



Welcome to Issue 35 – Members' news

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

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

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

Scottish Women's Institutes is a SCIO, SC053058

*****Celebrating members*****

Who's your Member of the Year?

The deadline is fast approaching for nominees for the Outstanding Member of the Year. This 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. Go on, nominate one of our special women and make their day!

Deadline for nominations: July 25th

NOMINATE A MEMBER here - rebrand.ly/9qkbpzd

*****Our commitment to SWI's growth*****

Many thanks to all who supported a new SWI in Stonehaven this month – it was great to see around 40 women get so excited about the possibilities a new group could bring. Special thanks to Kincardineshire Federation's Pat Cooper who gave an overview of everything the SWI has to offer at local, regional and national level, and to the supportive members who came along.

As we strive to attract new members to the SWI, we have two upcoming events across Scotland – please alert any friends and family you may have in the areas!

Dunfermline & Rosyth Women's Group Launch

2-4PM, Saturday July 12th

MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/164caz9

Galashiels Women's Group Launch

2-4PM, Saturday September 6th

MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/fxspo4o

If you would like to support a new group in your area, get in touch – let's give women across Scotland the chance to make friends, learn new skills and have fun! Email us at hello@theswi.org.uk to discuss.

New faces on the SWI team

This month we welcome two new part-time members to the team who will help us drive growth through events and new groups.

Anna Bain

Events Development Co-ordinator

"Hello, I will be creating a range of events attracting new audiences for the SWI. I'm from Oban, went to the University of Glasgow, studied history, and have a background in heritage, events and community engagement. I'm excited about bringing new events to the SWI calendar, and recruiting new members through them."

Roz Galloway

Membership Development Co-ordinator

“Hi, I'm following in many family footsteps as an active SWI member – I went to my first meeting when I was a baby and I'm currently a member of Leith SWI. I'm originally from a farm in the Machars of Wigtownshire, I've lived in Dundee, Fife and Edinburgh and have a background in graphic illustration and computer games, and an interest in rugby. My role is to encourage new members to join the organisation – it'll be fun!”

SWI AGM 2025 – catch up now

Thanks to everyone who attended the SWI AGM 2025, and to all of the members who took part in the successful event.

We had an afternoon full of insight from our fabulous Trustees who detailed successes, achievements, and challenges, and our member panel inspired with new ways of working to stay relevant in their local communities. Our special guest speaker Juliet Isherwood of our sister organisation the NFWI, gave food for thought on virtual online Institutes, too.

Thanks to members Maz Thorn and Kath Hewson for making sure everything went smoothly on the day!

You can read all about the AGM including the Trophy winners, FAQs and minutes [HERE](https://rebrand.ly/e3jww9h) – **rebrand.ly/e3jww9h**

Planning begins for SWI Conference 2026

The new committee for next year's SWI conference met last week to begin planning for the event which will take place in September 2026. Venues across the country are currently being considered and plans are afoot for themes, focus, and guests.

Traditionally, the SWI Conference features members' collaborative work, created on a theme and known as the Vaughan Nash competition. **The committee has decided the theme for 2026 is 'Festivals'.**

This can be anything from music and arts festivals to the traditional harvest festivals, Easter, and Christmas. You could also take inspiration from global festivals including Holi and Mardi Gras. We're looking for colourful and cultural displays of members' crafts! The entry requirements for this competition should showcase 5 different articles including:

- An item made using knitting or crochet
- An item made using a sewing technique (patchwork, applique etc.)
- Three own choice items using any handcraft technique

Entry guidelines

The committee has relaxed some of the rules to be as inclusive as possible and enable more members to get involved:

- 1.Groups, made up of a minimum of TWO members, can enter.
- 2.Each group can include members from different Institutes/Federations.
- 3.The entry fee for each group remains at £10.

So, it's time to get your creative thinking caps on and sort out your teams and ideas – more details will follow in next month's newsletter!

*****Our commitment to communities*****

SWI Heritage Project events

As part of the SWI Heritage Project, SWI members are sharing their skills with younger women in Scotland. Two FREE events are planned for summer, so please share the details with any women under 30...

Needlefelting for beginners

Saturday, June 21st | 1-3pm | Glasgow Women's Library, 23 Landressy Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow G40 1BP | FREE

SWI member Jean Shaw will give a class on needlefelting for beginners for women aged 16-30. MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/ikd0610

Pyrography for beginners

Saturday, July 5th | 11am-1pm | SWI Central Office, Suite 8, 1 Carmichael Place, Edinburgh EH6 5PH | FREE

SWI member Helen Bissett will deliver a session on pyrography for beginners for women aged 16-30. MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/ecablbv

Heritage News reminder

The first issue of the SWI Heritage Newsletter was released last month to make sure everyone keeps up to date with the SWI Heritage Project and The Crichton Opportunity as it develops! If you missed it, join the the list here - rebrand.ly/l9ukqlj

Don't miss the big show!

Scottish Handcrafts Championships

When June 19-22, 2025

Where Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh

Theme "Life is a Celebration"

Hosted by the SWI at the iconic Royal Highland Show, this event is a must-visit for anyone passionate about traditional crafts.

Come along to see entries from all across the world and say hello to the SWI members who run this great event for the Royal Highland Show organisers.

We need your help

The Royal Highland Show's Scottish Handcrafts Championship has long celebrated the creativity and skill of crafters across Scotland. The event is a valued part of Scotland's heritage, and the SWI proudly manages the Championship each year.

Now, the Championship faces challenges to its sustainability and relevance, so we're asking for your help in "ReCrafting" it for the future. Your feedback will ensure the event is inspiring, inclusive, and enjoyable for everyone – and by completing this survey, you'll be entered into our prize draw for a chance to win an iPad worth £309! Closing date: Sunday 31st August.

Thank you for contributing to the future of this cherished Championship, and good luck in the prize draw!

HAVE YOUR SAY – rebrand.ly/21kgsny

Ann takes on new international role

Many of you will know Ann McGhee in her role as President of Ross-shire & Sutherland Federation, but she has just taken on a far larger role for our sister organisation, Associated Countrywomen of the World (ACWW)!

Now, Ann is the coordinator for Scotland for ACWW, and her responsibilities include:

- Being the point of contact for Scotland-related ACWW activities
- Helping with fundraising efforts for ACWW
- Sharing information about ACWW with SWI members
- Representing Scotland at ACWW conferences (she has previously attended the European Conference in 2023 and the World Conference in Kuala Lumpur).

Good luck, Ann!

Support SWI's Heritage Project

Snap up a slice of SWI history with our fabulous notecards and postcards. Notecards feature beautifully crafted handmade items and the postcards show members through the ages. Great reminders of our wonderful organisation. Shop now – rebrand.ly/y07wqac

*****Volunteering opportunities*****

Web redevelopment

We'd like to thank the many members involved in shaping a brand-new SWI website that will launch this summer!

Designed with members at its heart, the new site will offer a fresh, modern look, easier navigation, and a great window on what we do.

Members have been involved from the start – interviewing design agencies from all over Scotland, and briefing our chosen agency, Creatomatic, who are based in Lockerbie.

We are currently working on initial designs and pages will soon be shared with all volunteers to test the structure and usability of the site!

Finance committee

We currently have two vacancies on our Finance Committee, and seek individuals who have a background in finance and can contribute to the financial oversight and strategic planning of the organisation.

These Committee members will play a crucial role in ensuring the financial health and sustainability of Scottish Women’s Institutes, so we invite applications from members who believe they can make a positive impact on our organisation. Apply here – rebrand.ly/8n15sdo

Supreme Court ruling: an update

The SWI is currently taking legal advice on the implications of the Supreme Court decision regarding the legal definition of a woman, so that we can ensure that Scottish Women’s Institutes operates in an appropriate and lawful manner.

As part of this process we are also reviewing our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

You may be aware that the Equality and Human Rights Commission is currently consulting in relation to updates to their Code of Practice for services, public functions and associations and our review will need to take account the final version of that Code of Practice when it is approved by Parliament. We will act in accordance with the legal advice that we receive and in accordance with the updated Code of Practice in due course.

*****Events*****

Don’t miss SWI Summer School 2025

More than 100 members have already booked their place at this year’s SWI Summer School at Stirling University – we have just a few spaces left! Join us for three days of fun and learning over a long weekend with like-minded women in a stunning environment and immerse yourself in a single course throughout the weekend. FIND OUT MORE – rebrand.ly/kyc0g4v

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE

3D Decoupage & Iris Folding

Tutors: Nan Middleton & Aileen Pittuck

Beginners and advanced students will learn papercrafting techniques: shaping, moulding, layering and feathering, with five projects being completed in class. BOOK HERE – rebrand.ly/nybdfho

ONE SPACE REMAINING

Quilt making

Tutor: Ann Hill

This course is ideal for quilters with an intermediate level of experience. If you enjoy piecing, appliqué and working with different quilting methods, this course will provide a rewarding challenge. BOOK HERE - rebrand.ly/72iii3d

TWO SPACES REMAINING

Temari Balls: beginners & beyond

Tutor: Kay Smith

This course is aimed at beginners and beyond who want to learn the ancient Japanese art. BOOK HERE - rebrand.ly/kb142a1

Creative Collisions: A mixed media masterclass

7pm, July 9th | Online | FREE for members | £5 Non-members

Join us for a creative and calming class with Jo Lochhead, founder of The Crafty Kit Company. In this online session, Jo will demonstrate how to create an atmospheric woodland scene using a blend of watercolour painting, needle felting, and simple embroidery. BOOK HERE - rebrand.ly/4blpgy8

The perfect scone

7pm, July 2nd | Online | FREE for members | £5 Non-members

Join us for an online baking masterclass led by the brilliant Linda McTurk, as she guides you step-by-step through making the perfect scone. Whether you're a total beginner or a seasoned baker looking to refine your technique, this session is designed to share tips, tricks, and secrets to achieving light, fluffy scones every time. BOOK NOW - rebrand.ly/m7b0wma

Curious Festival: Tea Party

12-2pm, Saturday 6th September | Crichton Central, The Crichton Estate, Backend Road, Dumfries DG1 4TA | In-person | FREE

A date for your diary We are hosting an event called MakMerry as part of Curious, the Royal Society of Edinburgh's festival of knowledge. Our event will include a talk about SWI history from SWI's Heritage Project Manager, Valentina Bold, and SWI member May MacCormick will demonstrate Sanquhar knitting. MORE INFO - rebrand.ly/3xbf7ql

Catch up with online events

You can catch-up on all online talks on our YouTube channel.

WATCH NOW - rebrand.ly/g94ombp

Competitions & benefits

National Golf Competition

Competition | Monday, August 4th | Gleddoch Hotel, Golf & Country Club, Renfrewshire
SWI invites entries to this year's Golf Competition hosted by Renfrewshire Federation.

This is a new style competition, so some rules and formats have changed. Read all the information here (rebrand.ly/4s1lan4) If you wish to enter more than two teams email hello@theswi.org.uk

ENTRY FORM - rebrand.ly/4l96zaj

National Writing Competition

Warnock Trophy | Deadline September 15th 2025 | Open for entries

Unlock the power of your pen in this year's writing competition. We invite participants to explore the theme of 'The Weather' by submitting captivating written pieces in the form of a poem (max 20 lines). Email your poem (on a Word document if possible) to hello@theswi.org.uk before 15th September, 2024.

ENTRY FORM - rebrand.ly/ulzco4w

National Outdoor Bowling Competition

Competition | Monday, September 1st | Kirkcudbright Bowling Club

SWI is pleased to announce entries are now open for this year's Outdoor Bowling Competition.

There is a new rule format – teams will play on one green for four games (instead of five). If you wish to enter more than two teams email hello@theswi.org.uk

ENTRY FORM - rebrand.ly/20w7pbi

National Photography Competition

Competition | Deadline October 27th | Open for entries

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

Please email your photographs as Jpegs to hello@theswi.org.uk before the deadline.

ENTRY FORM - rebrand.ly/7lht8bb

Your exclusive member benefits

Here at the SWI you know we love a bargain and you know we love bringing members exclusive perks and benefits. That's why we've partnered with the brilliant Crafty Kit Company – an award-winning, female-led Scottish business – to bring all members a fantastic 20% discount!

The Crafty Kit Company has lots to offer – beautiful, easy-to-follow craft kits designed to inspire creativity and well-being. Based in East Lothian (home of the SWI!), they're passionate about supporting mindful making and sharing the joy of crafting. Whether you're a beginner or an expert, their kits bring a little moment of calm – one project at a time.

The Crafty Kit Company

<https://www.craftykitcompany.co.uk/>

20% off craft kits, supplies and gifts

CODE: SWI20

The Edinburgh Woollen Mill

<http://www.ewm.co.uk/>

20% off all products, except sale and gift vouchers at Edinburgh Woollen Mill.

CODE: SW25

Wendy Wu tours

<https://www.wendywutours.co.uk/>

5% off tours

Can be used in conjunction with offers for huge discounts on last-minute trips to Asia and beyond!

Bloom and Wild

<http://www.bloomandwild.com/>

15% off flowers and gifts

CODE: THESWI15B&W

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

<http://www.fredolsencruises.com/>

5% off all cruises

CODE: WIScot10

Willowberry skincare

www.willowberry.co.uk

10% off products

CODE: 10offSWI

Don't miss the new SWI apron

Crafted from high-quality navy cotton, this durable apron features a beautifully embroidered SWI logo for a touch of elegance. Designed for practicality, it includes a spacious front pocket, adjustable strap, and secure waist ties.

In stock now – just £16.95.

One size fits all.

SHOP NOW - rebrand.ly/iqgzjsi

Sale or return boxes are available – great for any upcoming SWI Shows! Email hello@theswi.org.uk to order.

SWI shows around the country

Federation Shows and craft fairs are a fabulous way to showcase the talent, creativity, and community spirit of the SWI, and we know how much effort goes into making them a success.

Ayrshire Federation's Flower & Flavours Open Day

28th June | Walker Hall, South Beach, Troon KA10 6EF | 10.30am-3pm

Tickets £10 – everyone welcome (bring your own lunch)!

It's showtime!

Send details of your show to hello@theswi.org.uk and let's work together to celebrate the incredible work of our members across Scotland.

Member extras

NEW SWI website

A brand-new website is currently being developed for Summer 2025 which will provide a one-stop shop for all things SWI, making your membership even better.

New joiners

From now on all new joiners will receive an email with their joining information, including membership number, rather than a letter and a membership card. This helps modernise our services and work towards goals in our strategic plan.

NEW SWI Heritage quarterly e-newsletter

Now that the SWI Heritage Project has received major funding there will be lots more to report on, so SWI Heritage News will be released quarterly to keep you updated.

SWI Member Insurance

Members are covered through SWI Public Liability Insurance when working with non-members (children and adults) such as the Junior Dippers workshops.

Please note: It's important to ensure that any event involving non-members (adults or children) is branded as a SWI event, and it is recommended to confirm that any event venue you use has public liability insurance.

Access to SWI events

Keep up-to-date with the exciting range of in-person and online events at www.theswi.org.uk/event-diary.html.

Monthly newsletter

Email hello@theswi.org.uk to subscribe to receive the latest news direct to your inbox. You won't be bombarded by spam. We are committed to keeping our members informed so your help makes all the difference!

Communities on Facebook

Don't miss out, join us on Facebook and keep abreast of what's happening for the SWI and across the membership in Scotland. Follow us at

www.facebook.com/ScottishWomensInstitutes

Do you want to receive event alerts?

Subscribe to SWI's Eventbrite page at **<https://shorturl.at/2btoh>** and never miss a thing.

Do you want general news?

Visit **www.theswi.org.uk** for updates.

Not a member yet?

If you want to find out more about joining the SWI, please visit **www.theswi.org.uk/join-the-swi**

Contact us for any further information at SWI, Unit 8, 1 Carmichael Place, Edinburgh EH6 5PH or hello@theswi.org.uk or call 0131 225 1724

Copyright © 2025 Scottish Women's Institutes, All rights reserved. You are receiving this newsletter as you are an SWI member. Scottish Women's Institutes SCIO, SC053058