls*

Did you attend an Evelyn Baxter Federation class in 2023 to learn more about the art of Temari Balls and want to showcase your skills? Well now is your chance by entering this year's Evelyn Baxter competition!

Only attendees of the Evelyn Baxter Federation Schools are eligible to join. More information about the entry requirements and deadlines will be released soon so keep an eye out! Will you be the next recipient of the Evelyn Baxter Trophy?

\*\*\*\*\*

### **SWI Code of Conduct**

Due to the rise of members using social media to share their SWI stories and experiences, please be aware of the SWI Code of Conduct. You can find this here [rb.gy/swtpwp](https://rb.gy/swtpwp)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **A huge thank you!**

Thank you to all members who...

- Gave feedback on the draft constitution
- Have joined the Heritage Project Group
- Demonstrate their ongoing commitment in National Committees
- Volunteered for partnership events at Creative Crafts Show and the Royal Highland Show
- Attend monthly peer group meetings
- Have supported SWI Summer School and SWI Tour 2024

Your insight, advice, and support is key to providing a sustainable future for the SWI.

## **Don't miss your member benefits**

### **SWI Member Insurance**

- Please note, that 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 (adult or children) is branded as a SWI event and it is recommended to confirm that any event venue you use, has public liability insurance.

### **Do you want to access SWI events?**

- Keep up-to-date with the exciting range of in-person and online events here: **bit.ly/3KiCrPd**
- Federation Secretaries will find a new hub for information and how to book National Competitions here: **bit.ly/3KAB2ou**

### **Do you want to receive this 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!

### **Do you want to join us on Facebook?**

- Our Facebook page - 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: **bit.ly/3u7BDoM**
- **Our Facebook group** - This is where members share pics, recipes, news and more. Join the group here: **bit.ly/3u4tCAM**

### **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?**

Check in at **www.theswi.org.uk** for updates!

***Thank you!***