All Things SWI

Since its founding on June 26th in 1917, village halls across Scotland have played host to groups of women who came together, to chat and socialise over countless cups of tea. Pots of tea accompanied by trays and more trays of home baking! The SWI was founded by a suffragette and farmer named Catherine Hogg Blair. It is unlikely she would have imagined the organisation would grow to the size it is today. Presently, the SWI has over 8,000 members spread throughout Scotland within 400 institutes. Women of all ages come together to craft, bake, learn new recipes and crafting techniques, to laugh and most importantly, to support one another.

Throughout this time, the SWI has been a steady presence through times of great change - economic shifts, new technologies and even the rise of social media. Who could have predicted that their meetings could be held over Zoom, a steep learning curve for some of the more elderly members apparently, not used to new fangled technology! Marjorie being told she was on mute whilst she mouthed back at the gathered faces on the many small screens, “Can you all hear me?”. And Meggie wondering why her screen is upside down so she looks like a bat hanging from the rafters “But I don’t know how to change it!!” Humour has always been top of the agenda at the SWI.

But, that is what the SWI is and always will be about, bringing women and communities together. Sharing skills, fostering friendships and improving life in the community. One can imagine Catherine Blair looking ahead to the future and thinking, “One day, women will vote, lead and have important roles in society. And more importantly - there will be competitions for the best fruit scones and strawberry jam!”