



Welcome to Issue 44 - 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 you got 10 minutes?

Members are at the heart of everything we do at SWI, and this short survey is your chance to tell us about your membership experience – what’s working well and what could be improved.

Your feedback will directly influence how we support members, Institutes and Federations in the years ahead.

It’s really important that members take part – feel free to share the survey link or pass over to member friends. The more responses we receive, the better we can make decisions that truly reflect the views of our whole membership.

Inspiring speakers joining us for the Members’ Gathering in September

We are delighted to announce two exciting new speakers at the Members’ Gathering in September.

Leonie Bell, Director of V&A Dundee joins us for an inspiring talk about the V&A. As Director, Leonie leads the organisation from its spectacular home on Dundee’s reimagined waterfront and delivers the museum’s vision to inspire and empower through design and to champion design and designers.

Julia Bryce, Journalist, Broadcaster and Content Creator Joins our ‘Saturday Live’ Cooking Demonstration with Sarah Rankin. As former Head of Food and Drink at DC Thomson, Julia led coverage across major titles including The Press and Journal and The Courier interviewing world-renowned chefs.

Enter the raffle – Amazing prizes await

Don't miss your chance to win fantastic prizes while supporting the Members' Gathering! Prizes will also be awarded to the Institutes and Federations with the highest ticket sales.

Prizes include afternoon teas, tours, experiences, hampers, vouchers, artisan treats, plus whisky, gin, chocolates and more, there's something for everyone in this year's raffle!

Get your tickets through your local Institute or Federation. Tickets are open to everyone, so invite family, neighbours, and work colleagues to join in!

Members Gathering – Exclusive offers

Dundee City Region Convention Bureau are thrilled to welcome you to Dundee! As their special guests, they invite you, along with your friends and family, to make the most of your visit in September.

The local tourism partners have provided fantastic deals on dining, gift ideas, visitor attractions, outdoor activities, and more, making your visit truly unforgettable! Consider extending your stay and setting aside some time for you and your loved ones.

They hope you have an inspiring time at the Members' Gathering and can explore all the magnificent experiences the region has to offer!

A thank you to our Members' Gathering sponsors

We extend our thanks to LGT Wealth Management for their generous sponsorship of the SWI Members' Gathering evening drinks reception. Their support plays an important role in bringing our members together and making this event possible.

An update on safeguarding

A new safeguarding initiative is being rolled out across the membership in Scotland to support the safe and welcoming spaces you help create. As part of your membership support, we're pleased to share a new, easy-to-use policy template that individual Institutes and Federations can download from the new website.

To help members feel confident using the guidance, we'll also be holding a short online briefing session, which we plan to deliver at the beginning of April 2026. The session will be recorded so anyone who can't attend can watch it afterwards.

For most members, this won't feel new, it simply puts into writing the steps you already take when looking out for each other and helps us meet our responsibilities consistently. If you have any questions, please get in touch by emailing: hello@theswi.org.uk

Book your place at the SWI AGM

Members are warmly invited to attend the Scottish Women's Institutes Members' Annual General Meeting 2026, which will take place online on Saturday 16 May 2026 from 10:30am–12:00pm.

The AGM is an important moment in the SWI calendar. It's an opportunity to hear key updates, reflect on the progress we've made together, and look ahead to the future of our organisation.

This year's meeting will also mark a special milestone as Mary Burney concludes her term as National President and hands over to the incoming President. We will also warmly welcome our new Trustees and committee members as they begin their roles and help shape the next chapter of SWI.

We hope many members will join us online to take part in this important moment for our organisation.

Thank you for your interest in the Triennium

Thank you to everyone who has expressed interest in supporting the organisation during the upcoming Triennium. We really appreciate members putting themselves forward and offering their time, skills and experience.

We're pleased to have secured several names for the Board and for our committees. However, we are still looking for more members to join the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees, so recruitment for these roles will remain open.

We need you. Representation from across Scotland helps create a strong and diverse governing Board, bringing different perspectives and experiences to the organisation's work.

If you're interested in getting involved, or would like to learn more about the roles, we would be very happy to hear from you.

Nominate an outstanding member

Is there a member of the Scottish Women's Institutes who inspires others through their dedication and hard work? Perhaps someone whose commitment, energy, and generosity have made a lasting difference to their Institute, Federation, or local community? Why not nominate them for the Margaret Whiteford Award?

This award shines a light on those outstanding members who truly represent the values and ethos of the SWI. If you know someone whose contribution deserves special recognition, we warmly invite you to put their name forward and help us celebrate the difference they make.

Submit your nomination via the SWI website.

New member discount available

Get ready to shop and save! We're excited to bring you an exclusive discount from Rydale. Members can enjoy 10% off all non-sale items with the code SWI10. Whether you're refreshing your country wardrobe or treating yourself to something new, this is the perfect excuse to indulge.

Simply enter the code in the "Gift Card or Discount Code" box at checkout to unlock your discount.

Board Trustee Anne Kerr featured In new ACWW podcast

To mark International Women's Day, the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) have released a special episode of the Leadership for Equality Podcast.

The episode features Anne Kerr (Board Trustee, Scottish Women's Institutes) alongside Magdie de Kock (ACWW World President), Casey Daudelin (ACWW Engagement Officer) and Winnie Tushabe (Youth Initiative for Community Empowerment, Uganda).

Together they explore the upcoming International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026 and the vital leadership role rural women play, from challenges facing agricultural communities in Scotland to investment in regenerative farming in Uganda.

Watch the episode on the ACWW YouTube Channel.

A Creative and Crafty Weekend

A huge thank you to all our wonderful members who volunteered and stopped by our stall at the Creative Crafts Show!

Our Make and Takes hosted by Clare Greig, Margaret Crawford and Sharon Murdoch, went down an absolute treat with attendees at the show, we can't wait to be back at the show in October for another fun filled weekend of crafting.

Made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players.

SWI National Events

Online talk: Victorian Costume Balls

23 March – 7pm

Join Melissa, founder of the Historical Crafts Society, for a fascinating online session on Victorian costume balls.

This light-hearted inquiry into the extravagant fancy dress of the 19th century is perfect for history and textile fanatics alike.

Melissa encourages you to occupy your hands while you enjoy her talk, so feel free to knit, crochet, sew or draw along!

Online talk: 'Wilderness Mum' with Kate Barron

8 April – 7pm

Join author, adventurer, and mother Kate Barron, also known as Wilderness Mum, for an inspiring online talk about her extraordinary journey of adventure, resilience, and motherhood.

Drawing on her experiences and her new book Wilderness Mum, Kate's story is honest, moving, and empowering.

This talk is perfect for anyone curious about adventure, parenting, the outdoors, or simply seeking inspiration to live life on their own terms.

Skillshare: Boutonnière Mini Workshop

15 April – 1:30pm

Join us at the Scottish Women's Institutes Central Office for a relaxed and creative afternoon learning the art of floral accessories.

Led by experienced SWI member tutor Linda Galloway of Wigtownshire Federation, this hands-on Skillshare workshop will guide you through the process of creating beautiful boutonnières using both fresh and silk flowers. These small floral designs are perfect for weddings, special occasions, or simply adding a touch of handmade charm.

The session will also explore how to create a corsage, giving you the chance to try another classic floral design.

This friendly and informal workshop is ideal for anyone who enjoys crafts, flowers, and learning new skills. No prior experience is needed.

New SWI stand at the Ideal Home Show

We're delighted to be taking part in the Ideal Home Show this May, where several of our talented member tutors will be delivering hands-on craft workshops. These sessions will be available to book in advance via the Ideal Home Show website. In the meantime, why not head over to their site and take a look at the exciting speaker and demonstrator line-up that has already been announced.

Preparations are also underway for the Royal Highland Show. We expect the entry form for the Scottish Handcraft Championship to open shortly, but you can already view the schedule on the SWI website so now is the perfect time to start crafting and planning your entry!

The SWI makes its way to Haddington

We are delighted to announce the launch of our new Institute in Haddington, we had a fantastic turnout for the first meeting!

A huge thank you to the wonderful ladies of the East Lothian Federation for their support in helping grow our membership, your encouragement makes all the difference.

All topped off with homemade cakes, fun, and plenty of laughter, the perfect way to celebrate!

Say hello to Hannah

Hannah will be attending a series of member events during May and June exploring the positive health and wellbeing effects provided by community and crafting. Be sure to say hello if you see her at an event later this year.

Diane Cooper CEO said "We are delighted to welcome Hannah to the SWI as a student intern. University partnerships are important to the SWI, and through her research Hannah will help highlight the health and wellbeing benefits our Institutes provide to members, while also helping to educate audiences outside the SWI about their importance."

"Hello everyone!

My name is Hannah, I am 25 years old and originally from Denmark. I am currently in Scotland, in Edinburgh, because I am studying a masters in Medical Anthropology - and as a part of my masters. I am going to be with the SWI for a couple of months while working on my dissertation. I hope to meet and get to know (some of) you during this time.

When I am not studying, I do quite a bit of training and working out, and I am a part of both the kickboxing and weightlifting society at the university. I also love baking (I have a sourdough starter, her name is Karen), crocheting (mostly scarfs and sweaters), reading (my recent obsession is Pride and Prejudice, which I have read multiple times), watching movies and hanging out with all the great people I have met here."

National competitions

Spoken Word Competition (Variations on a Theme): "Nostalgia"

2 May 2026

Kindly hosted by Angus Federation, the event will celebrate members' creativity and performance skills.

Deadline for entries: Friday 3 April

Final information & running order distributed to Federations: Friday 17 April

National Golf Competition

8 June 2026

Hosted by Renfrewshire Federation at Gleddoch Hotel, Golf & Country Club.

Players are welcome to play a practice round on Sunday 7th June 2026 at £20 per player

Deadline for entries: Friday 8 May

Final information & draw distributed to Federations: Monday 25 May

Photography Competition: "Hands at Work"

Capture people's hands in action:

crafting, gardening, cooking, knitting and tell a story through your lens.

Deadline for entries: Friday 23 October

Winners announced: November 2026

Writing Competition: "All Things SWI"

Submit a 250–300 word newspaper-style article (including a headline) exploring the memory, meaning, or magic behind anything SWI related.

Deadline: Friday 18 September

Winner announced: October 2026

The National Ruralympics will be taking place in October 2026 (exact date to be confirmed) A big thank you to Ross-shire and Sutherland Federation who will be the host this year.

Member Discounts

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

CODE:SWI5

Rydale: 10% off country clothing – limited to non sale items only

CODE: SWI10

Bloom & Wild: 15% off flowers & Gifts

CODE: THESWI15B&W

Willowberry: 10% off skincare products

CODE: 10offSWI

The Edinburgh Woollen Mill: 20% off all clothing products

CODE: SW25

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

CODE:SWI20

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.