



Welcome to Issue 45 - 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

Help Us Reach 2,000 Voices!

So far, 1,850 responses have been submitted to this year's Membership Experience Survey. We've had representation from all 28 Federations, which is excellent.

Help us get closer to 2,000 by completing the survey.

It's really important that members take part, feel free to share the survey link or pass it on to fellow members. The more responses we receive, the better we can make decisions that truly reflect the views of the entire membership.

New Institute Office Bearer handbook

Federations, we've launched a new handbook designed to support Institute Office Bearers as they take on their new and exciting roles.

Inside, you'll find role descriptions, helpful hints and a section for Institute notes. The PDF is customisable, so you can add the relevant Federation contact details before sharing it with your local Institutes.

A special thanks to Aberdeenshire Federation, who shared an initial draft of the handbook they created to support their Institutes.

Members' Gathering latest news

We are delighted to announce two more exciting speakers for the Members' Gathering in September.

The Maclean Brothers

Ewan, Jamie and Lachlan Maclean are three Scottish brothers who grew up with a shared love of adventure. In

2025, when the brothers spent 139 days rowing 9,750 miles across the Pacific Ocean, from Lima, Peru to Cairns, Australia.

Through the challenge, they raised over £1 million for clean water projects in Madagascar - enough to bring access to safe drinking water to more than 40,000 people. Having returned from the Pacific, they're now working on a book, keen to reflect more deeply on what these journeys have taught them.

Members' Gathering latest news

Anna Campbell-Jones

Based in Glasgow, Anna has spent decades working across interiors, television, product design and public speaking, always with the belief that good design is not about trends, but about how we live and feel.

Many people know her from Scotland's Home of the Year, but her work spans everything from restorative mental health environments to small-batch sustainable products made here in Scotland.

Photography credit: Curse These Eyes

The Vaughan Nash Competition

We understand that many members are currently in the midst of preparing for the Vaughan Nash Competition; however, we have received very few official entries to date.

To help us better gauge numbers, those who intend to enter but are not yet ready to submit their official entry are encouraged to email beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk to advise of their intention to participate.

New Workshop: Oor Wullie Sugarcraft with Margaret Dick & Anne Howat

Join Margaret & Anne for a sugarcraft workshop. Using modelling paste & 'bas relief', a 3D sugarcraft technique, you'll be taken through step-by-step and learn to create your own 3D version of the cheeky chappy Oor Wullie.

Please note: Spaces for this workshop will initially be available to new attendees only. If you've already booked your Members' Gathering ticket and workshops, we kindly ask that you stick with your current selections to give others the chance to secure their place and workshop of choice.

A thank you to our Members' Gathering sponsor

We are pleased to welcome Hamlyns of Scotland as a sponsor of the 'SWI Saturday Kitchen' cooking demonstration at this year's Members' Gathering.

A proudly Scottish brand with roots stretching back to 1881, Hamlyns have long championed the very best of Scottish produce from field to table. We extend our sincere thanks to Hamlyns of Scotland for their generous support.

Happy 4 year Anniversary Beth!

Last week marked Beth's fourth year at the SWI. Her hard work and dedication shine through in the care she brings to her daily conversations with members across the country.

Beyond supporting our members with queries, Beth is the driving force behind our events. From the early planning stages through to the final moments of each occasion, her meticulous attention to detail, boundless enthusiasm and ability to remain calm under pressure ensure that every event is not only memorable and enjoyable, but runs seamlessly from start to finish.

We are incredibly fortunate to have Beth as part of our team, and we look forward to seeing all that she will continue to achieve in the years to come.

Institute spotlight: Largs sewing club

The ladies at Largs SWI have been busy inspiring a new generation of crafters through their sewing club. Truly capturing the ethos of “if you know a good thing, pass it on”, the club has taught over 100 women in the area the valuable skill of sewing.

The group isn't just about sewing. It's the laughter, the encouragement, the shared cups of tea and the friendships that keep people coming back week after week. The atmosphere that Largs SWI has created is something truly special, and that doesn't happen by accident. It reflects the dedication, warmth and hard work of everyone involved.

Is your Institute helping to pass on a craft skill or contributing to your local community? We'd love to see some examples we can share in the next Members' News.

Tag us on Facebook or send an email to hello@theswi.org.uk

National Spoken Word Competition: Spectator tickets now available!

National Spoken Word Competition (formerly known as Variations on a theme)

Saturday 2 May 2026

Tealing Village Hall, Inveraldie, Dundee, DD4 0QW

Focusing on the theme of 'nostalgia', the Spoken Word Competition brings together 11 teams from across the country for an afternoon of storytelling, poetry and performance. Spectators are warmly invited to come along and support the competitors as they take to the stage to share their unique and creative perspectives.

Tickets are priced at £5 each, and includes entry to the full event plus a printed mini programme. It promises to be a wonderful afternoon, not to be missed.

We would strongly encourage members to pre-book their tickets by clicking below, spaces are limited and entry is only guaranteed with a pre-booked ticket.

Book your ticket on the SWI website

AGM – Don't miss out book your place

Members are kindly invited to attend the Scottish Women's Institutes AGM 2026, taking place online on Saturday 16 May, 10:30am–12:00pm.

Join us to hear key updates, reflect on the year, and look ahead together. This year also marks a special moment as Mary Burney concludes her term as National President and we welcome our new President.

We hope you can join us for this important occasion.

RSVP via the SWI website

Nominate an Outstanding Member

Do you know an inspiring SWI member whose passion, dedication, and commitment make a real difference?

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.

The winner will be announced at the SWI Members' Gathering on 11 September 2026 at the Apex Hotel, Dundee.

Deadline for submissions: Friday 31st July 2026

Nominate online via the SWI website

Become an Evelyn Baxter Scholar

We're on the lookout for talented members with skills in Felting (all techniques welcome) or Dorset button making.

Become an Evelyn Baxter Scholar and travel across Scotland to help teach members your specialised craft. Interested? We'd love to hear from you. Simply send an expression of interest to beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk

The craft with the most interest will be selected as the focus for the 2026 scholarship.

Our 2025 scholar, Arwen, has delivered her first class in Fife Federation. We wish her the very best as she continues her tour of 14 Federations over the coming year, sharing her skills and inspiring members across Scotland.

Upcoming Online Events

SWI Health & Wellbeing: Posture for Health Masterclass
Wednesday 6 May | 7 - 8pm

Neck ache, shoulder tension, back pain after sitting, or feeling unsteady on your feet? Your posture affects far more than you might realise, from your breathing and digestion to your energy levels and daily comfort.

In this practical session, movement and bodywork practitioner Jen Wilson will guide you through how common postural imbalances can impact your overall health.

She will also share simple exercises – seated, standing or lying down – that you can start using straight away.

Upcoming Online Events

Online Craft Along: Decoupage Coasters & Candles

Wednesday 27 May | 7 - 8pm

Join us for an evening of creativity. SWI Board of Trustees member Linda McTurk will guide you step by step in making your own decorative decoupage coasters and pillar candles. Whether you're a crafting newbie or a seasoned pro, this online session is the perfect way to relax, get creative and connect with fellow SWI members.

During this interactive session, you'll learn decoupage techniques to transform everyday items into beautiful home décor. Linda will demonstrate each step, and you'll have the chance to follow along in real time from the comfort of your own home.

Upcoming National Competitions

National Ruralympics

Saturday 10 October 2026

Hosted by Ross-shire & Sutherland Federation at Dingwall Academy.

Entries are now open for the National Ruralympics. This fun and friendly competition brings Federations together to test their teamwork, skill, and sporting spirit.

Deadline for initial entries: Monday 31st of August

Deadline for expressions of interest for an additional team: Monday 7th of September.

Final information & draw distributed to Federations: Monday 21st September

Please note: this competition will have a capacity of 24 teams, so we are asking that Federations initially only enter one team to allow for more Federations to get involved.

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. Get snapping!

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 for entries: Friday 18 September

Winner announced: October 2026

External events

Ideal Home Show 22 – 25 May

We are delighted to be taking part in the Ideal Home Show where several of our talented member tutors will deliver hands-on craft workshops. Sessions can be booked in advance via the Ideal Home Show website.

Royal Highland Show 18 – 21 June

Preparations are also underway for the Royal Highland Show. The entry form for the Scottish Handcraft Championship is now open! Time to get crafting!

Submit an entry via the RHS website

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.