



Members News – Issue 50

September 2026

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

SWI members came together in Dundee for two days of speakers, exhibitions, entertainment and friendship at the 2026 Members' Gathering.

"What a fantastic two days our members enjoyed in Dundee," said Susie Finlayson, SWI National President. "The Gathering was a celebration of everything that makes the SWI so special. You could feel the energy and enthusiasm throughout the weekend."

Members were treated to the unveiling of the 110th anniversary branding and inspiring line-up of speakers, including Stuart Johnstone, Editor of The People's Friend, Leonie Bell, Director of V&A Dundee, interior designer Anna Campbell-Jones, and world-record-breaking rowers the MacLean Brothers who received a standing ovation.

A particular highlight was Friday evening's entertainment, which showcased the incredible talents of our members through many performances, including memorable songs and a short play which had everyone in hysterics.

The Vaughan Nash Exhibition offered a wonderful collection of displays celebrating festivals from a wide range of places and cultures, reflecting the creativity and hard work of members across Scotland.

The weekend concluded with a lively cooking demonstration hosted by Sarah Rankin and Julia Bryce, featuring plenty of delicious dishes and culinary inspiration.

A free selection of photographs from the Members' Gathering is available to view and download by clicking the button below.

Congratulations to our Competition Winners

Outstanding Member of the Year – Alice Meston, Catterline SWI

Vaughan Nash Winner – Craigie SWI

Vaughan Nash Runner Up – Blairingone SWI

Nancy MacMillan Trophy – Irene Sloan, Blairingone SWI,

President's Choice – Fiona Walker, Echt SWI

Mary Aitken Trophy (jar of marmalade) – Lynne Davidson, Duffus SWI

Anne Wallace Sugar Sifter Trophy (Dundee Cake) – Moira Garden, Durris SWI

Evelyn Baxter Competition – Clare Greig, Millig – Helensburgh SWI

Here's what members had to say about the Members' Gathering:

"It was lovely to meet up with members across Scotland that I'd met at previous events but I also made lots of new acquaintances"

"Every speaker had a great sense of humour and held your concentration. Great atmosphere. Really enjoyed the weekend."

"Fun, Friendship and plenty of memories which will stay with me forever, I can't wait for the next one!"

"It is really special to meet women from all over Scotland who love their crafts and making new friends. The organisers must have put in such a lot of work to make it so much fun. The quality of the exhibits were outstanding, a real joy to see."

Special SWI Offer: MacLean Brothers Book

The MacLean brothers, Ewan, Jamie and Lachlan, captivated members at the SWI Members' Gathering with the story of their rowing adventures.

SWI CEO Diane Cooper said: "It was fantastic to welcome the brothers. Their charitable story gave us a fascinating insight into the grit, determination and hard work behind their remarkable achievements."

The brothers have kindly offered SWI members 25% off their upcoming book, Three Brothers in a Boat. Each copy will be signed and include a bookplate containing a few drops of Pacific water they carried home from their row. Members who have already ordered a copy will also receive the special bookplate and a signed edition.

This offer is only available till Saturday 26th September and please use code SWI to receive your discount. What a great Christmas present.

Purchase your copy: <https://www.themacleanbrothers.com/shop/three-brothers-in-a-boat>

Upcoming Project 1917 Meetings

Project 1917 continues to spark new ideas from SWI members on how we can make our 110th anniversary a memorable one. Meetings have now taken place in Edinburgh, Stirling, the Isle of Arran, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, Roxburghshire and the Highlands & Islands.

More meetings are coming up, don't miss out:

- Aberdeen (Garioch Heritage Centre)- Friday 2nd October at 1pm | [Click here to book](#)
- Ross- shire & Sutherland - Dingwall Masonic Lodge 14 November 2pm | [Click here to book](#)

If you can't attend, but want to give us your ideas, please visit this link:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M9DTSBP>

110th Anniversary Brand Guidelines

We were proud to showcase our new anniversary branding revealed at the SWI Members' Gathering this past weekend. As we begin preparations for our celebrations next year, we're delighted to share it with you all.

From 2nd November 2026 you are allowed to use the anniversary branding across social media and your events. A special 110th anniversary Facebook cover will also be made available in the November newsletter.

If you have any questions about our new anniversary branding please email Bobby at bobby.veitch@theswi.org.uk.

Please note: for insurance purposes you must use the current SWI logo alongside the 110th anniversary branding at all times.

Institutes Briefing Pack

As you may be aware, a recent UK Supreme Court ruling has prompted the SWI Board of Trustees to review its approach to membership. The Board has carefully considered a range of factors and gathered initial feedback from members through a survey. Before reaching a final decision in December 2026, it is now seeking direct input from Institutes across Scotland.

Yesterday, Federation Office Bearers received a consultation pack, including a response form to support discussion at Institute meetings. The feedback gathered will help the Board better understand members' views on the ruling and its potential impact on SWI membership.

Institutes are asked to make space at a meeting to discuss the briefing and return the completed response form to Federations by email no later than 18 November 2026. Federations should then forward all completed responses to the SWI Central Office by 25 November 2026.

The Board of Trustees are looking to make a decision in December 2026.

Members who are unable to attend an Institute meeting are encouraged to submit their response form directly by emailing hello@theswi.org.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to engage with this important consultation and for your continued feedback and support.

National Fee Increase Reminder

A small reminder that the National Membership Fee for the year 2026-2027 will be increasing from £33 to £36 from 1 November 2026. If you pay directly to the SWI via direct debit you should also receive an email notification closer to the time to remind you of the increase.

If you have any questions about how this impacts you or your institute please reach out to the central office team by emailing hello@theswi.org.uk.

Celebrate 110 Years of SWI with Our Limited Edition Anniversary Tote Bag

Mark this special milestone with our exclusive SWI 110th Anniversary tote bag, now available to purchase from the SWI Shop for just £4.

Created to celebrate our upcoming 110th anniversary next year, this limited-run tote features the beautiful anniversary branding designed especially for this landmark occasion.

Whether you're treating yourself or looking for a thoughtful gift for a fellow member, these commemorative bags are a wonderful keepsake of this historic celebration. With only a limited quantity available, be sure to secure yours before they're gone.

Institute Spotlight

Berriedale SWI celebrate their 90th Anniversary

Members gathered for a beautiful afternoon tea, music, and a sing-a-long, followed by a gorgeous celebration cake.

They looked back over decades of memories, from the MacMillan Walks that raised over £7,500 in total, to prize-winning bulb shows, Christmas parties for local children, and unforgettable outings across Caithness and beyond.

Congratulations on 90 amazing years of friendship, learning and fun.

If you'd like to be featured in an upcoming issue of Members' News please send an email to hello@theswi.org.uk

External Events

The Creative Craft Show 2026 Volunteers Wanted

Are you passionate about crafts and the SWI? Then we'd love to have you as a member volunteer at this year's creative craft show, taking place from 22 to 25 October 2026.

Members who volunteer will be provided with a ticket to the show.
For more information on specific times and availability, please email Beth at Beth.spencer@theswi.org.uk

Royal Highland Show 2027 Class List Now Available

We're excited to share the class list for the 2027 Scottish Handcrafts Championship at the Royal Highland Show.

Further details, including classes and entry information, will be shared in the full schedule, which will be published in spring 2027.

Please email the RHS directly should you have any questions.

Berriedale SWI celebrate their 90th Anniversary

Berriedale SWI members marked their 90th anniversary with a lovely afternoon tea, music, a singalong and a celebration cake.

They shared memories from across the decades: Macmillan walks that raised more than £7,500, prize winning bulb shows, Christmas parties for local children and outings across Caithness and beyond.

Congratulations to Berriedale SWI on 90 wonderful years of friendship, learning and fun!

Berriedale SWI meet at Portland Hall In Berriedale, Caithness on the northeastern coast of Scotland

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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.