



Welcome to Issue 21 - 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 registered Scottish Charity No. SC011901

Welcome to Issue 21!

There's a whole lot of excitement lined up for the months ahead. We've got plenty of events, volunteering opportunities, and the SWI Summer School bookings are already buzzing with activity! What could be better for shaking off those winter blues?

SWI Summer School: 15th - 19th August 2024

We're thrilled to introduce the revamped SWI Summer School for 2024. Join us for a week of learning and camaraderie with like-minded women in a picturesque rural setting at Strathallan School in Perthshire.

Thanks to everyone who has booked to attend the SWI Summer School. The response has been fantastic and we have 104 members signed up so far! We have the following courses still available some of which may take your fancy.

What's in store at the summer school?

We've carefully selected expert tutors to lead engaging 3-day workshops, offering diverse courses in handcrafts and activities. 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. Unleash your artistic flair with 3D Decoupage, Painting, Floral Art, and Beadwork.

Residential and non-residential options are available. Stay at Strathallan School for four nights or opt for non-residential attendance – the choice is yours!

Accommodation and meals

Residential pupils enjoy full board from August 15th to 19th, with single-occupancy dorms featuring shared common spaces. Shared bathroom facilities are available in each dorm.

Non-residential pupils 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. Explore scenic walks around the campus for a relaxing experience.

What can I learn?

3-day Beadwork for Beginners & Improvers workshop

(13 places remaining out of a total of 16)

Your tutor, Mairi Carlton, is the Chair of Trustees for the Beadworkers Guild. Originally a self-taught beader, she has been creating and teaching her designs for more than 20 years.

She organises a large beading group in Glasgow called 'Beadwilderer', teaches regularly in her local area, and delivers workshops for several Scottish Guilds and shops. 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 a number of different components which can either be made into one necklace or can be made into a number of smaller items which 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 Floral Art workshop

(12 places remaining out of a total of 14)

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 Improver's Crochet workshop

(6 places remaining out of a total of 10)

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 Basket Making workshop by Naturally Useful

(5 places remaining out of a total of 20)

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 workshop by Elizabeth Johnston

(4 places remaining out of a total of 14)

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 Quilting for Improvers workshop

(5 places remaining out of a total of 12)

Pat Archibald has been quilting for decades, since discovering her granny's scraps bag. When she grew up, she established Purely Patchwork in Linlithgow, which was Scotland's first dedicated patchwork and quilting shop. She has been hosting specialist classes since 2004 and now teaches classes at her studio in Edinburgh and in stitching holidays around the world, too. She exhibits annually at The Edinburgh International Festival Fringe and her work is widely exhibited in the UK, Europe, and the USA and has won multiple awards. This course is for people that have basic machine skills and understand the basics of their own sewing machines but wish to push the boundaries a little and become more confident with free motion quilting.

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 3D Decoupage workshop

(5 places remaining out of a total of 12)

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 workshop

(2 places remaining out of a total of 12)

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. Her work is currently on display at Blair Drummond Safari Park, The Lake at the Port of Menteith restaurant, Kings Home, Bar 10, and homes from New Zealand to America. This 3 day course will be an introduction to painting on canvas and participants will paint one canvas per day of Sarah's famous farmland animals.

The following workshops are fully booked, but if you would like to be put on a waiting list, please email hello@theswi.org.uk.

- Sashiko for Beginners workshop (Sold Out)
- Willow Basket Making workshop by All About Willow (Sold Out)
- Shetland Lace Knitting workshop by Elizabeth & Betsy Williamson (Sold Out)

How much will it cost?

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

- SWI Members £500
- Non-members £600

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

- SWI Members £400
- Non-members £500

How do I book?

Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn something new and let's make 2024 a year filled with fun!

To book your place, please go here 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.

Join us this March at the Creative Craft Show in Glasgow!

Once again, Creative Crafts has generously provided SWI with a complimentary stand at the upcoming Creative Craft Show from Thurs March 7th to Sat March 9th.

We look forward to showcasing the SWI and offering a variety of popular 'Make & Take' craft sessions at our stand in March.

Thursday

Vanessa Shand, Scone SWI, Perth & Kinross will be crocheting up a storm, teaching you how to make a crochet heart keyring to take home for a loved one.

Friday

May MacCormick, Mennock SWI, Dumfriesshire will be showing off her knitting skills by demonstrating Sanquhar knitting. Come along and have a go!

Saturday

Helen Bissett, Harburn SWI, Midlothian, will close out the weekend with a pyrography make and take. If you've ever fancied learning the art of free handed wood burning then this is your opportunity to try it out.

Showcase Your Skills: Embrace the Scottish Handcrafts Championship 2024 or Explore Volunteering Opportunities!

Get ready for a crafty makeover! The RHS committee are working hard with RHASS to upgrade of the Scottish Handcrafts Championship stand with further changes in the next few years. Our goal for 2024? To change and test out a new location and have a new display for the competition entries. We want this traditional event to be attractive for craft lovers of all ages, making it the place to be.

So, how are we going to do it? Well, first off, we're bringing some fresh ideas to the table. We've looked at what has worked in the past and we're ready to take things up a notch. Our plan? Get more young stewarding volunteers and get more folks to take part in the competition.

We want them not just checking out the crafts, but rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck in. It's all about making the Handcrafts Championship an attractive modern attractive competition and must-visit part of the Royal Highland Show.

We will have a cosy corner for ongoing craft workshops, demos, and guest speakers. A huge shoutout to all our members who embody our motto of 'If you know a good thing, pass it on.', your time and efforts is very much appreciated.

The draft schedule is out now here rb.gy/g4d4su and we are all looking forward to more details of how to apply...we will let you know as soon as we know!

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up via this form here rb.gy/ud2mj5 and we will be in touch with more information.

Unlocking History: Join the Excitement of Our Heritage Project!

The heritage of the Scottish Women's Institutes holds a profound place in Scottish society, documenting the transformative journey of women's rural life since 1917. It narrates members' activities, challenges, and resilience, illuminating the pivotal role of women in governance at local, regional, and national levels.

Aligned with the SWI strategy, our objective is to safeguard the SWI heritage into a collection for a Heritage Centre, where we honour the past to inspire future generations. This two year project involves a multiprong approach from establishing a Heritage group of members dedicated to being a sounding board for the project through to working with external partners, archivists, funders and academics.

The Heritage Project group represents members from the following areas:

Aberdeenshire, Argyll, Ayrshire, Banffshire, Dumfriesshire, Dunbartonshire, Fife, Lanarkshire, Midlothian, Moray and Nairn, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Inverness-shire, Ross-shire & Sutherland, Roxburghshire, SC&WP, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, West Lothian, Wigtownshire and a selection of online members.

If you want to be part of the Heritage group, email hello@theswi.org.uk and you will be invited to the next group meeting.

Without a robust engagement plan with members, this heritage project faces the risk of being unsuccessful.

The project is segmented into four areas:

- Archiving
- Oral History
- SWI Story
- Home for our Heritage

You can view and listen to a pre-recording of the overview of the Heritage project by clicking this link: <https://rb.gy/fi6jfb>

Members from Angus, Argyll, Ayrshire, Banffshire, Caithness, Dumfriesshire, Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Fife, Lanarkshire, Midlothian, Perth & Kinross, Ross-shire and Sutherland, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and a selection of online members have already signed up to help volunteer with various aspects of the archiving project.

If you are willing to be involved in this exciting project, add your name to the list of volunteers by emailing: hello@theswi.org.uk or sign up here rb.gy/ud2mj5

The overarching objectives for the entire project include:

Recruiting Volunteers: Securing support from our members is key for the short, medium, and long-term success of this project. Demonstrating interest and active participation is important. We aim for full member engagement, encouraging both face-to-face and remote volunteering. Members may receive a box containing items and archiving guidelines, or these boxes could be dispatched to Institutes or Federations for group participation, fostering an enjoyable experience of reminiscing and archiving together.

Funding Opportunities: Working with an experienced fundraiser will enable us to explore potential funding opportunities, ensuring each aspect of the project is financially viable. Members play a crucial role in funding applications, as funders appreciate and anticipate significant volunteer involvement in our project. Additionally, we recognise the importance of not solely relying on successful funding applications and are exploring potential SWI fundraising initiatives to financially support the project.

Raise Awareness: We are developing a communication plan to keep members informed about the project's progress, milestones achieved, and opportunities for involvement. This will involve, e-newsletters, social media, and in-person meetings to reach out to members.

Feedback: We will establish multiple channels for members to provide feedback, suggestions, and challenges throughout the project. We will look at surveys, hosting feedback sessions, events or setting up online feedback to ensure all voices are heard and valued.

Here is an example with a link to the Office Bearer event in November to Dumfries where there were table discussions on a Heritage Centre in partnership with Crichton Trust rb.gy/yze1ng

Member Recognition: We will regularly acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of volunteers to the project. This could include featuring member spotlights in newsletters, organising appreciation events, or creating a recognition program.

Technology: We will explore ways to leverage technology to enhance the project efficiency and engagement. This could involve using digital channels for data gathering, involving digital champions for recording virtual and face to face oral history interviews.

Measure and Monitor: We will consistently monitor the project's progress against timelines and objectives and maintaining a systematic approach.

If you are willing to be involved in this exciting project, add your name to the list of volunteers by emailing: hello@theswi.org.uk or sign up here rb.gy/ud2mj5

Celebrating International Women's Day

To commemorate International Women's Day, the SWI is thrilled to announce a special partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Together, we are excited to deliver two engaging virtual sessions for Scottish Fire and Rescue staff that delve into the history and remarkable transformation of the SWI.

Through an insightful presentation, the participants will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the SWI's impact on communities across Scotland and beyond.

As we celebrate the spirit of International Women's Day, we can honour the achievements of women everywhere. If you have a special women in your life that you'd like to honour, we'd like to help spotlight them.

Send us in a picture and few words to hello@theswi.org.uk about the most inspirational woman you know and we will feature it on a special member news edition of the e-newsletter.

Free Member Benefits: Upcoming events

SWI Skill Share - The Perfect Frangipane Tart

Online event | March 13th | 7pm-8pm

Join us for a bake-along with Jean Miller as she guides you through the process of baking this delicious frangipane tart - Just in time for Easter!

The ingredients and equipment list on the Eventbrite page, so you can bake along from the comfort of your own kitchen!

This event is free for members and £5 for non-members. Book here: rb.gy/1wjyqx

SWI Heritage: Our Founder Catherine Blair

Online event | March 20th | 7pm-8pm

To celebrate SWI heritage and Women's History Month, this informative online presentation on the biography of our founder, Catherine Blair, will help you discover the fascinating stories behind the creation of SWI and how Catherine's vision has shaped our community. Don't miss out on this unique chance to connect with our founder and be inspired by her remarkable journey.

This event is free for members and £5 for non-members. Book here: rb.gy/vylzxo

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.

Booking can be made through Eventbrite.

This competition entry fee is £60 per team. Book here: <https://rb.gy/9uwn0v>

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 fee is £5. Book here: 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

SWI Members' Annual General Meeting

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

You are warmly invited to register to attend the 2024 Scottish Women's Institutes AGM.

How can I join in?

The AGM will be online, to ensure we include as many SWI members as possible.

We look forward to seeing you there!

This year's AGM will continue with the new format which so many enjoyed last year:

- **Welcome**
- **AGM Formal Business**
- **Annual Strategy Review**
- **Member Discussion Panel**

Booking can be made through Eventbrite [here](https://rb.gy/5vemul) <https://rb.gy/5vemul>

Board and Staff Strategy Day

The SWI Board and Staff had a Strategy Day in January where we reviewed past achievements, understanding what worked well and what we could do better.

We discussed important updates to our current strategy, addressing priorities, challenges, and opportunities. Everyone had a chance to share their thoughts, ensuring commitment to our plan.

In a few weeks, we'll unveil a refreshed strategy with SWI members. We aim to build on the work to date, adapt to changes, and lay the groundwork for SWI's sustainability and impact across Scotland.

A big thank you to our fantastic facilitators, Dr. Meg Wright and Dr. Pat Armstrong. They made sure we addressed everything, from strengths and weaknesses to addressing societal changes."

Continuing with our membership growth plan, can you suggest new locations to launch SWI groups?

Last year we established 17 new groups, most of which have been successful, however we need to identify and scope out more locations in Scotland where we can build on the work that has been done.

Growing the membership is critical for a sustainable future and if are more inclusive, we reach out to as many women as possible, as we are giving them the chance to learn, connect, make friends and have fun in their communities.

If you've got any ideas or suggestions, we're all ears! Speak to your Federation or have brainstorm with your group.

If you think there are locations that could benefit from a new group, let us know by emailing our Membership Development Officer at [**membership@theswi.org.uk**](mailto:membership@theswi.org.uk).

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the SWI – you're amazing!

Here is a taster of what we can achieve together - last year's success in Inverness. ([**https://rb.gy/hoq6cu**](https://rb.gy/hoq6cu))

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)

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**
- **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!