

SWI Members' Gathering

Attendee Pack

We are committed to creating as sustainable an event as possible by aiming to make the Gathering more paper-free. This digital delegate pack has been designed to reduce paper use while making information easily accessible for delegates.



SWI Members' Gathering 2026

Dear Attendee,

Thank you for registering for the SWI Members' Gathering 2026 at the Apex Hotel, Dundee, on the 11th - 12th September, 2026. The event is fast approaching, so here is some information to help get you up to speed. If you have any questions please get in touch with us at hello@theswi.org.uk

We're excited for you to join us for two inspiring days of fun, friendship, and learning. The Members' Gathering features an exciting line-up of speakers, including some with strong Dundee connections, interactive workshops and an evening of fun with SWI's Got Talent.

In this pack you will find information about the conference, the venue and Dundee itself. We hope that this proves to be a useful resource, but if you have any further questions we are more than happy to help.

In this pack you will find:

- National President's welcome
- Conference programme
- Attendee list
- List of exhibitors
- Conference Code of Conduct
- Parking and travel information

If anything has changed from when you booked your place, please contact hello@theswi.org.uk to advise of any new allergies, dietary or access requirements, so we can cater to your needs.

Any questions or queries regarding the event can also be addressed to the above email.

We look forward to seeing you at the SWI Members' Gathering 2026.

SWI Team

National President's Welcome

Dear Members,

A warm welcome to everyone attending the SWI Members' Gathering 2026. We are really excited to be bringing members together in Dundee for this special event, celebrating the spirit, creativity, and community that makes SWI unique.

This is a fantastic opportunity to highlight the enthusiasm and dedication of our members as we come together for what will be a memorable weekend; sharing experiences, exchanging ideas and building new friendships and connections.



We have a really diverse programme with an inspiring range of guest speakers, demonstrators and tutors. Starting on Friday with Stuart Johnstone from "The People's Friend", then the amazing MacLean brothers will regale with tales from their adventures before we hear from Leonie Bell from the V&A Dundee.

Friday evening gives you the chance to explore the exhibitions, competitions and hear the results before we settle in for what is bound to be an unforgettable evening as Susan Morrison introduces "SWI's Got Talent". Make sure you bring your raffle tickets with you as the draw will take place on Friday evening.

Creativity takes centre stage on Saturday with interior designer Anna Campbell-Jones, a panel session from Scottish craft experts and then finishing off with a cooking demonstration from the fabulous Sarah Rankin. Throughout the weekend there are a range of workshops and activities taking place delivered by both members and partners.

The "Oot an' About" activities have proved to be very popular and are a great opportunity to discover Dundee's history, culture, and heritage. We have such a wealth of talent and creativity in the SWI hopefully you will learn a new skill that you can take back to your groups because if you know a good thing, pass it on!

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Thank you for being part of this event. Members, staff and SWI partners have worked incredibly hard to put together a programme filled with learning, creativity, friendship, and inspiration. This is a great opportunity to connect with others, celebrate shared passions, and embrace new beginnings together.

I hope you have a wonderful weekend - see you there.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susie".

Susie Finlayson
SWI National President

Programme

Day 1 - Friday 11th September 2026

09:00 – 10:00	Registration & Refreshments
10:00 – 10:15	Welcome – Susie Finlayson - SWI National President
10:15 – 11:00	Guest Speaker – Stuart Johnstone, Editor - People's Friend Magazine, DC Thomson
11:00 – 11:45	Comfort break & refreshments while we prepare for the next speaker
11:45 – 12:45	Guest Speaker with Q&A – The MacLean Brothers, Ewan, Jamie & Lachlan
12:45 – 13:45	Members' Lunch and Social Gathering
13:45 – 14:30	Guest speaker – Leonie Bell, Director - V&A Dundee
14:30 – 16:30	Learning Workshops or 'Oot an' aboots' (Pre-booked)
16:30 – 18:30	Free Time - Relax and enjoy!

Evening Reception

18:30 - 19:15	Official Exhibition Opening by Depute Lord Provost of Dundee Nadia El-Nakla – National Handcraft Competition - Vaughan Nash (upstairs)
19:15 - 19:30	Drinks Reception sponsored by SWI Investments Partner, LGT Wealth Management
19:30 - 20:00	Competition winners and prizegiving, presented by Susie Finlayson & Anne Howat
20:00 - 21:30	Evening Entertainment 'SWI's Got Talent', hosted by the warm and witty comedian Susan Morrison.
21:30 - 22:00	National Raffle
22:00 - 23:00	Social Time

Programme

Day 2 - Saturday 12th September 2026

09:00 – 10:00	Registration & Refreshments
10:00 – 10:15	Welcome – Susie Finlayson - SWI National President
10:15 – 11:15	Guest speaker – Anna Campbell-Jones - Interior Designer
11:15 – 13:15	Learning Workshops or 'Oot an' aboots' (Pre-booked)
13:15 – 14:15	Members' Lunch and Social Gathering
14:15 – 15:00	Craft Experts Panel and Q&A - Lynsey Calder (panel chair) Panel: Susie Finlayson, Lindy Richardson, Gordon Cree, Susan Anderson Kiara Mackenzie and Clare Devaney
15:00 – 15:30	Short comfort break & refreshments
15:30 – 16:30	'Saturday Live' cooking demonstration sponsored by Hamlyns of Scotland – Chef Sarah Rankin & Journalist, Broadcaster and Content Creator, Julia Bryce
16:30 – 16:40	Closing Remarks & Farewell – Susie Finlayson - SWI National President

Please note: This programme is correct at the time of receiving it, however some times/events may be subject to change.

Photography

We want to make sure members will be able to look back at this year's conference for years to come, so we will be taking photos throughout the event. If you'd like to opt out of having your photo taken, please alert **Bobby Veitch, SWI's Marketing and Communications Lead**, upon registration.

Meet our Speakers

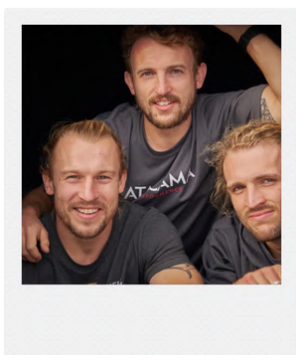


Stuart Johnstone
Editor of the People's Friend Magazine
DC Thomson

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.

[Visit the People's Friend Magazine website](#)

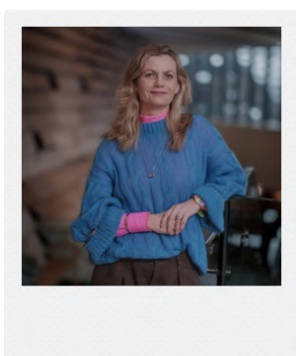


Ewan, Jamie, and Lachlan MacLean
Record breaking rowing team

Three Scottish brothers who grew up with a shared love of adventure. In 2019, they rowed over 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean – from the Canary Islands to Antigua – completing the crossing in 35 days. It was enough to break the previous speed record by nearly six days.

Drawing on 139 days and 9,750 miles at sea – rowing non-stop and unsupported from Peru to Australia – Ewan, Jamie and Lachlan Maclean share what kept them moving when conditions turned, morale dipped, and turning back wasn't an option: how to find a mindset that holds under pressure, the small habits that keep a team together, and what happens when you anchor what you love to something bigger than yourself.

[Visit the MacLean Brothers' website](#)



Leonie Bell
Director of V&A Dundee

As the Director of V&A Dundee, she 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. Leonie is responsible for ensuring that V&A Dundee continues to grow and evolve as a world-class design museum, for deepening the museum's social and civic reach and for welcoming visitors from around the world.

Leonie is an Honorary Professor of Design at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee, a Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellow, a member of the Bonnetmakers Craft, one of the Nine Incorporated Trades of Dundee and a member of the Policy Evidence Centre for Creative Industries Advisory Board.

[Visit the V&A Dundee website](#)

Meet our Speakers



Anna Campbell-Jones
Interior Designer

Anna designs spaces, objects and ideas that help people feel more themselves. Based in Glasgow, she has spent decades working across interiors, television, product design and public speaking, always with a 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 stretches from restorative mental-health environments to small-batch sustainable products made here in Scotland.

She speaks, teaches, writes and designs to encourage confidence and curiosity in the spaces we inhabit. Our surroundings express our identities, and with a little care and imagination, they can help us feel grounded, at home.

[Visit Anna Campbell Jones' website](#)



Sarah Rankin
Professional Chef & Masterchef Finalist

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.'

[Visit Sarah Rankin's website](#)



Julia Bryce
Journalist, Broadcaster and Content Creator

As former Head of Food and Drink at DC Thomson, Julia led coverage across major titles including The Press and Journal and The Courier. She has interviewed world-renowned chefs such as Gordon Ramsay, James Martin, Michel Roux Jr, Nadiya Hussain and Poppy O'Toole throughout her career.

In 2024, she made her Netflix debut on Somebody Feed Phil (Season 7), showcasing Scotland's culinary landscape to a global audience, and hosted the Glasgow date of Phil Rosenthal's European tour.

Julia continues to spotlight Scotland's most exciting food and drink stories through her freelance journalism & social platforms

[Visit Julia Bryce's website](#)

Meet our Speakers



Susan Morrison **Comedian & Evening Entertainment Host**

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....



Craft Experts Panel **Glasgow School of Art & Guests**

This panel will explore how craft can support wellbeing, bring people together and keep skills and memories alive. It will also look at what traditional crafts can teach us today and how we can pass them on to future generations.

Competitions

The Vaughan Nash Competition

The Vaughan Nash celebrates the very best of SWI craftsmanship, showcasing members' talent, creativity, and skill. This year's theme, Festivals invites vibrant, imaginative pieces inspired by celebrations, traditions, and gatherings from near and far. All entries will be displayed at the Members' Gathering.

The Margaret Whiteford Award (Outstanding Member of the Year)

This award shines a light on the members who go above and beyond - the ones whose passion and commitment make a real difference to their Institute, Federation, or community. Thank you to everyone who nominated a member this year. We're looking forward to celebrating this year's winner together.

Evelyn Baxter Competition

This year's Evelyn Baxter Competition invited members to create a macramé necklace, drawing on the techniques taught at the 2025 Beginners' Macramé classes with Evelyn Baxter scholars Sharon Murdoch, Caitlin Davidson, Pam Goodwin & Hazel Lawson.

Dundee Cake Competition

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.

Jar of Marmalade Competition

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.

Competition winners will be announced on Friday evening between 19:30 - 20:00

Look at our workshops

- **Straw work with Elaine Lindsay**

Location: City Quay Suite - Apex Hotel

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 & a dragonfly out of straw.

- **Christmas 3D decoupage card with Nan Middleton & helpers**

Location: City Quay Suite - Apex Hotel

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.

- **Oor Wullie Sugarcraft with Margaret Dick & Anne Howat**

Location: City Quay Suite - Apex Hotel

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.

- **Tartan wreathes with Christine Donaldson & helper**

Location: Unicorn Room - Apex Hotel

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.

- **Women in jute talk with Fiona Roberts**

Location: McManus Room - Apex Hotel

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.

- **Felted hat pincushion with Maz Thorn**

Location: Verdant Room - Apex Hotel

Enjoy a cosy 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.

- **Kanzashi flower brooches with Margaret Crawford**

Location: Keiller Room - Apex Hotel

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.

- **Patchwork taster with Rosalie Wilkie**

Location: Slessor Room - Apex Hotel

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**

Location: Camperdown Room - Apex Hotel

Discover the calming and creative world of Sashiko, the traditional Japanese art of decorative stitching. 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.

Look at our oot an' aboots

- **Dundee's Discovery Point with Tour Guide Alastair Derrick**

Muster point: Look out for a SWI member helper at the rear door of the Apex Hotel

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.

- **DC Thomson Offices Tour**

Muster point: Look out for a SWI member helper outside the front of the Apex Hotel

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.

- **Underground City Quay Vaults Tour with DD Tours**

Muster point: Look out for a SWI member helper outside the front of the Apex Hotel

Step away from the crowds and descend beneath the streets of Dundee into a hidden network of historic vaults. Tucked below the city and long overlooked by the people walking above, these spaces have spent centuries buried and built over.

- **The Verdant Works**

Muster point: Look out for a SWI member help outside the front of the Apex Hotel

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.

- **Do your own thing**

Prefer to skip the workshop or outing? No problem, use the time to explore Dundee, enjoy the shops, relax in a café, and experience the city your way.

Wellbeing space for members

Between the sessions, the workshops and the catching up with old friends, a busy day at the Members' Gathering can fly by fast. That's why we've created a Wellbeing Space just for you - a calm space to relax, recharge, and enjoy a chat with other members.

Pop by whenever you need a moment to sit down, it's your space to relax and recharge in your own time.

SWI Team

Board of Trustees



Susie Finlayson, National
President - Roxburghshire



Clare Greig, National Vice
President - Dunbartonshire



Rita Storr, National Treasurer
Ross-shire & Sutherland



Ann Henderson
Dumfriesshire



Jane Hogg
Dumfriesshire



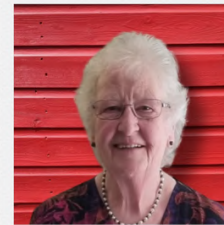
Karen Harrison
Shetland



Julie Cribb
Ross-shire & Sutherland



Heather Coutts
West Lothian



Sybil Stuart
Moray & Nairn



Elizabeth Hay
SC&WP

SWI Staff Team



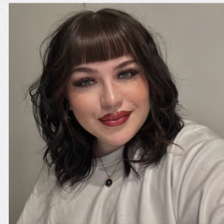
Diane Cooper
Chief Executive Officer



Jacqui McGuire
Head of Finance and Operations



Bobby Veitch
Marketing &
Communications Lead



Beth Spencer
Events & Administration Lead



Roz Galloway
Membership Coordinator

Conference Committee



Anne Howat
Ayrshire



Margaret Dick
Dunbartonshire



Kay Smith
Perth and Kinross



Mary Burney
Stewarty of kircudbright



Elizabeth Farr
SC&WP

Sponsors & Exhibitors

Sponsors



Wealth
Management

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.



We extend our thanks to Hamlyns of Scotland for their kind support of our 'Saturday Live' Cooking Demonstration. Their generosity helps make sessions like this possible and we are delighted to have them be a part of this year's Members' Gathering.

Exhibitors



Scotland's largest health charity work to help people with chest, heart and stroke conditions live life to the fullest. With their Community Healthcare Support Service, they ensure that people across Scotland get the support they need.



Sew Nice/Mac zips will be joining us with a wonderful selection of fabrics and sewing supplies for you to browse. Be sure to stop by their stall it's the perfect chance to stock up on your next crafting project!



SWI Stand

Come and say hello at the SWI stand! Browse our range of merchandise, pick up some raffle tickets for your chance to win fantastic prizes, and chat to the team about any questions or enquiries you might have. We'd love to see you there.

Member Code of Conduct

As the SWI Members' Gathering will be a fabulous showcase of all the SWI has to offer, the aim is for this to reflect the organisation in the best possible way. Let's make this a kind conference!

The SWI is an organisation centred on friendship, education and fun – a place for all women where members are welcomed, supported and able to fully enjoy their membership and utilise all the opportunities that come with it.

To ensure that the SWI Members' Gathering 2026 is a kind conference and the aims of the organisation are realised, all attendees must abide by this Code of Conduct which sets out the behaviour expected of all.

As a part of the SWI:

- **We're kind, considerate and treat each other with respect, always**
- **We share our views, comments and feedback honestly, but always respectfully**
- **We welcome every member with open arms**
- **We look out for the SWI's reputation**
- **We follow SWI policies, because they're there to keep everyone safe and supported**
- **We know mistakes can happen, and we treat them as chances to learn and grow, not reasons to be hard on ourselves or each other**
- **We're proud to represent the SWI and everything we stand for**
- **We ask for help when we need it, and we offer it freely when we can**
- **We treat every member's contribution however big or small as valuable**

The SWI promotes a positive and inclusive culture with zero-tolerance for harassment, bullying and discrimination of any type, and of any behaviour that intends to cause distress to another. Any such behaviour must be reported and will be investigated.

Be kind to all

Getting to the Members' Gathering

The Apex Hotel is located at 1 West Victoria Dock Road, Dundee, United Kingdom, DD1 3JP



Train

There are regular trains from Scotland's major cities, with direct services from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and further afield. Dundee railway station is only around 5 minutes' walk from the hotel. On leaving the station, turn left and head across the car park, cross the road, turn right and walk alongside the old Tay Hotel building, and the hotel will be on your right.

There is also a taxi rank located outside the station. For train times and updates see [Trainline](https://www.trainline.co.uk) or call [0344 811 0344](tel:03448110344)

Bus

The Apex is well served by good bus connections, with Dundee's main bus station approximately 335 metres away, a 5 minute walk. Bus routes serving the hotel include the 21B, 40, 46, 57, 99, E10 and X7. For full timetables see [Xplore Dundee](https://www.xplore Dundee.co.uk) or [Stagecoach East](https://www.stagecoach.co.uk). By getting the bus to the venue you positively contribute towards our efforts as a Green organisation.

Parking

The hotel offers on-site car parking for £7.00 per day of your stay, members should register their vehicle at check-in to avoid a parking charge notice. Alternatively, there are several council-run car parks within walking distance in the city centre, including on Dock Street and Gellatly Street, where charges apply.

Electric Vehicle Charging

Dundee has an extensive EV charging network, including on-street ChargePlace Scotland points close to the waterfront and city centre. For up-to-date locations, connector types and live availability, check the ChargePlace Scotland map before you travel.

For more information:

www.apexhotels.co.uk/destinations/dundee/apex-city-quay-hotel-spa
<https://chargeplacescotland.org/>