



SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB



Jacinta Campbell – ‘A Crafting Life’

NEWSLETTER No. 67 January 2026

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Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to the January 2026 Newsletter. The SUWC's Chair and Committee send you best wishes for 2026.

A big welcome to Wendy Jenrick, our new Chair, and a 'thank you' to Alison Allen-Booth and Rosemary Hannon who have been our very capable Co-chairs for two years. The handover seems to have gone smoothly and Wendy is already immersed in SUWC matters.

A personal 'thank you' to all those who have contributed excellent reviews to this newsletter reminding us of the events we have enjoyed.

We hope you enjoy the 2026 programme of events which the Committee has planned for you. We have been lucky to attract some excellent speakers. Details of forthcoming events are in the newsletter so please put them in your diary. The previews will, hopefully, whet your appetite. They include: a variety of talks by people such as Professor Dame Pamela Shaw, Director of SITraN, on its breakthrough of treatments for neurological diseases including motor neurone disease, Ben Keywood of the Sheffield/Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Emily Pieters, Chief Executive of the Harmony Works project, together with a summer tea party and outing which are currently being planned.

It is important to recruit new Committee members as part of the succession and to bring new ideas and skills. If you are interested in joining the Committee please let a member of the Committee know.

As usual, this edition of the newsletter will be offered by email to all members and in print form only to those who have expressed a wish for a hard copy. Please help us by collecting those hard copies at meetings, wherever possible, to save on postage.

Pat Holmes, Editor

RECENT EVENTS IN 2025

22 September: Coffee Morning and Book Swap

The autumn equinox what a glorious day for the first meeting of the 2025/6 season! Tapton Hall was gloriously surrounded by beautiful trees preparing for the leaf colour change and the long winter ahead. There was more colour and conversation inside the hall where we met up for a start of season coffee and book swap. The September sun shone through the windows and the room was noisy with general greetings and joy at seeing friends again after the summer break.

Alison, our co-chair, greeted us all. New members were welcomed and introduced into the groups and there were several prospective new members, who got special treatment as we discussed and dissected our summer activities and excursions. It was particularly good to have time to socialise without a time scale since it is not always possible at talks as other commitments occur.

The bi-annual newsletter had been emailed out and paper copies were available, so that we now have our own individual schedules to transfer to our diaries. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the newsletter – thank you, Pat!

Helen Eyre

22 October: AGM

Co-Chairs' Report Presented by Alison Allen-Booth and Rosemary Hannon

This year has been the second for us as interim Co-Chairs and we hope that, together with our very supportive Committee, we have provided an interesting and varied programme of talks and other events for you.

Following the AGM last year we had, what is becoming a bit of a tradition, a talk by one of our members. Jill Lauriston gave us a history lesson on bookmaking which she illustrated with many samples of her own work.

This was followed in November by a fascinating talk by Professor Gavin Reynolds on mental illnesses, in particular schizophrenia, and the drugs used to treat it.

In December we were back at the Hallamshire Golf Club for our Christmas meal preceded by Chris Reece's delve into the history of Sheffield's theatre and music hall world.

In January a few days before Donald Trump was sworn in as President of the USA for the second time, Professor Richard Carwardine gave us his reflections on the history of the American Presidency, ending with a few comments on his thoughts for the future!

During the spring Becki Hastings told us the story behind Gareth Malone and the Military Wives Choir and how she and the other members of the choir were top of the hit parade on Christmas Day 2011.

We also heard from local author Clare Jenkins who took us on a journey through India in search of the dwindling Anglo-Indian community, based on her book 'Teatime at Peggy's'.

And in May we had an inspiring talk by Tim Renshaw, the CEO of the Archer projects, about its work with the homeless community in Sheffield.

On a rather wet and gloomy June day we made our way to Wentworth Woodhouse for our summer outing. We had an excellent talk on the extraordinary history of this stately home by David Allott, Lead Guide and Archivist, and a tour of the house focusing on the many different women who had played a part in that history.

Hallam Community Hall was the venue for our final event of the 2024/25 season - a Summer Afternoon Tea Party - where we enjoyed tea, cakes and chat and a plant swap.

Sadly, during this year three of our long serving members have died: Barbara Barr, Marion Watson and Jenny Street. On a happier note, we have welcomed many new members: Liz Craghill, Anne Holland, Lisa Hopkins, Gill Manifold, Una Moran, (whose mother joined last year), Pauline Pashley, Hilary Shenton, who for many years has inspected our accounts, and Liz White. You are all very welcome.

Throughout this year, we have been very well supported by the wonderful Committee in their various roles for which we are very grateful. Two new members were coopted onto the Committee this year – Wendy Jenrick and Sally Kendall. When we took over two years ago as joint Chairs, it was on the understanding that it was an interim arrangement until someone was willing to take over. We are delighted to say that Wendy has kindly agreed to be our new Chair. Also, Sally is to be the new Membership Secretary and we shall shortly be asking you to accept formally their election.

So, we would just like to say how much we have enjoyed the last two years and to thank you all for your support which we are sure will continue for Wendy.

Alison Allen-Booth and Rosemary Hannon



The AGM was followed by a Talk by Jacinta Campbell 'A Crafting Life'



Not many of us may have realised that Jacinta Campbell's busy and full life has also included varied interests in crafting, but no one was left in any doubt after hearing a talk in which she described a creative journey which began in early childhood and continues to this day. It was a story of close relationships with family, friends and tutors, two special mentors (both of whom were present), of an interest in the natural world and in particular in ferns, a love of colour, of travel, a thirst for learning and above all of enjoyment.

The talk was accompanied by beautiful images and exhibits of her work, and included an exquisite piece of hand embroidery by her Auntie 'Nun' (so called because she had taken holy orders), who was an important early influence on her creativity.

Jacinta's early attempts at needlework were followed by being taught how to knit Aran stitches - by eye, without a pattern - and later she began discovering the joys of attending evening classes and workshops in many

different techniques, only one of which failed to excite her, calligraphy, as it was rather intense and did not involve drinking tea!

The journey took her from homes in South Wales, Southampton and Sheffield and travels to various parts of the world. It exemplifies what I believe is called ‘coddymompling’, i.e. journeying, but with no particular end point in mind! After the knitting and embroidery came the calligraphy, painting, and textiles like patchwork, silk painting, dyeing, felting, appliqué, as well as techniques from Japan, Africa and particularly Australia, a country which holds a special place in her heart, with its strong, distinctive colours and aboriginal influences. Her favourite palette of colours is the warm, earth colours of autumn and the outback. Her latest discovery is the joy of spinning and weaving. All of these different skills can be incorporated in her work, which also reflects her background as a biologist and a scientific approach to looking at landscape, animals and plants.

Even as her ability to thread a needle and travel so much declines, Jacinta is still happy sitting at home at her spinning wheel with her stash of materials, enjoying carrying on creating a very personal and colourful view of the world with modesty, enthusiasm and enjoyment. A Crafting Life indeed!

Jill Lauriston

5 November: Talk by Peter Shiu ‘Secrets behind Numbers – An Introduction to Cryptography Today’



Peter started his fascinating talk with a simple maths lesson which even Mathsphobes couldn't have felt threatened by! To understand how cryptography is used to keep our messages and personal information secure from hackers we need to know a little basic maths and so we were reminded about multiplication, division, factorisation and we learned about the importance of large prime numbers in cryptography.

Along the way to finding out about encoding and decoding we had some fascinating historical detail and insider information. We heard about the code used in the Moscow-Washington hotline in the 1960s and were reminded about how the British with the Poles broke the German Enigma code during WWII. It was interesting to hear how the codes that are routinely used in encrypting our messages and keeping banking safe were developed and Peter relished telling us how in the 1970s the mathematicians at GCHQ had got to the solution of an unbreakable code before the Americans. The problem was that the Official Secrets Act prevented them from publishing, so the Americans got all the kudos. I now know that the three most important mathematicians are Carl Gauss, Archimedes and Isaac Newton and I learned that just as we have a Chief Scientific Officer in the UK, we used to have a Chief Mathematician.

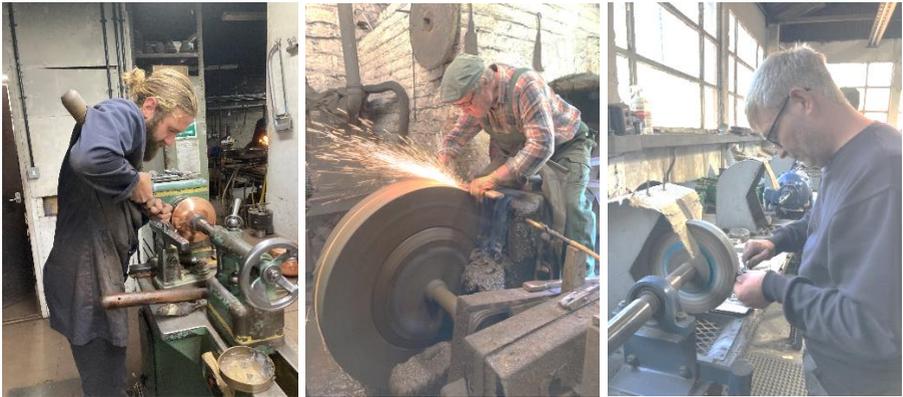
Our journey into cryptography took us from simple secret codes like the Boy-scout-code where a message is encoded by converting the text into numbers prior to transmission and then decoded by the receiver with the key to the code. Simple codes are, however, easy to decode and, therefore, vulnerable to interception or hacking. More sophisticated codes use a random number sheet to encrypt a message (one-time-pad encryption). This random number sheet is used just once so the method is safer, but it may be possible to find the decoding key using computing skills or as Peter had it ‘machines for a brute-force attack’.

Secure messages sent today rely on the multiplication and division of large prime numbers. They use the principle of a one-way function, a simple example being a letter box. Once the letter has been posted, it cannot be retrieved - it is a one-way process. The encryption method for secure messages today uses the mathematical idea that while it is easy to multiply two large numbers ($A \times B = C$), it is more difficult to factorise the solution and from C find what A and B are. So, multiplication in this case is a one-way function. In fact, even supercomputers are unable to factorise numbers with 400 digits. So, the code generated by this process is essentially secure and, unless there is a mistake in the system by the users or a leak, it is essentially impossible to break the code and it is safe from hackers. This method of encoding underpins all the online world - payment by bank cards, passwords for log-in, authentications /verification, digital signatures and so on.

The digital world Peter told us began in the 1970s when mathematics solved the problem of sending messages securely over the internet. I found Peter’s talk gave me a real insight into this digital world and the importance of mathematics and mathematicians.

Lindsay Reynolds

**15 December: Christmas Event:
Talk by Peter Machan, ‘The Last of the Little Mesters’
followed by Lunch**



It was good to see so many members at the Hallamshire Golf Club at our annual Christmas Lunch. There were many familiar faces along with new members enjoying friendship and conversation along with delicious food.

Our speaker this year was Peter Machan, a Sheffield-based author and historian, who really opened our eyes to Sheffield’s ‘Little Mesters’, an incredibly skilled group of people in the knives and cutlery industry. His illustrated talk was fascinating and his personal experiences added to the interest. We tend to think that these amazing skills have disappeared with the decline of industry in Sheffield, but Peter showed us that these skills are still being used today. It was felt that Sheffield doesn’t blow its own trumpet enough!

Although a rather wet and dismal day outside, inside everyone enjoyed themselves and the chatting never seemed to stop!

Margaret Stoddard



Christmas Lunch 2025

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN 2026

at 2.15 p.m. at Tapton Masonic Hall unless otherwise stated

Wednesday, 25 February: Talk by Emily Pieters, Chief Executive of the Harmony Works Project



Emily has been leading the Harmony Works Project since 2017. She is an experienced architect, having qualified in 1997 after studying at the University of Cambridge. Previously she worked with Benoy and was responsible for delivering a £40m redevelopment for Wokingham which won the RTPI ‘Excellence in Planning for a Successful Economy’ Award. Emily grew up in Sheffield and Harmony Works combines her passions of music, architecture, and Sheffield.

Harmony Works will transform the Grade II* listed Canada House in Castlegate in the heart of Sheffield into a home for inspirational music education and opportunity for a wide range of audiences, including especially young people. It will provide an inclusive and accessible hub for music education that celebrates excellence and invites all young people to explore their musical potential. It brings an outstanding Victorian heritage building back into public use for the first time in many years, and will anchor the culture-led regeneration of the Castlegate quarter. Founding partners Sheffield Music Academy and Sheffield Music Hub will be joined by many others, including Brass Bands England, Music in the Round, Orchestras for All, Choir with No Name and Concerteenies.

Monday, 23 March: Talk by Dr Tori Herridge ‘Women in Archaeology.’ Venue Lecture Room



Dr Tori Herridge is an evolutionary biologist at the University of Sheffield, where she runs the MSc in Science Communication. Her post-doctoral work was at the Natural History Museum in London. Her research addresses big evolutionary and environmental questions using a broad range of laboratory and field methods, all underpinned by the rich fossil record from the Quaternary Period (aka “The Ice Age”). She is an expert on fossil elephants, particularly those species which lived in Europe during the Ice

Age: mammoths and straight-tusked elephants. Tori also makes TV and Radio programmes and Podcasts.

Tori is the co-founder of TrowelBlazers, an organisation dedicated to telling the stories of pioneering women in palaeontology, geology and archaeology, and addressing gender disparity in these fields today. She will talk to us about ‘Women in Archaeology’.

**Tuesday, 14 April: Talk by Ben Keywood of the
Sheffield/Rotherham Wildlife Trust**



**Sheffield &
Rotherham**
Wildlife Trust

Ben Keywood will introduce ‘Wild Sheffield’, the work of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust. He will share an overview of its 15 local nature reserves, its work championing nature-friendly farming at Ughill Farm, and some stories on how it supports communities to connect with, and protect, their local wild places. He will also highlight the Trust’s campaigning work for nature, showcasing some of the wonderful wildlife found locally, and offering practical ways people can take action for nature in their homes and local communities. This talk will be lavishly illustrated with photographs of stunning wild places that the Trust cares for across Sheffield and Rotherham. It will also show the diverse range of wildlife that lives there from the smallest insects to our largest land mammal, Red Deer. The talk will touch on the vital connections between these species and how their lives connect with our own, helping to pollinate our flowers, control pest species and improve our wellbeing.

Ben Keywood has a lifelong interest in nature that started at age five, collecting snails and other mini beasts. President of the Rotherham & District Ornithological Society, his ecology work has awarded him associate membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and he is a member of the Royal Entomological Society. A founding member of the Entomological Livestock Group, he has worked widely in the Environmental Voluntary Sector before joining SRWT in 2010. He is now the Trust’s Membership Officer as well as working within its Support Services Team. An advocate of wildlife gardening, he has given advice and talks to groups ranging from the WI to John Lewis and during lockdown in 2020 and 2021 recorded mini documentaries for the SRWT YouTube page from

his own garden. In 2021 he recorded Ben's Butterfly Diaries, an episodic guide to local butterflies for YouTube. Ben has 35 years of studying and recording butterflies and moths with many published records and reports. He is an occasional wildlife holiday tour guide in Eastern Europe specialising in butterflies of the Carpathians region.

Monday, 18 May 2026: Talk by Professor Dame Pamela Shaw 'The impact on Human Health of Translational Neuroscience at the University of Sheffield'



We are honoured to be able to welcome Dame Pamela, Director of the Sheffield Institute for Translational Neuroscience (SITraN) and a multi-award-winning academic neurologist who is also an Honorary Consultant Neurologist at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Some members will remember visiting SITraN a few years ago. Since then, there have been many further developments and the most recent will double the research capacity of this world-leading facility, accelerating the progress of breakthrough treatments for neurological diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and Motor Neuron Disease.

This promises to be an inspirational talk from an inspirational woman.

June: Summer Afternoon Tea Party tbc.

July: Summer Outing tbc.

Monday, 21 September 10 a.m. to 12 noon: Coffee Morning

Our autumn programme for 2026/27 will start with an informal get together where members can meet up and exchange news after the summer. Guests will be very welcome to join us and, as on previous occasions, we hope to have a stall for books.

OUR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS INCLUDE:

The Walking Group

This group meets on the first Tuesday of the month. Members take it in turns to lead the walks, usually for about two hours (not a fast pace) and often finishing with lunch. Because we are a small group, we can tailor walks to the needs of the people joining in any month, for example on flat terrain, or avoiding stiles. Visitors and new members are always welcome. Details are sent out a few days in advance so just ask to join our emailing list.

The Shorter Walking Group

This group meets at 10.00 a.m. on the first Tuesday in the month opposite 26 Riverdale Road for a short walk through Endcliffe Park to a local coffee shop. New members are very welcome.

The SUWC Committee comprises:

Wendy Jenrick (Chair)

Karen Borthwick

Helen Eyre

Pat Holmes (Minutes Secretary/Newsletter Editor)

Angela Karck (Diary of Events)

Sally Kendall (Membership Secretary)

Lindsay Reynolds (Treasurer)

Angela Stewart (Tapton Events Coordinator)

Margaret Stoddard

New Committee members would be very welcome.

Newsletter No. 68 will be published in September 2026.



SUWC Committee