

# SWI Records for Permanent Preservation

The Scottish Women's Rural Institute was founded by Catherine Blair in 1917, who sought to bring together rural and urban women across Scotland. Since its establishment, the organisation's aims of providing women with a community outside of their private household sphere are reflected in the records which survive today. Following the National Lottery funding in 2023, the SWI Heritage Project ensures that these records are preserved for future generations to learn about the growing interconnectivity of the SWI across the decades. At a time when the SWI are reviewing and cataloguing their head office archive, this is an opportune moment for local institutes to also reflect and preserve their own records to enrich their local heritage and to continue developing physical records going forwards. This guide will help local branches with their decisions of record preservation, and to help them understand the certain types of materials which are deemed valuable by archivists. This collaboration between local institutes and archives is beneficial for systemised, regional record preservation, ultimately upholding the SWI's historic impact on rural and urban women's lives and facilitating the organisation's role in local histories.

## Key Records

The records listed below have been identified as having significant historical interest for both the SWI and its own members, as well as the wider academic sector, and genealogists. These records help to express the objectives, values, activities and decision-making processes of the Scottish Women's Rural Institute since its establishment in 1917. This guidance document is created based on the current contents of the SWRI collections, notably those of Perth and Kinross Council Archives, Argyll and Bute Council Archives, and the John Gray Centre.

- Committee meeting minutes
- Financial books
- Memberships
- Records of closed institutes

- Photographs of meetings and large events/occasions
- Textiles
- Correspondence between local and central branches
- Newsletters/Scottish Home and Country magazines

## Breakdown of Key Record Types

Records which are selected as valuable for permanent preservation should document the developments of the SWRI in both rural and urban institutes from 1917 onwards and should convey the organisation's objectives of interconnectivity and community amongst Scottish women. Records from the interwar period are additionally compelling to inform academic interests of how the organisation encouraged women's access to citizenship and political identity in a public sphere.

### Administrative records

- Minutes of meetings (committee and local)
- Cash books
- Account books
- Press secretary report books
- Membership lists
- Membership cards
- Attendance book
- Correspondence and letters (may also be included within meeting minutes)
- Speech cards
- List of office bearers

### Photographs

- Royal visits
- Coronation events
- Local institute events
- Parties and celebration
- Regional competitions
- Prize winners

### Published materials for members/public

- Magazine/newsletter
- SWRI handbook

- Song books
- Cookbooks
- Local history books created by SWRI members
- Annual syllabi cards of meetings and events
- Record of competition winners
- Posters
- Newspaper cuttings referencing significant SWRI achievements/events
- Memorandum book

### Objects/memorabilia

- Crockery
- Trophies and medals
- Artwork
- Textiles
- Craft items
- Rosettes
- Broaches
- Membership badges

### NOT to be archived

- Receipts (key purchases/transactions already in account/cash books)
- Publications not written by SWI members