



Welcome to Issue 27 - Members' news

This is a print-friendly version of the Scottish Women's Institutes monthly member newsletter.

Scottish Women's Institutes was established in 1917 and is an inclusive and inspirational membership-based organisation. We are here to build an inclusive community, to have fun and form friendships, to campaign, to learn, to share and to socialise. We provide a platform for social activities and networking, and champion women's issues.

Find out more about us at **www.theswi.org.uk**

Scottish Women's Institutes SCIO SC053058

Welcome to your September newsletter and a big 'hello' to any new members joining our groups and Institutes around the country. As we all start back after a slightly soggy summer with its exciting shows, great events and even some Royal interest, we hope this year is even bigger and better than the last!

Don't miss our special events – over the next few months we'll be joined by The Hebridean Baker who'll be interviewed by Masterchef 2024's Sarah Rankin, and The Repair Shop's Teddy Bear Ladies will be dropping by for a chat, too – get your tickets before they're gone!

Special online events announced

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

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

These events are all FREE for members, £5 for non-members – what a great membership benefit!

Not going to be in? Don't worry, all events will be available on our YouTube channel [Scottish Women's Institutes TV](#) for catch-up shortly afterwards

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Meet Andrew Crummy MBE

Andrew is the artist behind many major Scottish artworks – The Great Tapestry of Scotland, The Cancer Tapestry, The Scottish Diaspora Tapestry and the latest, The Dundee Tapestry, all detailing Scottish life and history. Join us for a chat with Andrew about his work, what inspires him, and how he achieves the delicate balance between creating an immense artwork with a unified style and giving freedom to individual stitchers to make their own contributions. He's an inspiring man! Book here: rb.gy/93v19x

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The Hebridean Baker returns!

Celebrity chef Coinneach Macleod is usually found travelling the world promoting wonderful Scottish baking and cooking, but on November 18th he'll be chatting to you!

The Lewis-based international bestseller will be interviewed by Masterchef 2024 finalist Sarah Rankin, herself a cookery book writer, and the pair will be giving advice on Christmas food and different twists on classics. This is sure to be a popular get-together, so get your tickets early! Book here: rb.gy/k085og

Our speakers

Coinneach Macleod

TikTok sensation Coinneach has more than 20 million followers worldwide and his latest book *The Hebridean Baker: The Scottish Cookbook* is out in October. This is his fourth book and it's brimming with tales of island life and encounters with pioneering women.

Sarah Rankin

Sarah Rankin is a MasterChef finalist, food writer and lover of Scottish flavours and produce. You may have heard her on Radio Scotland or bumped into her at the annual Golden Spurtle World Porridge Championships which she hosts. Her new book *Kith* is out now.

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Meet The Teddy Bear Ladies!

Julie Tatchell and Amanda Middleditch will share their unique spin on the world of soft toys and related history. The pair are best-known as The Teddy Bear Ladies from BBC1's *The Repair Shop*'s and they're passionate about preserving old and dying crafting traditions. Before they joined the repair team in the BBC barn they ran a business restoring soft toys from their shop in a beautiful little village. The shop's logo featured Julie's sketch of an adorable bear, which Amanda made into a teddy known as Bartie Bristle. Julie and Amanda began writing short stories all about Bartie Bristle and the other favourite toys for the children that came to their shop, with Julie reimagined as Mrs T and Amanda as Rose. Join us as we hear about their passion for their furry friends...

This event will be in December but an exact date is to be decided. Please click the link below and subscribe to our Eventbrite channel to be notified when tickets become available – you'll get an email to let you know! rb.gy/8t72y3

A summer of successes

King Charles supports the SWI

The RHS Flower Show's 200th anniversary at the Duthie Park in Aberdeen was a memorable day for SWI member Gillian Hadden. As President of Granite City SWI, Gillian had the honour of meeting the patron of the show, HRH King Charles, as he toured the exhibits.

"He chatted to me about our entries and how important it was to keep encouraging new people into our organisations," says Gillian. "He was very interested in hearing all about SWI and our future plans."

Apparently Gillian hasn't stopped smiling since her Royal encounter!

We wonder if King Charles had a chance to taste the no-bake Turkish delight traybake made by Granite City SWI's very own Linda Morris. It won the cup for Best in Show!

Summer School 2024: a great return

Last month attendees, expert tutors and staff walked through the doors of the first SWI Summer School since 2019 in the stunning surroundings of Strathallan School, Perthshire. The event saw 120 women learn new skills and what great feedback we got!

95% would recommend to a friend
96% would attend again
88% thought it was value for money

Attendees rated the 4-day event 4.9 / 5 for enjoyment and 5 / 5 for quality of teaching - well done to our fantastic tutors!

Here's what the students said...

- "I had a great time and met lovely people."
- "It was lovely to get time away to craft with like-minded folks."
- "This was my first Summer School but hopefully not my last! Made lots of new friends!"
- "It was a delight."
- "My tutors were absolutely brilliant."
- "Can't wait for next year!"

Plans are already underway for next year's SWI Summer School – maybe we'll see you there?

Members lead the SWI into the future

The SWI is a member-led organisation with a Board of Trustees making decisions on behalf of thousands of women around the country. The ten Trustees – all volunteers – meet at least four times a year and decide on strategic goals and major issues, however after losing much-loved Joan Hutchison of Shetland Federation earlier this year, a new Trustee had to be found.

Meet Clare Greig of Dunbartonshire Federation who is no stranger to life in this wonderful organisation. One of Clare's first tasks was helping to sign off the new SWI constitution which was essential as the organisation has changed its charitable status to become a SCIO. This helps to protect SWI Trustees and allows us to access major funding to ensure that future generations of Scotland's women can be inspired by and enjoy lifelong learning and friendships.

Please join us in welcoming Clare to this important role and also Catherine Williamson and Liz Hay to their new roles on the SWI Finance Committee. Their skills will be hugely valued.

We are proud to be both member-led and women-led!

**Make a date: Office Bearers' Gathering
September 23rd | P's and G's Church, Edinburgh and online**

We're delighted that more than 140 Office Bearers have signed up to our event on September 23rd to discuss what we can all do to promote the benefits of the SWI in communities across Scotland, prevent Institute closures and ensure that the SWI is fit for the future.

The event, open to all Institute and Federation Office Bearers, will explore what support is needed and what we can do to safeguard our Institutes, so if you haven't signed up yet please do so now.

Make sure your Institute is represented – all Office Bearers are invited and can nominate someone if they can't make it themselves.

This will be a special hybrid event, so we welcome all Office Bearers to join online if they can't attend in person. If you can make it to Edinburgh you'll have a wonderful day meeting old and new friends in a beautiful location (a light lunch will be provided too).

This will be a great opportunity to get our heads together and map out a plan of action for the future! We believe that through collaboration we can make a significant difference and we look forward to collectively shaping ideas and taking plans forward.

rb.gy/67u0ko

Scottish Handcrafts Championship schedule out now

Since the millennium, SWI members have run the Royal Highland Show's Scottish Handcraft Championships. They devise the list of classes, steward the event and judge entries from all over the world.

The confirmed list of classes for 2025, on the theme Life is a celebration, has just been released and can be viewed here - **rb.gy/lcsf02**

SWI Shop

SWI 2025 calendar

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

Mouthwatering baking recipes from Aberdeenshire Federation's Centenary Cookbook will give you inspiration every month. Grab one for yourself, and treat your friends and family too! Buy here: **rb.gy/88c4n8**

2025 SWI diary

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

The diary features: Week per page, Plenty of room for notes, Handbag-sized and On-trend colour. Buy here: **rb.gy/ul458r**

Groups share new Junior Dippers fund

Thanks to the WH Mann Foundation, a major national funder, Junior Dippers groups across the country are sharing £1,500 to help expand the work of their existing groups and establish new groups.

The SWI Junior Dippers groups are an important part of the SWI as they are the epitome of our founder’s original motto – If you know a good thing, pass it on. The groups are run by skilled member volunteers and provide intergenerational learning in the following Federations:

- Aberdeenshire
- Angus
- Dunbartonshire
- Perth & Kinross
- Ross-shire and Sutherland
- West Lothian

If you would like to set up an SWI Junior Dippers group in your region, email us at hello@theswi.org.uk. Many thanks to the WH Mann Foundation for funding this important work.

Could you be an Evelyn Baxter scholar?

Each year, two members are selected to be trained as experts in a craft before touring the country teaching others the skills they learned. This year's craft is macramé. Successful applicants will be trained to teach members and become the public face of the Evelyn Baxter Scholarship Programme for the year teaching classes at Federation level. Apply here: rb.gy/szty9g

Calling all Federations!

We have teamed up with the Scottish Council on Archives’ Community Stories, Community Archives project to offer Federations support with their own archives. From October / November

they will provide free training on:

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

If you are interested, email us at hello@theswi.org.uk

Creative Craft Show

Each year members help to ‘woman’ the stand at The Creative Craft Show, helping show-goers learn more about the SWI. All helpers get a free ticket and have plenty of spare time to gad around the Show. For the event on 24-27 October at Glasgow’s SECC we are looking for one helper on the following days: Thursday 24th, Friday 25th, Saturday 26th.

Email hello@theswi.org.uk to register your interest.

Congratulations, bowlers!

When the National Outdoor Bowling competition took place in Helensburgh last month Dumfriesshire 1 rose to the challenge, beating off eleven teams from around Scotland to secure the trophy. Lanarkshire 1 were runners up and hosts Dunbartonshire Federation SWI put on a great day for competitors and spectators alike – well done to everyone for a fabulous day!

Join us at the Creative Craft Show

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 do at the SWI.

SWI members will be leading our popular Make & Take sessions daily from 11am-noon and 1pm-2pm. Come and join in the fun – use our member discount code CRAFTSTITCH to get 30% off entry.

Thursday Brenda MacLeod will be making felted brooches.

Friday Margaret Crawford will lead classes in fabric mini landscapes (postcard size).

Saturday Maz Thorn will create fabric craft ornaments.

Sunday Pam Goodwin will make macramé bookmarks.

Find out more about the show here - www.creativecraftshow.co.uk/

Chutneys & jellies

SWI Skill Share | Weds 25th September

FREE FOR MEMBERS | £5 NON-MEMBERS

Join Jean Miller as she guides you through the step-by-step process of making your own chutney and bramble jelly. While we won't be able to make it in real time due to the length of the process, Jean will demonstrate each stage and the all-important setting points. Book here: rb.gy/tqh8zg

SWI Heritage Group

Thurs 26th September

MEMBERS ONLY

The SWI Heritage Group meets on a monthly basis to progress and contribute to the wider SWI Heritage Project, with a focus on preparing the SWI heritage for a Visitor Learning Centre in Scotland. We welcome all members to join the group and keep abreast of developments. Book here: rb.gy/w16upv

Afternoon Macramé workshop

Edinburgh | 12-4, Tues 15th October

£30 MEMBERS-ONLY

Learn this fantastic craft in the company of this year's Evelyn Baxter scholars as they prepare for a year of travelling around Scotland teaching fellow members. Book here: rb.gy/pemwp2

National competitions

Ruralympics

National competition | Saturday October 5, Webster's Sports Centre, Kirriemuir

Sixteen teams from across Scotland compete to see who triumphs in this fast-paced games event.

Photography

National competition | Deadline Nov 4

We encourage members to delve into the theme Our Fragile World by entering compelling photos. You could win up to £25 in SWI Shop vouchers. Enter here: rb.gy/u0b7f2

Writing

National competition | Deadline Sept 30

Wow the judges and win the Warnock Trophy! Write an inspirational letter on the theme of the SWI motto: If you know a good thing, pass it on. You could win up to £25 in SWI Shop vouchers, too. Enter here rb.gy/gd8fnj

Don't forget the 2024 Membership Drive Toolkit!

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

What's in the Toolkit?

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

Please use all or any asset in your community and across social media, so we really showcase what a wonderful resource the SWI is for Scotland's women! Some members have seen 15+ enquiries as a result of using the new assets. We'll evaluate the campaign in March 2025 and use learnings for the next membership drive. Find it here rb.gy/ew92zp

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!

Alternatively, if you have a grumble to share, please follow our complaints procedure **rb.gy/ek4d2a** to ensure that you receive an appropriate and timely response.

Thank you!