



Welcome to Issue 39 – 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

Have Your Say – Be Part of the 2026 Triennium

Would you like to have your voice heard and help shape the future of the SWI? The Triennium is your chance to get involved.

We're looking for members to join as Trustees, including an Honorary Treasurer and committee members. You don't need lots of experience – just an interest in helping and a willingness to give it a go. We'll support you every step of the way.

Getting involved is a great way to meet new people, build confidence, and make a real difference.

Here's what's coming up:

- Oct–Nov 2025: Find out more through meetings, newsletters, our website, social media, and videos.
- Nov 2025 & Jan 2026: Join our friendly online Q&A sessions to ask questions and hear from others. Sign up here – rebrand.ly/qwdy4hk
- Jan 2026: Read our "Why I am a Trustee" stories from members who've taken part.

Applications close 27 February 2026, with interviews in March. New Trustees will be announced by 31 March and welcomed at the AGM on 16 May 2026.

Come along for a chat – you might be surprised by how much you can offer.

See more here – rebrand.ly/0gwuc5o

Save the Date: Your Gathering, Your Celebration!

We're so excited to invite you to the SWI Members' Gathering 2026 at the Apex Hotel in Dundee on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 September 2026!

This is a weekend all about you, our amazing members. Come together for two days of friendship, creativity, and fun. Try something new in hands-on workshops, enjoy inspiring speakers, explore the Vaughan Nash Exhibition, and cheer on fellow members at SWI's Got Talent!

It's a celebration of everything that makes our community special, warm, welcoming, and wonderfully creative. Mark your diary now!

In the meantime, you can enter the Vaughan Nash National Handcraft Competition here – rebrand.ly/2rq93rc

Meet Our New Staff Member

Say hello to Bobby Veitch, the new SWI Marketing and Communications Lead.

Although originally from Edinburgh, Bobby spent four years in Aberdeen studying Marketing at Robert Gordon University. Since completing his degree, he has worked in a variety of sectors and industries, holding marketing and communications roles that have helped businesses, charities, and individuals share their stories.

Bobby is working on the final changes for the new SWI website, which will be unveiled to all members in the next couple of weeks, so keep an eye out for it!

Outside of work, you can find him stuck in a good book, playing his guitar, or making his way through current and classic movies. He's looking forward to taking on this opportunity at the SWI, collaborating with the team to deliver engaging messages that continue to empower women, celebrate Scottish culture, and serve communities across Scotland.

Love Calligraphy? Share Your Skills!

Evelyn Baxter Scholarship 2026

"If you know a good thing, pass it on." Let's show our SWI motto in action through the art of beautiful writing.

We're excited to announce that Calligraphy is the chosen craft for next year's Evelyn Baxter Scholarship programme.

We're looking for members who already know a bit about calligraphy and would like to:

- Brush up your skills at a fun two-day 'train-the-trainer' course
- Travel around Scotland, meeting other members
- Share your love of calligraphy and help others give it a go
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If you enjoy creating and teaching others, this is your chance to shine! Apply by 20 October to take part.

Let's keep the art of beautiful writing alive, and have fun passing it on!

Apply here - **rebrand.ly/yfefwtl**

Be part of our "Stitched with Love" appeal!

Our Stitched with Love appeal continues to bring warmth and comfort to those in need, thanks to the incredible generosity of SWI members across Scotland.

HomeStart is an amazing charity powered by volunteers who help young families through adverse circumstances and life-changing events. We're so proud to partner with them and bring some of that homemade love to struggling families this winter.

Whether you've been knitting or crocheting, your handmade contributions have made a real difference - and we're so grateful.

If you haven't yet taken part, it's not too late! Find the project guidelines and drop-off information by clicking the button below, and join the hundreds of members stitching for good. Learn more here - **rebrand.ly/plisoih**

Study Tour Sets Off Next Week!

Fifty excited members will set off on Monday 13 October for this year's SWI Study Tour to visit Dublin & Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. We wish all attendees a wonderful trip full of new experiences, friendships, and laughter.

As with every SWI trip, we know the memories won't just come from the sights themselves, but from the friendships, conversations, and shared laughter along the way. We can't wait to share photos and stories from this adventure on our [Facebook](#) page throughout the week, so follow along for updates and photos from the journey!

Join us at the Creative Crafts Show!

Our preparations are well underway for this year's Creative Crafts, taking place from 23 to 26 October at the SEC, Glasgow, and we would love for you to come and see us - a great opportunity to explore, learn, and get inspired!

Visit the SWI stand to take part in one of our Make & Take sessions, including:

- Beaded Snowflakes with Linda McTurk (Lochrutton SWI)
- Felt Brooches with Julie Cribb (Ardross SWI)
- Beadwork with Margaret Dick (Luss SWI)
- Fabric Decorations with Maz Thorn (Powmill SWI)

Special Offer: Use the promo code CRAFTSEW30 for 30% off your ticket price!

Keep an eye on our socials for more details and come and see us, we'd love to meet you there!

Preserving Institute & Federation Archives

More and more members have been asking how to best preserve their Institute and Federation archives, so we're delighted to announce a special online session with our Archivist to guide you through the process. We've also updated our guidance and added new resources to support you.

Online session: Preserving the Archives on Thursday 30 October. Sign up here - rebrand.ly/ibckm1b

Download new guidance:

- Archiving for SWI Institutes - rebrand.ly/w6s573t
- SWI Records for Permanent Preservation - rebrand.ly/w4sbbpz

In addition, our very own Archivist, Rachael Rennert, was recently featured in the news celebrating the vital role archivists play in preserving Scotland's heritage. It's a great read about why protecting our archives matters so much - take a look here - rebrand.ly/bh0takp

From Our Friends in the Sector: ACWW Update

We're pleased to share an update from our friends at the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

This month's ACWW newsletter highlights their ongoing advocacy for rural women globally, upcoming regional conferences, and opportunities for members to engage in international development initiatives. It also celebrates the upcoming International Day of Rural Women 2025 on October 15.

You can read the full update via their latest newsletter here - rebrand.ly/rv1z8ae

In Memoriam: Celebrating Brenda Shone

Moray and Nairn Federation member Brenda Shone sadly passed away on Friday 19th September. Brenda was a stalwart member of, initially, the WI then SWI for over 40 years.

On moving to Scotland she joined Lochaber Federation where she served as Federation Secretary for a number of years before moving further North. Brenda was a member of both Cawdor, where she had held the posts of President and Secretary in the past, and Duffus Institutes, served on the executive committee for many years including nine as Federation Secretary, had been a Central Councillor and served on the finance committee.

Organisation was one of Brenda's many strengths. She played a central part in the organising of the National H&H conference in 2013 when it was held in Elgin. She also took it upon herself to visit local shops, hotels and cafés to warn them that there would be an influx of Rural ladies descending on Elgin. It came as no surprise that Brenda then became involved in the planning of the 2017 National Centenary celebrations. She was integral in starting an SWI archive while helping to plan the Centenary exhibition. It was a very proud moment for Brenda when she met The Princess Royal at the opening of the exhibition.

Brenda was such a knowledgeable woman, what she didn't know about SWI wasn't worth knowing. She was known by SWI members the length and breadth of Scotland but it is as a Moray and Nairn member that she will be most missed. Her friendliness, kindness, support, advice and oh, how can we forget that dry sense of humour.

Our thoughts go out to Brenda's husband Gary and her four legged friend Percy.

What's On in the SWI

National Writing Competition – Winners Announced!

We're delighted to announce the winners of the 2025 SWI National Writing Competition!

- 🏆 1st Place: Vanessa Shand, Scone SWI
- 🥈 2nd Place: Mary Hogg, Crosshill SWI
- 🥉 3rd Place: Claire Totton, Monquhitter SWI

A huge thank you to everyone who entered - the standard was incredibly high, and we loved reading each and every piece.

Special thanks also go to our volunteer judge, Jillian Murray, who generously gave her time and expertise to review this year's submissions. Jillian is a retired secondary deputy head teacher - she was "honoured to be asked to judge this competition and was delighted to see the enthusiasm of your members for this theme. The weather is such a familiar topic to us all and it was wonderful to see such personal and unique viewpoints expressed so beautifully."

Read the entries here - rebrand.ly/6cg02zh

Upcoming Events

Online Author Talk with Jennifer Futter

October 14 | 7pm - 8pm

Join us for an inspiring evening with Jennifer Futter, author and fashion designer, as she discusses her memoir *10 Years of Unpicking: A Yarn of Love, Fashion and Survival* in Nairobi. Free for SWI members!

The book has been praised on Goodreads for its honesty, humour and heart. Don't miss this chance to hear Jennifer's story, followed by a live Q&A.

Sign up here - rebrand.ly/pdb9zz8

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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

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Dried Winter Wreath Workshop

November 29 | 12pm - 2pm | SWI Office

Celebrate the festive season with our Dried Winter Wreath Workshop in collaboration with The Crafty Hen!

Learn to create your own beautiful, long-lasting wreath using locally sourced dried foliage, mini pinecones, dried oranges, cinnamon, and eco-friendly trims.

What's included:

- All materials and expert tuition
- A glass of fizz to enjoy while you craft
- A sustainable wreath that lasts up to 24 months!

Get tickets here - rebrand.ly/rw8dmum

SWI Annual Christmas Quiz & Fizz

December 11 | 7pm - 8.30pm | Online

It's back! Our annual SWI Christmas Quiz is just around the corner. Join us for a fun, festive evening packed with laughter, surprises, and friendly competition.

The top quizzier will win a £50 Marks & Spencer voucher!

So, grab your team, wear your best Christmas jumper, and pour your favourite tippie, it's going to be a night to remember!

Sign up here - rebrand.ly/yu80le9

Legal Update on UK Supreme Court Ruling

We are currently taking advice regarding the implications of the UK Supreme Court decision so that we can ensure that the 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 have completed their consultation and are currently updating their Code of Practice for services, public functions and associations and our review will need to take account of 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.

We are here to support members and if you have any questions, please get in touch for advice.

Your exclusive member benefits

A little reminder that SWI members have a special 5% discount on any Wendy Wu Tour – and the best part is that this can be used in conjunction with all the fantastic offers shown below. Explore offers here: **www.wendywutours.co.uk**

From cherry blossoms in Japan to vibrant adventures across Southeast Asia and beyond, Wendy Wu Tours take care of every detail – including flights, hotels, meals, expert guides, transport, sightseeing and entrance fees.

It's the perfect way to explore the world with confidence, and now with even more value as an SWI member.

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

Bloom and Wild

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

15% off flowers and gifts

CODE: THESWI15B&W

Willowberry skincare

www.willowberry.co.uk

10% off products

CODE: 10offSWI

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.

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.

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.

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

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Thank you!