



Welcome to Issue 22 – 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 Issue 22!

Spring is in the air and there is a whole lot of excitement lined up for the months ahead. We've got the visionary heritage project with volunteering opportunities. There are lots of in person and online events and competitions, and the SWI Summer School bookings are coming along nicely!

Unlock Your Passion! Reserve your spot at the SWI Summer School on 15th - 19th August

Join us for a week of learning and friendship with like-minded women in this picturesque rural setting at Strathallan School in Perthshire. Thank you to everyone who has booked to attend the SWI Summer School so far. The response has been great with 104 members signed up so far!

What's in store at the summer school?

We've carefully selected expert tutors to lead engaging 3-day workshops, offering diverse courses in arts and crafts. 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

(11 places remaining out of a total of 16)

Your tutor, Mairi Carlton, is the Chair of Trustees for the Beadworkers Guild. 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 several different components which can either be made into one necklace or can be made into several smaller items that 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

(5 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

(3 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

(2 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

(1 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.

3-day Shetland Lace Knitting

(1 place remaining out of a total of 18)

Native Shetlander Elizabeth Williamson and her mother Betsy will take you through the basic stitches, history, and techniques of Shetland lace knitting. This 3-day workshop concentrates on an introduction to Shetland Lace by knitting a miniature Shetland Lace Hap. Participants will be taught how to read lace charts, the basic stitches of Shetland lace, the construction methods of haps, how to do the Betsy Join when putting their haps together and how to dress Shetland lace.

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)

How much will it cost?

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

- SWI Members £500 or non-members £600

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

- SWI Members £400 or non-members £500

How do I book?

Don't miss out on this opportunity to follow your passion!

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.

Getting Crafty at the Creative Crafts!

Over three days, we promoted SWI membership, encouraged learning, and had lots of fun. Huge thanks to everyone who stopped by for a craft and a chat. And a special shoutout to our amazing volunteers and demonstrators for making it all happen! We couldn't do this without members, its a truly collaborative effort.

- This years demonstrators were: Vanessa Shand, of Scone SWI,
- May MacCormick, of Mennock SWI,
- Helen Bissett, of Harburn SWI

The SWI is offered a free stand space at each Creative Crafts show, so if you didn't manage along, we'll be back at the next show in October with more exciting make & takes!

Anticipation is building as we approach the Royal Highland Show!

Thank you to everyone who has put forward their name to volunteer at RHS, but we still have some gaps to fill in our daily schedule, so please let us know if you fancy helping out by emailing: charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk

The competition schedule is out now here shorturl.at/yzIL4 and details of how to apply will soon be available on the RHS website from the 21st March.

Alternatively, the bookings are now open to attend the event here shorturl.at/vLZ28

SWI Heritage Update

Now that the SWI National body is transitioning to become a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation), we have started seeking funding opportunities with support from a fundraiser to finance the initial stages of our Heritage project specifically the archiving, oral history, and the SWI story. We have identified potential funders and are prepared to receive feedback on our requests.

We are strengthening the Heritage Group, drawing on their SWI and member knowledge as a valuable sounding board for all aspects of the project. The list of volunteers continues to grow, and we extend our gratitude to all who are interested in this project, ensuring we leave a legacy for future generations of SWI members.

Members have been contacting us about their Institutes and Federation archives, so we will hold a special event for all members, during which our archivist, starting in March and working one day a week, will discuss methods for protecting and preserving heritage.

The Crichton partnership is progressing steadily. The South of Scotland Enterprise has commissioned architects to update the building plans, incorporating the SWI Heritage and incorporating suggestions gathered from members during the feedback session at the office bearers' event last November.

The architects will announce plans to consult with all SWI stakeholders including the wider membership on what they would like to see in the centre.

The SWI Board of Trustees will meet with the Crichton Board on March 26th in Edinburgh. Both boards will receive a presentation from the architects outlining their initial plans to integrate SWI and Crichton heritage into the visitor centre. We will also make an official announcement regarding this unique partnership.

We are continuing to meet the Heritage Group on a regular basis and encourage all members to get involved if they haven't already. The next meeting is Thursday 28th March and you can sign up here shorturl.at/dlyGQ

If you any questions or want 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 shorturl.at/eqwQY

Evelyn Baxter Federation Schools

Despite an unexpected hurdle, we're moving ahead with our basic dressmaking classes! While one of the Evelyn Baxter tutors had to step back, Jessie Meikle is stepping up to teach these classes solo throughout the year.

Jessie is a fabulous teacher and will be able to deliver quality classes all around the country, however some changes will need to be made to the requests for dates in order for this to be manageable.

The SWI Team are sending our best wishes to Lesley Robinson and hope she may return later this year to help tutor some classes.

The contact details of those who filled out the forms have been forwarded along to Jessie and she will get in contact with each Federation directly to organise the details of the classes, but we ask that you be understanding and flexible with us during this time. If you have any urgent questions in the meantime, do not to hesitate beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk

Free Member Benefits: Upcoming events

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. Bookings closed. Spectators welcome.

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 ticket is free. 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>

Margaret Whiteford – Outstanding Member of the Year 2024

Competition | Deadline 26th July Don't miss your chance to nominate that member that goes above and beyond for everyone! Maz Thorn from Powmill SWI was the proud recipient of the Margaret Whiteford Trophy last year!

This unique award celebrates members who are great ambassadors for everything we

hold dear – friendship, lifelong learning, and sharing skills – and who get the most out of volunteering for the charity.

The award is named after Margaret Whiteford, a member of Ratho SWI. She was passionate about the SWI and enjoyed attending events like the SWI Summer School and Study Tour.

Take your time to think about that person who you could not imagine life in the SWI without. Who goes that extra mile for you/your institute/your Federation?

It is as simple as filling out this form here shorturl.at/sxHI9 and sending it to charlotte.hughes@theswi.org.uk before the deadline of Friday 26th of July 2024.

All nominations are confidential. Both individual and group nominations will be accepted!

SWI National Photography competition 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 before the deadline of Monday the 4th of November 2024. Entries will be judged after the deadline and the winners will be announced by the end of November 2024.

Click here shorturl.at/rtsY3 to register and pay on Beacon - if you need a form emailed to you separately, please contact us to request one. Have fun and good luck!

SWI National Writing competition 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 your 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 before the deadline of Monday the 30th of September, 2024. Entries will be judged after the deadline and the winners will be announced by the end of October 2024.

Click here shorturl.at/ozLPR to register and pay on Beacon - if you need a form emailed to you separately, please contact us to request one. Have fun and good luck!

SWI Evelyn Baxter Competition

Competition | Deadline tbc. | Subject - Temari Balls

Did you attend an Evelyn Baxter Federation class in 2023 to learn more about the art of Temari Balls and want to showcase your skills? Well now is your chance by entering this year's Evelyn Baxter competition!

Only attendees of the Evelyn Baxter Federation Schools are eligible to join. More information about the entry requirements and deadlines will be released soon so keep an eye out! Will you be the next recipient of the Evelyn Baxter Trophy?

Launch of new groups planned for 2024

It's crucial for us to expand our membership and explore the locations suggested by our members for potential new Institute groups. Therefore, we're currently planning the following:

Planned launches of new groups:

- Wormit - 17 March
- Paisley - 14 April
- Falkirk - 28 April

Exploring suggested locations:

- Newhaven
- Biggar
- Dumbarton
- Newton Mearns

Please continue to think of some potential locations and talk to your Federation for ideas email: membership@theswi.org.uk

Here is a taster of what we can achieve together - last year's success in Inverness. (<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

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 for updates!

Thank you!