



Welcome to Members' News – Members Gathering Special Edition

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

PTickets are on sale - don't miss out!

It's finally here! Tickets for this year's Members' Gathering at the Apex Hotel in Dundee are officially on sale on the new SWI website!

Mark your calendars for September 11 & 12 and get ready for two unforgettable days packed with friendship, inspiration, and plenty of fun. From engaging speakers to interactive workshops (and a few surprises along the way!), this is your chance to connect, learn, and make lasting memories with fellow members.

Special Members' Discounted Multi-2-Day Ticket: £110

Friday Day & Evening Ticket: Members: £70

Saturday Day Ticket: Members: £60

Visit the Members Gathering Website - <https://www.theswi.org.uk/members-gathering-2026/>

The programme is here, and it's packed with excitement!

09:00 – 10:00 | Registration & Refreshments

Doors open for registration. Collect your pass, enjoy tea and coffee, and take time to catch up with friends, old and new.

10:00 – 10:15 | Welcome

National President's welcome and an engaging overview of the Members' Gathering, introducing the highlights and what to look forward to across the two-day event.

10:15 – 11:15 | Guest Speaker - Stuart Johnstone, Editor - People's Friend Magazine Uncover the fascinating story behind People's Friend magazine and explore its rich heritage, enduring charm, and the impact it has had on generations of readers.

11:15 – 11:30 | Comfort Break

11:30 – 12:30 | Guest Speaker with Q&A – an exciting announcement coming soon.

12:30 – 13:30 | Members' Lunch and Social Gathering

Enjoy lunch while exploring the exhibitor stands and catching up with friends.

13:30 – 14:30 | Guest speaker with Q&A – an exciting announcement coming soon.

14:30 – 16:30 | Learning Workshops or 'Oot an' aboots' (Pre-booked)

Choose how you spend your afternoon – join an inspiring, hands-on workshop to learn new skills and spark your creativity, or head 'oot an' aboot' for a relaxed, guided outing and enjoy exploring beyond the venue.

16:30 – 18:30 | Free Time

Relax, have dinner, explore the city and get ready for the evening activities.

Friday Evening Activities

18:30 | Official Exhibition Opening by the Lord Provost of Dundee – National Handcraft Competition (Vaughan Nash)

Celebrate the opening of this colourful exhibition, featuring handcrafted festival-inspired creations from members across the country.

19:30 | Drinks Reception sponsored by SWI Investments Partner, LGT Wealth Management

20:00 – 23.00 | Evening Entertainment 'SWI's Got Talent'

Enjoy lively performances, an exciting raffle, and plenty of opportunities to socialise, all hosted by the warm and witty comedian Susan Morrison.

Day 2 - Saturday 12th September

09:00 – 10:00 | Registration & Refreshments

Doors open for day 2 registration. Collect your pass, enjoy tea and coffee, and take time to catch up with friends, old and new.

10:00 – 10:15 | Welcome

National President's welcome, featuring highlights from day one and a helpful walkthrough of the activities and events planned for day two.

10:15 – 11:15 | Guest speaker with Q&A – an exciting announcement coming soon.

11:15 – 13:15 | Learning Workshops or 'Oot an' aboots' (Pre-booked)

Choose how you spend your morning – join an inspiring, hands-on workshop to learn new skills and spark your creativity, or head 'oot an' aboot for a relaxed, guided outing and enjoy exploring beyond the venue.

13:15 – 14:15 | Members' Lunch and Social Gathering

Enjoy lunch while exploring the competition entries and catching up with friends.

14:15 – 15:00 | Craft Experts Panel and Q&A

Discover how the SWI's NDS collection can ignite a creative movement across Scotland. Gain new insights, exchange ideas, and join the conversation shaping the future of craft.

15:00 – 15:30 | Comfort Break

15:30 – 16:30 | Saturday Kitchen Live – Chef Sarah Rankin & Food Writer

Enjoy an exciting live cooking session with a renowned chef and an acclaimed food writer, packed with expert tips, delicious inspiration, and plenty of culinary creativity.

16:30 – 16:40 | Closing Remarks & Farewell

Please note: While the programme has been carefully planned, details may be changed, refined or adjusted as arrangements are finalised.

Members Gathering' Guest Speakers

Stuart Johnstone, Editor of the People's Friend Magazine

Friday 11th Sept 10:15 – 11:15

Originally from southwest Scotland, Stuart moved to Dundee to study psychology, but always aspired to be a journalist. After graduating, he joined DC Thomson as a junior news reporter, later moving into feature writing before transitioning into magazines.

In 2023, he became only the 12th editor in the 157-year history of The People's Friend. Now in his 26th year in journalism, Stuart finds magazine publishing both challenging and rewarding, enjoying the collaboration with a talented creative team to produce one of the UK's most enduring titles. He is delighted to be our opening speaker, where he will share how The People's Friend has evolved over the years and continues to remain relevant and popular with its readers.

Guest Speaker

Friday 11th Sept 11:30 – 12:30

Stay tuned for the exciting announcement of the second speaker for the first day of the 2026 Members' Gathering.

Guest Speaker

Friday 11th Sept 13:30 – 14:30

Stay tuned for the exciting announcement of the third speaker for the first day of the 2026 Members' Gathering.

Susan Morrison, Comedian & Evening Host – SWI's Got Talent

Friday 11 Sept 20:00 – 23:00

Susan Morrison is almost old enough to be history. As a stand-up comedian, she's been part of The Stand Comedy Club since it opened, but history is her first love. In recent years she has presented BBC Radio Scotland's Time Travels and House of the Lion and written a history column for The Scotsman newspaper. Her enthusiasm for women's history is boundless and she will be a fabulous evening host. Top tip. Don't get trapped in a lift with her....

Day 2 – Saturday 12 Sept

Guest Speaker

Saturday 12th Sept 10:15 – 11:15

Stay tuned for the exciting announcement of the first speaker for the second day of the 2026 Members' Gathering.

Craft Experts Panel and Q&A

Saturday 12th Sept 14:15 – 15:00

Stay tuned for the exciting announcement of the Craft Experts Panel members for the second day of the 2026 Members' Gathering.

Sarah Rankin, Professional Chef & MasterChef UK Finalist – 'Saturday Live' – cooking demonstration

Saturday 12 Sept 15:30 – 16:30

Sarah celebrates Scotland's Larder, local suppliers and artisan producers in her food writing, broadcasting, chef demonstrations, private chef service and pop up collaborations.

Her two cookbooks; 'Kith – seasonal, Scottish food for family and friends' and 'Feast' – a collection of menus that bring joy,' are available now in all good bookshops.

She is delighted to be hosting our 'Saturday Live' cookery demonstration this year, and says; 'It is a joy to be performing a cookery demonstration to the Scottish Women's Institutes Members' Gathering – a place where stories, skills, and generations meet. To share food in this company feels like weaving warmth, tradition, and creativity into every dish, honouring the spirit of women who nurture both craft and community."

'Saturday Live' – cooking demonstration guest

Saturday 12th Sept 15:30 – 16:30

Stay tuned for the exciting announcement of the guest joining Sarah Rankin for 'Saturday Live' – Cooking Demonstration.

Workshops & Oot an' aboots

Workshops & Oot an' aboots will run on both day 1 and day 2, please remember to prebook when you make your booking.

Straw work with Elaine Lindsay

With over 40 years' experience, Elaine is an expert in straw-work, making items from her workshop in the heart of Aberdeenshire, Scotland. This workshop will take you through the process of making a bookmark out of straw.

Felted hat pincushion with Maz Thorn

Join Maz for an cosy afternoon session crafting your own felted hat pincushion. Her Fabric Fandangos session in 2025 was loved by all who attended and we are sure this session will go down as a treat for all who attend.

Oot an' aboot - Dundee's Discovery Point with Tour Guide Alastair Derrick

Meet at the Discovery Ship for a short guided walk exploring Dundee's history from the Law to the River Tay. Hear stories of treasure ships, the Tay Bridge Disaster, Captain Scott and the Discovery, William McGonagall's infamous poetry, and the heroic Bamse the sea-dog. A lively mix of history, humour, and local tales.

Oot an' aboot - Dundee Statue Trail

Follow Dundee's Statue Trail and explore the city through its public art, discover the stories behind iconic figures and hidden gems, wander from landmark to landmark at your own pace, capture memorable photos along the way, and see how art, history, and community come together across the city.

Felt kanashi flower brooches with Joyce Petrie

Learn how to create delicate felt kanzashi flower brooches using simple folding and stitching techniques. This workshop is perfect for beginners and results in a beautiful handmade accessory to wear or gift.

Christmas 3D decoupage card with Nan Middleton

Nan has been a tutor at the last two Summer Schools so we couldn't wait to have her back teaching SWI members again. Learn the art of 3D decoupage to make your very own Christmas Card.

Tartan wreathes with Christine Donaldson

This session will guide you through shaping, layering, and assembling the materials to create a stylish tartan wreath. Perfect for adding a cozy, decorative touch to your home

Patchwork taster with Rosalie Wilkie

Come and join this hands-on workshop and learn how to create two classic patchwork squares: the Rail Fence and the Cathedral Window, with step-by-step instruction this workshop is suitable for all skill levels.

Sashiko taster with Lorraine McCafferty

Discover the calming and creative world of Sashiko, the traditional Japanese art of decorative stitching, in this relaxed and friendly taster session. Designed as a gentle introduction, this workshop is perfect for complete beginners who would like to have a go and learn the basics in a supportive, informal setting.

Oot an' aboot - DC Thomson building tour

Step inside the iconic DC Thomson building and discover a world where storytelling, creativity, and innovation have thrived for over a century. Home to some of the UK's most beloved newspapers, magazines, and comics, DC Thomson has shaped the imagination of generations.

Women in jute talk with Fiona Roberts

Fiona Roberts is a practice-based researcher and interdisciplinary artist. She is currently a PhD candidate at Norwich University of the Arts, where she also earned her Master of Fine Arts. Before embarking on her PhD, Fiona worked as a practising artist for 30 years alongside a career in cultural project management.

Oot an' aboot - The Verdant Works

Explore The Verdant Works and journey through Dundee's jute heritage, explore original mill machinery and atmospheric factory floors, discover the stories of those who powered the industry, experience hands-on exhibits that bring textile production to life, and learn how Dundee became known around the world as the centre of jute manufacturing.

Competitions & Exhibitions

Vaughan Nash Exhibition

The Vaughan Nash is a national handcraft competition. It celebrates creativity, skill, and presentation in both traditional and modern crafts. Each entry must include five handmade items, displayed together as one exhibit. The items should demonstrate a variety of craft techniques and be arranged to look good as one exhibit and be themed on 'Festivals'.

Dundee Cake Exhibition

The Anne Wallace Sugar Sifter Trophy is the SWI's national baking competition celebrating Scotland's rich culinary heritage and the skill of our home bakers. This year's entry is a traditional Dundee cake, showcasing craftsmanship, flavour, and attention to detail.

Marmalade Exhibition

The Mary Aitken Trophy is a national preserves competition celebrating the time-honoured skills of crafting homemade jams and preserves. This year's entry is a jar of marmalade, showcasing clarity, colour, and depth of flavour.

Sign Up To Take Part

SWI's Got Talent Entertainment

SWI's Got Talent is a fun, feel-good variety showcase celebrating the amazing hidden talents of our members. It's not a competition – just a chance to take the spotlight and share what you love, whether that's singing, acting, magic, comedy, or something completely unexpected!

Raffle Tickets – £1 each or £5 for a book.

The Central Office have sent books of raffle tickets to all Federations for distribution to Institutes. Please sell tickets at any events and gatherings, and remember that anyone can buy—members, friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues. Ensure buyers' names and contact details are clearly written on tickets. The national raffle will be drawn at the Members' Gathering on Friday evening, with winners notified shortly afterwards.

Federation and Institute Prizes!

The Federation with the highest ticket sales will win £200 worth of national event vouchers. The Institute with the highest ticket sales will win £100 worth of national event vouchers. Both winning Federation and Institute will be notified following the Members' Gathering.

Returning Stubs

Please send all folded ticket stubs to the SWI Central Office no later than Friday 28th August 2026, with completed return slip. Alternatively, you can bring along with you on the first morning of the Gathering. Please Note: all stubs must be folded.

Banking Funds

When banking raffle funds, please use the code 'MG' for Members Gathering + your Federation's two-letter identifier (e.g., MGORK for Orkney, MGP&K for Perth & Kinross).

All raffle proceeds go directly toward supporting the Members' Gathering, helping to cover costs such as guest speakers, tutors, and other essential extras that make the event special for everyone.

Raffle Prizes

We are receiving new raffle prizes every week, here are some we have secured so far:

- Bottle of Special Edition Whisky – Glen Moray
- Hamper – Hamlyn's of Scotland
- £100 Voucher – Raasay House
- Membership Card – V&A Dundee
- Handmade Paperweight – Caithness Glass
- Hamper – Galloway Lodge Preserves
- 2 Tickets – Edinburgh Bus City Tours
- £20 – Gift Voucher Doodles Ceramics Workshops
- Votive Candle – Isle of Skye Candle Company
- £50 M&S Voucher – Argyll Federation
- £50 Voucher – Rydale Country Clothing
- Tour & Tasting Voucher for 4 people -Blackthorn Salt
- Treat Selection including Teacakes & Caramel Wafers – Tunnock's
- £50 Tesco Voucher – Orkney Federation

FAQ

Where is the Members' Gathering being held?

This year's Members' Gathering will be held at the Apex Hotel in Dundee, on 11 – 12 September 2026

How much does it cost to attend the Members' Gathering?

Special Members' Discounted Multi-2-Day Ticket: £110

Friday Day & Evening Ticket: Members: £70

Saturday Day Ticket: Members: £60

Non-member rates:

Multi-2-day ticket: £150

Friday 11th Sept: £120

Saturday 12th Sept: £100

Non-Event Attendees: Vaughan Nash Exhibition Viewing Only – Saturday (time-limited slot): £10 per person.

In the spirit of transparency, the venue charges a daily rate equal to 85% of your ticket price. To keep tickets as affordable as possible while paying our speakers and covering essential costs, we rely on competition entries, raffle ticket sales, sponsor support, partners, donations, exhibitors, and the generosity of members who share their skills by running workshops.

What do I need to book a ticket?

To book a ticket you will need, your membership number, email address and to complete payment online.

What's included in the cost of my ticket:

Multi-2-day ticket:

A full two-day ticket to the whole event

Two days of guest speakers with Q&A's

Workshop or Oot an' aboot on each day

Lunch on both days

Craft experts panel with Q&A

Refreshments throughout the event

'Saturday Live' – cooking demonstration

Official opening of Vaughan Nash Exhibition

Drinks Reception

Evening Entertainment

FAQ

What's included in the cost of my ticket:

Friday ticket:

One-day Friday day and evening ticket
Guest speakers with Q&A's
Workshop or Oot an' aboot
Lunch on Friday
Refreshments throughout the day
Official opening of Vaughan Nash Exhibition
Drinks Reception
Evening Entertainment

Saturday ticket:

One-day Saturday ticket
Vaughan Nash Exhibition viewing
Guest speakers with Q&A's
Lunch on Saturday
Craft experts panel with Q&A
Workshop or Oot an' aboot
'Saturday Live' – cooking demonstration
Refreshments throughout the day

What accommodation options are available?

Thanks to Dundee City Council we have a dedicated booking portal for members which shows a selection of available accommodation in Dundee.

Where can I find more info about this year's competitions?

We have a dedicated webpage set up with competition details including the Vaughan Nash Competition, Anne Wallace Sugar Sifter Dundee Cake Competition, Mary Aitken Trophy Marmalade Competition, and our fun members talent show, SWI's Got Talent.

How long does the Members' Gathering last?

Day one – Friday 11th September: 9:00am – 4.30pm | Evening activities: 6.30pm – 11pm

Day two – Saturday 12th September: 9:00am – 4:30pm

Where can I find this year's programme?

We've set up a dedicated webpage giving you a programme of what to expect over the weekend. Please note: In the run up to the event, there could be slight tweaking or amends.

FAQ

What's included in the cost of my ticket:

Where can I find this year's programme?

We've set up a dedicated webpage giving you a programme of what to expect over the weekend. Please note: In the run up to the event, there could be slight tweaking or amends.

How do I get to the venue?

There a variety of travel options available including, public transportation and parking spaces, you can find out more information via the Accommodation Booking portal.

Is this event open to anybody?

Yes this event is open to all members and non-members.

Can I come to the evening event only?

Can I visit the Vaughan Nash Exhibition only?

Can I come to the evening event only?

Unfortunately, we are not taking separate bookings for the Evening activities as its included in the Friday one-day pass. We expect a good attendance and have lots planned with an official opening on the Vaughan Nash Exhibition with the Lord Provost, a sponsored drinks reception and the SWI's Got Talent hosted by the fabulous Susan Morrison.

Can I visit the Vaughan Nash Exhibition only?

We're pleased to share that the venue has kindly offered a dedicated two-hour viewing slot on Saturday, from 11:15am to 1:15pm, exclusively for visitors wishing to view the Vaughan Nash Exhibition. Exhibition-only tickets may be purchased at the door for £10 by cash or card; however, access will be limited to this allocated time. Please note that no refreshments will be available, as a Members' Gathering will be taking place during this period. You can RSVP to view the exhibition-only [here](#).

How do I get my competition entry to the event?

All Federations will be acting as hubs to collect and transport competition entries. We encourage you to get in touch with your Federation to find out who will be attending and how they can best support you with your entry. They'll be happy to help coordinate and make the process as smooth as possible for you. Please don't send any entries to the SWI Central Office in Edinburgh.

Can I buy raffle tickets at the event?

You are able to purchase raffle tickets on the Friday 11th before the draw on the Friday evening – please find a member of SWI staff to help.

Member Discounts

Wendy Wu Tours: 5% off all tours, can be used in conjunction with other offers

CODE:SWI5

Take a look - <https://www.wendywutours.co.uk/>

Bloom & Wild: 15% off flowers & Gifts

CODE: THESWI15B&W

Take a look - <https://www.bloomandwild.com/>

Willowberry: 10% off skincare products

CODE: 10offSWI

Take a look - <https://www.willowberry.co.uk/>

The Edinburgh Woollen Mill: 20% off all clothing products

CODE: SW25

Take a look - <https://www.ewm.co.uk/>

The Crafty Kit Company: 20% off craft kits, supplies and gifts

CODE:SWI20

Take a look - <https://www.craftykitcompany.co.uk>

Please Note that all discounts are only available online and are not for in store use.

Member Support & Benefits

National Benefits:

- Take part in national events – From the SWI Summer School and Study Tour to the Members' Gathering and competitions.
- Learn new skills online – Enjoy free online events, a library of YouTube “how-to” videos, and scholarship opportunities.
- Use the membership toolkit – Access ready-made templates and ideas to promote your Institute and celebrate members’ achievements
- Enjoy exclusive discounts – Take advantage of great savings and special offers just for members.
- Stay connected – Receive our monthly members’ e-newsletter and quarterly Heritage Project updates.

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 [here](#).

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 [here](#)

Do you want to receive event alerts?

Subscribe to SWI's Eventbrite page 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

Alternatively, if you have a grumble to share, please follow our complaints procedure to ensure that you receive an appropriate and timely response.
