



## **Welcome to Issue 26 - 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

## 2024 Membership Drive Campaign Toolkit

We all know the SWI holds a special place at the heart of Scotland's communities, so let's shout about it!

As many groups and Institutes get back together this September we have created a membership drive campaign to help you promote your activities in your local area and 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! We will evaluate the campaign in March 2025 and use learnings for the next membership drive.

How to use the tools

The SWI Members' Toolkit has simple steps to follow, so the tried and tested instructions will explain everything and make you a marketing whizz in no time!

You'll find the SWI Members' Toolkit and all of the downloadable files here [rb.gy/v5wuie](https://rb.gy/v5wuie)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Volunteering opportunities at The Creative Craft Show, Glasgow**

This October, 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 can do at the SWI.

We are excited to invite members to volunteer from October 24th–27th in Glasgow. Whether you're available for a morning or afternoon slot, your help would be invaluable. Volunteers will receive a free pass for the day.

Additionally, we are looking for enthusiastic crafters to lead our popular Make & Take sessions. These sessions run daily from 11am–noon and 1pm–2pm. Make & Take volunteers will enjoy a free ticket to the show and will be reimbursed for the materials used in their sessions.

At the March show we shared skills in Pyrography, Sanquhar Knitting and Crochet – which craft could you share?

If you're passionate about crafts and want to share your skills, we'd love you to join us. Please email [charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk) to volunteer.

Find out more about the show here – [www.creativecraftshow.co.uk/](http://www.creativecraftshow.co.uk/)

## **Book now for the Federation & Institute Office Bearers' Gathering 2024**

In light of the projected Institute closures reported in the 2023 Federation Annual Reports, we are reaching out to offer our support and explore potential collaborative efforts to safeguard our Institutes.

Although we face many challenges, such as an ageing membership and difficulties in filling Office Bearer roles, we continue to establish new Institutes. However, the projected decline far exceeds the level of growth.

We understand that the closure of Institutes not only diminishes the SWI but also impacts the lives of the ladies involved. Therefore, we are keen to discuss how we can work together to develop and implement strategies to prevent these closures and ensure our Institutes continue to thrive.

The Board would like to invite you to an in-person event to collectively shape ideas and take plans forward. Spaces are limited to 100 members so book your space while you can!

If you are unable to attend in-person, we welcome Office Bearers to join in online. Please register on Eventbrite by clicking the 'online' option and you will be sent a meeting link closer to the time. We are eager to discuss possibilities and hear any ideas you may have on how we can best support your membership efforts within your Federation areas. We believe that through collaboration we can make a significant difference and help secure sustained membership for the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to the opportunity to work together.

All office bearers welcome - book your place here - [\*\*rb.gy/67u0ko\*\*](https://rb.gy/67u0ko)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Membership numbers steady so far**

A quarter of Federations have now submitted their annual fees to SWI office and we're pleased to report that membership numbers are looking steady so far.

New Institutes across the country are establishing themselves, and existing Institutes have gained a few new members and some lost a few. We are closely monitoring the numbers and will keep you regularly updated.

This September, all Federation and Institute Office Bearers have the opportunity to meet in-person in Edinburgh and online to discuss Institute closures and how to prevent them, and a strategic approach based on members' ideas will be created as a result. Please book your place here [\*\*rb.gy/67u0ko\*\*](https://rb.gy/67u0ko), if you can't attend, send someone in your place. In the meantime, SWI's Membership Drive 2024 will provide all members with the tools to spread the word about the benefits of the SWI, so all members are encouraged to get behind the recruitment campaign.

Steady numbers will enable us all to build on our recent successes, encourage membership growth nationally and locally, and further develop a strong sustainable SWI for the future. Thank you to all members who work so hard to encourage women in their communities to join and enjoy the SWI.

Thanks also to the Federations who have submitted fees so far, and we look forward to receiving the remaining Federations' fees before the deadline in November.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Order your 2025 SWI 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!

Find it on the SWI Shop here - **[shop.theswi.org.uk](https://shop.theswi.org.uk)**

The SWI 2025 Diary will be in store later this month, so keep an eye on the SWI Shop to avoid missing out!

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Outstanding Member of the Year**

Well done to all members nominated for this year's Outstanding Member of the Year! Judges now have the difficult job of deciding who will win the coveted title, but it's safe to say that all ten nominees are stars in their own right!

The nominees for 2024 are:

- Allison Bisset, Resolis SWI
- Janette Cousar, Craigie SWI
- Rosemary Duncan, King Edward
- Susie Finlayson, Wilton Dean SWI
- Christine Kyle, Uplawmoor SWI
- Margaret Leiper, Elsrickle SWI
- Helen Love, Cumbernauld SWI
- May MacCormick, Mennock SWI
- Pat Macleod, Dingwall SWI
- Joyce MacRae, Craigrothie SWI
- 

Maz Thorn of Powmill SWI was last year's inaugural winner of the award which celebrates members who go above and beyond for fellow members in the SWI. You can hear from last year's winner and runner's up here - **[rb.gy/dqxakz](https://rb.gy/dqxakz)**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **We're on Instagram!**

As we continue to promote the SWI to all women in Scotland, we have an increased focus on Instagram audiences to reach potential new members.

You may have seen our recent activity on Instagram (@scottishwomensinstitutes) At the moment, we're just introducing what the SWI is and does, and encourages women to discover how our vibrant SWI community is learning new skills, making friends, and having fun together.

Since relaunching our Instagram, we have gained 50 new followers in the first three days, helping to spread the word about the SWI to potential new members!

If you don't have Instagram, don't worry! We will still be using our usual ways to let you know about news and events, so you definitely won't be missing out.

By sharing our posts on Facebook, Instagram, or X, you can help us reach so many more potential members, so please share whenever SWI pops up on your feed!

#IfYouKnowAGoodThingPassItOn

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Evelyn Baxter competition winners**

SWI's flagship educational programme, the Evelyn Baxter Scholarship and Competition never disappoints. The programme, named after Miss Baxter, a forward-thinking member who was passionate about sharing skills in the 1950s, sees two SWI members chosen as scholars each year. The scholars are then trained in a skill which they pass on to members around the country. That's the real ethos of what the SWI was created to do - "If you know a good thing, pass it on".

This year, Kirsty Robb of Roxburghshire Federation and Kay Smith of Perth & Kinross Federation toured the country teaching members the art of temari balls. The balls are a traditional Japanese gift to children and young women and are made using intricate thread patterns.

As the latest Evelyn Baxter programme draws to a close, we are delighted to present the beautiful and intricate temari balls created by our talented participants in this year's SWI Evelyn Baxter Competition. Each entry is a testament to the artistry and skill of our community.

All entries will be displayed at next month's Summer School, and online - [rb.gy/9src74](https://rb.gy/9src74)

The winners

1. Maybelle Coltart, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright Federation
2. Ella Purves, Berwickshire Federation
3. Mary Finlay, SC&WP Federation

Well done everyone!

\*\*\*\*\*

## Could you be an Evelyn Baxter Scholar?

### Would you like to become an Evelyn Baxter SWI Scholar for 2025?

Previous scholars have described their year of dotting around Scotland as "wonderful", "a privilege", and "so much fun", so if you would like to become one of SWI's two scholars touring Scotland to teach fellow members throughout 2025 apply now. This special scholarship programme celebrates Evelyn Baxter (1879-1959) who was an active SWI member with a passion for sharing skills and promoting learning, values the SWI still holds dear.

### What's the subject for 2025?

The SWI's Skills & Events committee has chosen the art of macramé as this year's craft, and scholars will be taught by Becky Cargill of Bonnie Wee Dreams. Becky has trained many people how to create beautiful pieces of macramé and sells her own designs through her small business.

### What does a scholar do?

Successful applicants will be trained in how to teach members the basics of macramé in preparation for leading the 2025 programme of Evelyn Baxter classes at Federation level. Scholars then become the public face of the Evelyn Baxter Scholarship Programme for the year. They will liaise with the office to create a diary of classes around the country to teach members new skills and techniques in the art of macramé.

### What's involved?

The two-day training programme in the SWI office in Edinburgh involves:

Day 1: Becky Cargill will spend the whole day teaching the two successful scholars on how to design and deliver a macramé training class.

Day 2: Under the guidance of Becky Cargill, the scholars will then test out their new teaching skills with a group of 6 members who are interested in learning macramé. If you would like to be one of these 6 students you can book a place for £30 per person (this includes your tuition and lunch). To express your interest, please email: [hello@theswi.org.uk](mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk) Please note, we are limited to 6 places.

### Application process:

**9th September:** Deadline for Evelyn Baxter Scholarship Applications.

**16th September:** Applicant interviews. These will be conducted via Zoom.

**23rd September:** Two applicants will be chosen as the SWI scholars for 2025.

**14th-15th October:** Successful applicants will be trained in how to teach members the art of macramé. This training will be held at SWI office in Edinburgh.

**October 2024:** Scholars announced.

**October-December 2024:** Scholars liaise with office and Federations to set up a series of up to 12 classes for members across Scotland. These classes are usually for groups of up to 15 members. All scholar expenses are paid for by Federations.

**December 2024:** The scholar's calendar of classes will be finalised by the end of 2024.

### What skills do I need to apply?

Skill sharing is at the heart of everything the SWI stands for, so its reputation relies on high-quality teaching from our scholars. The best scholars help members achieve their potential and require the following...

- Good communication skills including confident public speaking and active listening
- Advanced knowledge of macramé
- The ability to break down complex topics and make them more accessible
- Organisational skills
- Creative thinking

Do you have what it takes? We would love to hear from you! Apply [here](#) and please contact [beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk](mailto:beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk) if you require any further information.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Members begin archiving project**

Many thanks to all members who recently volunteered to help catalogue items in the national SWI collection which are now being stored at The Ballast Trust, Johnstone. Each week in August will see the archive being worked on to create a collection ready for a new home at The Crichton Estate in Dumfries if we are successful in funding the project.

A recent application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was rejected but after a rejig and subsequent positive funder feedback it will be re-submitted this month.

The SWI Heritage Group, chaired by SWI Trustee Susie Finlayson with Vice Chairs Heather Coutts and Phyllis Hannah remind you that there will be lots of opportunity to get involved with the collection and preservation of SWI heritage, so members are encouraged to join the SWI Heritage Group. The Group meets online on the last Thursday of each month, so please book your place here [rb.gy/hnvkzc](https://rb.gy/hnvkzc) if you would like to participate.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Scottish Borders Archive offers training**

It's all smiles for Susie Finlayson, Chair of the SWI Heritage Group, with Paul Brough, Archive Manager at The Scottish Borders Archive in Hawick.

Susie has teamed up with Paul to secure free training for all members involved in the national SWI Heritage Project. This is a major coup as it will enable members to learn how to archive and digitise our current collection, and collect oral histories to add to it.

Susie, who is also President of the Roxburghshire Federation, said: "Over the last few months members from Roxburghshire Federation have been trawling through many years of SWI records. Attics have been scoured, cupboards have been emptied and decades worth of minute books, financial records and photos have been uncovered. The Scottish Borders Archive based in Hawick is already home to over 800 years of local history but they have welcomed these donations from the SWI with open arms as very little of their current collection is about the lives of women.

We are delighted to work with them on the national archiving project."

Thank you Susie, and well done!

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Federations' archiving opportunity**

As you know, the national SWI Heritage Project is protecting the story of the SWI's contribution to life in Scotland as a whole. However, we know there are some fabulous Federation archives, too. To continue to support members with making the most of these we have teamed up with the Scottish Council on Archives' Community Stories, Community Archives project.

This will provide four Federations free training (on a first-come, first-served basis), covering:

- preserving your archives
- digitising documents and photographs
- collecting members' oral histories.

The project's overall aim is to support the development and accessibility of community archives in Scotland.

Training will commence in October/November 2024. Through online and offline workshops and one-to-one training with professional archivists, the project will help you enrich and improve your archive and raise your profile and accessibility through the Scottish Archives.

The project team will also provide diversity and inclusivity training to help you be as representative as possible to wider communities. A key element of the project will be the facility to upload catalogues to a new portal being developed by SCA called Your Scottish Archives.

If you would like your Federation to be included in the Community Stories - Community Archives project please email [beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk](mailto:beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk). The first four Federations will be automatically accepted and the Community Stories - Community Archives project team will let us know if there are more opportunities for further Federations to take part.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Wishing SWI Summer School students a swell time!**

This month sees 120 attendees, expert tutors and staff walk through the doors of the first SWI Summer School since 2019. This year's long-awaited event will provide a total of ten courses in eight subjects in the stunning surroundings of Strathallan School, Perthshire.

This year's courses

- Willow basketry
- Shetland lace knitting
- Painting
- Improvers' crochet
- Beadwork for beginners and improvers
- 3D Decoupage for beginners and improvers
- Sashiko for beginners
- Quilting for beginners and improvers

The Skills & Events committee is currently making plans for the next SWI Summer School and we welcome suggestions for courses you would like to see, and tutors you have come across and enjoyed. Please email [charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk) with any recommendations.

## **Upcoming online events**

### **FREE SWI Health & Wellbeing: Farm & Croft Wellbeing**

Wednesday 15th Sept | 7pm

Join our pal Jean Miller as she shares the skills and techniques learned from her mum, Stella, and Granny Geddes, along with her own updated tips. Jean will guide 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, ensuring you understand the all-important setting points. Book [here](https://rb.gy/b0orbk) **rb.gy/b0orbk**

### **FREE SWI Heritage Group Monthly Meeting**

Thursday 22nd Aug | 6pm

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 extend a welcome to any member interested in this project, whether they have a specific story to share or simply want to stay informed and join the group. Book [here](https://rb.gy/fcu3ye) - **rb.gy/fcu3ye**

## **Competitions**

### **SWI National Competition: Writing 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 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 30th of September. Entries will be judged after the deadline and the winners will be announced by the end of October 2024.

Register and pay online here [rb.gy/gd8fnj](https://rb.gy/gd8fnj), alternatively please contact us to request a form by email. Have fun and good luck!

# SWI National Competition: Photography 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 4th November 2024. Entries will be judged after the deadline and the winners will be announced by the end of November 2024.

Register and pay online here [rb.gy/u0b7f2](https://rb.gy/u0b7f2), alternatively please contact us to request a form by email. Have fun and good luck!

\*\*\*\*\*

## And finally....

This year, the SWI proudly supports the Mountain School for the Deaf in Malawi as our charity of the year. Nestled in the heart of Malawi, this incredible institution provides essential education and support to children, fostering a nurturing environment where they can thrive and reach their full potential. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of these wonderful children. Let's come together as a community and support the Mountain School for the Deaf in Malawi, ensuring they have the resources they need to succeed.

\*\*\*\*\*

You can use our complaints procedure to ensure that you receive an appropriate and timely response to any feedback, comment, or complaint you may have here:

[rb.gy/ek4d2a](https://rb.gy/ek4d2a)

## 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](https://bit.ly/3KiCrPd)

- Federation Secretaries will find a new hub for information and how to book National Competitions here: [bit.ly/3KAB2ou](https://bit.ly/3KAB2ou)

#### **Do you want to receive this newsletter?**

- Click here: [bit.ly/3ENy7EC](https://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](https://bit.ly/3u7BDoM)
- **Our Facebook group** - This is where members share pics, recipes, news and more. Join the group here: [bit.ly/3u4tCAM](https://bit.ly/3u4tCAM)

#### **Do you want to receive event alerts?**

Subscribe to SWI's Eventbrite page here: [bit.ly/3VhO652](https://bit.ly/3VhO652) and never miss a thing.

#### **Do you want general news?**

Check in at [www.theswi.org.uk](http://www.theswi.org.uk) for updates!

***Thank you!***