

Summer 2025

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Mothers' Union has a vision of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships.

MU Office and Shop: St Thomas's House, St Thomas's Square, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 1BA
Opening Hours
Tuesdays and Thursday 10.00 am – 3.00 pm
Telephone number and email address remain the same: 01722 333402

mothers.union@btconnect.com

Website address (local): www.salisbury.anglican.org/workingforjustice/mothers-union
Website address (national): www.mothersunion.org

# A Message From Our President - Sandra Gamble



#### The Triennium has begun with a bang!

From the starting gate on January first, we hosted, in March in Sarum College, our new Canadian Worldwide President Kathleen Snow and her entourage from London: Zonal Trustee for Canterbury, Julia Jamieson; Provincial President, Comfort Idowu-Fearon; and MHS Director of Membership, Steph Nunn - during their Southwest Cluster visit to take in the work of the eight dioceses. The Service of Celebration, held in the Butterfield Chapel of Sarum College and led by Salisbury MU Diocesan Chaplain Revd Jacqui Clark, was attended by Bishop Stephen who welcomed Kathleen to the Diocese together with Salisbury, Mayor Sven Hocking and

Sarum College Principal, Revd Canon James Woodward. Back to Canada, Kathleen then flew to Rome to attend the Inauguration of Pope Leo as a member of the Anglican Delegation.

Many of you will have visited the themed "Spirit of Water" Flower Festival in the Cathedral in May where Mothers' Union's splendid floral display was on view, beside the MU Banner in the St Margaret's Chapel, depicting the flow of living water from the mouths of believers and produced by six MU members under the guidance of designer Gil Pelton from the Cathedral Flower Guild.

Also in May, I attended the residential Provincial Conference held at Highgate House Conference Centre north of Northampton. This was newly elected President Comfort's first Provincial Conference following the retirement of Kathryn Anderson who has taken on the elected role of Chair of the Steering Group and Chair-elect of the about-to-be registered "charitable incorporated organisation", Mothers' Union Southwest CIO.

MU Salisbury, as one of the eight southwest cluster dioceses, is a member of the Steering Group and officers - me, Carrie Walsh and Diocesan Treasurer, Suzanne Waters - have been working over the past 2 years on policies, procedures and processes - legal, governance and financial - to assist the Cluster in bringing about creation of the new charitable entity. The first three southwest dioceses intending to dissolve as charities and become part of the new charitable entity are Bath and Wells, Bristol and Winchester (the so-called First Tranche). They are aiming to do this in October of this year, the earliest possible date. The issue is survival, the difficulty in particular, experienced by so many dioceses with declining membership, of attracting volunteers to take on trustee roles. The Second Tranche to consider dissolution and transition early in 2026 will include Salisbury – meaning, not only will we be organising and celebrating Mothers' Union's 150 years (what a feat!), but seriously contemplating, at the same time, our own future!

Trustees will be asking for your help in determining the success of both. As from July, following the Leadership Conference in Liverpool in June, which will launch preparations, there will be a great deal of planning and, hopefully, participation in

making the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary a year to remember. Also one that make anniversary a year to remember. Also one that makes Mothers' Union known everywhere. No more: "I didn't think Mothers' Union was still around" or "No, never heard of you"! And you, as members, will be hearing as well why Trustees believe MU Salisbury needs to become part of Mothers' Union Southwest – while seeking your support to journey with them, still as members of Salisbury Diocese, in this new direction.

To finish, I wish to conclude, with a reminder of a very happy event to come in September this year, again in Oxford: The Canterbury Provincial Gathering on Saturday 27 September in The King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES, the same venue as last year. Bookings are open at £20 per person for members, family and friends. It has been decided that this year each Cluster should do a presentation and, when at the Provincial Conference, the Southwest Cluster DPs got together, the theme chosen was "school" - 10 minutes in total for all eight dioceses to share a project they undertake in schools, hopefully unique to them. What would you say to our Virtual Babies? It is certainly unique.

With love and prayers and God's blessings to you all - Sandra

# **Katheen Snow the Worldwide President and our new Patron**

Mothers' Union has had the privilege of enjoying royal patronage since its foundation in 1876, and we are delighted that Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Edinburgh, has accepted the invitation to continue this tradition.



#### **Chaplain's Chat**

It is with great joy that I write to you again, now back as Chaplain to the Salisbury Trustees. It has been some time since I was last Chaplain to the Trustees of the Salisbury MU, and in the interval, 6 years; I have been working as a Prison Chaplain at HMP Erlestoke and now into my second year of retirement, I have taken up the baton to work with your wonderful Trustees once again.

As the Mothers' Union, we are just a collection of individuals united by faith, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to the dignity and flourishing of families and communities around the world. But who are we, truly? Beyond the programs, the workshops, and the acts of service, we are a spiritual body, a legacy, and a force for transformative love and God knows we need that love in the world right now.

We are rooted in prayer. From our beginning, prayer has been at the heart of everything we do. It is the wellspring from which we draw strength, courage, and

clarity. Through prayer, we align our hearts with God's will, seeking guidance for the challenges we face and wisdom for the work we undertake. Prayer is not just a practice for us—it is our lifeline, our communion with the divine, and the foundation of our mission.

We are a family. This was never more apparent that when we had our recent visit from the WWP, Kathleen Snow, we began with handshakes, we ended the day with hugs. Across continents, cultures, and languages, we are bound together in a unique fellowship. Our diversity is our strength, reflecting the beautiful mosaic of humanity. In each of our members, we see a sister or brother, a reflection of God's image. Looking ahead there will be changes. But we can do this. Are we not advocates for change? The Mothers' Union is not a passive organization. We recognize the injustices and inequalities that persist in our world, and we are committed to addressing them. Our advocacy spans from combating gender-based violence to supporting female empowerment, from nurturing healthy relationships to creating economic opportunities. We do not shy away from the hard work of confronting new systems and structures that help us in this fight. Instead, we step into the gap as agents of peace and reconciliation. We will go on doing this in a new way.

We are custodians of tradition and need to be innovators of the future. Our roots stretch back to Mary Sumner and we honour her vision and the generations of members who have carried it forward. Yet, we also understand the need to adapt and evolve. In a rapidly changing world, our methods may shift, but our purpose remains constant: to bring Christ's love and hope to families everywhere.

We continue to be bearers of hope. In our corner of the globe, the Mothers' Union remains a beacon of light. Through our projects, we provide hope. Hope that lives can be improve and communities can thrive. This hope is not naïve; it is rooted in faith and sustained by action.

Ultimately, we are disciples of Christ, striving to embody His teachings in our daily lives. As the Mothers' Union, we walk humbly in His service, knowing that the seeds of love we plant today will bear fruit tomorrow. Together, we will remain a testament to the power of faith, unity, and determination to make the world a better place for all. God bless each and every one of you as we enter this new Triennium.

#### **Treasurer's Notes**

As I continuing to serve you as treasurer and to date no enquiries from branches, parishes or from an advert in the diocesan Grapevine newsletter, please continue to pray that someone will come forward, perhaps there is someone you now know who might be interested? I really do not want to step down and leave you without a treasurer, especially as we begin our new triennium with perhaps changes afoot. This is the perfect time for someone new.

I would like to say 'A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO All THE BRANCH TREASURERS' without all your help I could not do my job. I would like to arrange a meeting of you all, please could you let me know if you are interested and if the Autumn would be a good time? Email me at: mufinsals@outlook.com My new MU Finance email address.

As always my thanks to Alison Oakes for the sterling work she does in collecting gift aid annually. Don't forget, if you pay the Inland Revenue tax on your earnings, pensions, savings, by completing a Gift Aid form (obtainable from the office, Jenny or myself), we are able to collect 25p in the pound from your annual subscription and any donations you make. Branch treasurers, please remember to check with your members when you are completing the annual subscription forms. Thank you branches for all your fund-raising efforts.

Membership in 2024 was 659, a reduction of 54. Our 2025 membership to date is 534 a further reduction of reduction of 125 members. A big drop in Diocesan and Branch membership. MSH portion for 2025 increased to £24.50. Our diocesan subscription for 2025 will remain at £35 per member and £60 for joint membership.

A Reminder to branch leaders and treasurers that if you are having to consider closing a branch or moving to Prayer & Fellowship group, please in the first instance contact Tracy Whitear, our administrator to be guided on the correct steps to take.

Standing Orders: More important than ever, there are still standing orders that have not been amended to reflect the increase in subscription. Many are still at £26, £27, £28, £30, £32. Please, please can you check that your standing order is up to date? I have been reporting this for several years and still they remain.

Can I take this opportunity to remind treasurers of the Regulation 12. 4. When distributing the funds your Branch has raised, only keep sufficient funds for immediate requirements in your bank account. We have been advised by Mary Sumner House that no branch should be holding more than £200 in their branch account. Anything over this amount should be sent to the Diocesan Office for projects; the exception is if you can show that you have a purpose for any excess amount over £200. If you require a copy of "Regulation 12" please get in touch.

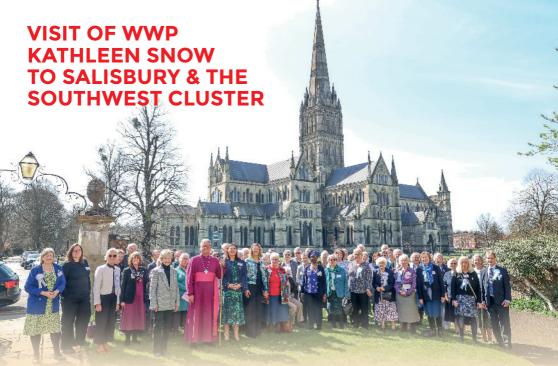
Finally, the Holiday Fund is financially in a good position, branches and individuals have been making donations towards the 'Welcome Packs', thank you everyone and we now hold a substantial amount. As I predicted we have an overspend in 2024 on our working income and expenditure, and there will be one in 2025, so donations to the General fund are needed. **Suzanne Waters** 



### **Harnham Community Teas**

We had a really fun afternoon in January and thought you might like to see the Pluckers Ukulele band entertaining us. We are booking them again for November as brought the hall alive.

Thank you to everyone who was able to be there and with 14 in the band there was little food left over.



On Monday, 31 March, members of Salisbury Diocese's Mothers' Union had the great pleasure of welcoming and hosting, on behalf of the MU South West Cluster of Dioceses, the visit of the Mothers' Union newly commissioned Worldwide President Kathleen Snow - and her party from London, comprising Canterbury Provincial President Comfort Idowu-Fearon, Zonal Trustee Julia Jamieson, and Britain and Ireland Director of Membership Stephanie Nunn.

Kathleen is this week visiting four Mothers' Union diocesan clusters within Canterbury Province, ours being her first stop. Bishop Stephen, together with Revd Canon James Woodward, Principal of Sarum College, and the Mayor of Salisbury, Cllr Sven Hocking, welcomed Kathleen and her party on their arrival in the Diocese.

Representing the South West Cluster of 8 Dioceses and attending the morning Service of Celebration and Worship in Sarum College's Butterfield Chapel, led by Salisbury MU Diocesan Chaplain the Revd Jacqui Clark, were Diocesan Presidents and Trustees from Bath & Wells, Bristol, Exeter, Gloucester, Portsmouth, Salisbury, Truro and Winchester, together with Kathryn Anderson Chair of the South West Cluster Pilot and special guests Caroline Probert, Chair of Trustees of Salisbury Women's Refuge, and our former Salisbury Diocesan President, Rosie Stiven.

Kathleen gave an inspiring Address during the Service, which Bishop Stephen also attended, encouraging us to have joy in our activities within the Mothers' Union - the full text of which will soon be available to read. Lunch in the Refectory preceded an afternoon of cluster dioceses' presentations and an outline of the Southwest Cluster Pilot, after which Kathleen and her party visited the Cathedral for a guided tour and photograph in front of the Mothers' Union Banner.



## Jenny Harrison – The Long Goodbye!

Following the 16
Days Service on
the 19
November in
Salisbury
Cathedral I was
surprised and
overwhelmed to

have a presentation made to me by Sandra of the iconic MU Vase together with a lovely bouquet of flowers. Bru and I were also invited as guests to the lunch in Sarum College. In replying to Sandra's kind words I was able to take the opportunity of saying a few thank-yous and I would like to reiterate them again here.

I started working in the MU Office in May 2005 and so have reached almost 20 years in the role but I was not able to beat the record of 22 years as MU Diocesan Secretary set by Christine Stott who was in post between 1973-1995. Well done Christine! Over the years I have worked with four Diocesan Presidents starting with Bridget Trump, then Ann Howard (who now lives in the Midlands), Rosie Stiven and lastly by Sandra Gamble who will again be Diocesan President in the new triennium. All four ladies follow a different path and bring a different focus to the role but what they all have in common is unstinting hard work, dedication and loyalty to Mothers' Union so thank you and I feel very privileged to have worked with them all and what a pleasure to see Bridget and Rosie here today: three diocesan presidents coming together – what an honour!

Thanks also go to all the trustees, both elected and ex officio, who I have worked alongside over the years for their support and kind words and I have witnessed first-hand their dedication to Mothers' Union even when things have sometimes been a challenge. In particular I would like to thank Suzanne Waters, our Diocesan Treasurer, for making my job so much easier, for being a joy to work with and for her continuing friendship. Of

course I also need to thank all members for their kindness, love and support and to say that I have enjoyed being your Diocesan Secretary – well for most of the time anyway! I am grateful for the friends I have made along the way and a special shout-out goes to June Watt and Rosemary Allen who have been my constant companions over the years and are both still involved in the MU Office. I always say that June taught me everything I know – thank you both for your knowledge, your help as office volunteers as well as companionship and friendship which I hope will continue into the future.

On my last day on the 19 December as Diocesan Secretary I was again overwhelmed by the cards, kind messages and the very generous cheque from members so another thank you to all of you for your kindness. It has been good fun trying to decide how to spend the cheque but I will be buying two framed prints (Rain, Steam & Speed by JMW Turner and Train in the Snow by Claude Monet) and there is still money left over! I shall now wait until the Spring and purchase some items for the garden.

At the 16 Days Service Sandra mentioned that the build-up to my retirement was "the long goodbye" but she could not have anticipated how long since it has now been agreed that I will continue as an office volunteer mainly to tidy up some loose ends which have accumulated over the past decades. Tracy Whitear is now your new Diocesan Administrator and I have no doubt that you will extend to her the same welcome and support that you have given me over the years.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my husband Bru for his support and patience which has enabled me to enjoy my job. Now is the right time for me to move on and focus more on family life. I wish you all well for the future.

- Jenny Harrison

### 125th ANNIVERSARY, 2001

Westminster Abbey was the venue for a service to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Mothers' Union. Attended by our patron Queen Elizaeth II whose message included:

"Mary Sumner's vision now reaches around the world. I pay tribute to the strong faith of the members and the work which characterises the Mothers' Union today."

The theme of the service was tents, (two being erected in the abbey), as Abraham had travelled with tents, MU does likewise around the world. I travelled to London with a fellow trustee, a four-hour train delay meant we missed the beginning of the service, reluctant officials admitted us (no one is allowed entry after the Queen), in time to hear our Diocesan President lead the prayers and an inspiring address from the MU chaplain. Our late arrival gave us a grandstand view of the dancers at the end of the service and a very close view of Her Majety as she left with the Abbey bells ringing out for all London to hear.

The joy of meeting with so many members from all parts of the world made us determined to return to our dioceses to carry on the work of Mary Sumner. As we mingled outside the Abey someone suggested we all went on the London Eye, which we did. Seeing the "pods" full of MU members going around was a fitting memory of a wonderful day.

Next year 2026, we celebrate again. This time 150 years with a service at St Paul's Cathedral. With new President Kathleen who hopes that our new patrol, Sophie Duchess of Edinburgh will attend, with many members from around the world to celebrate Mary Sumner's inspiration and example. **Gillian Mackenzie** 

# Derry Hill Prayer & Fellowship Group

We met on Wednesday, 5 March in Christ Church Derry Hill and as it was also Ash Wednesday Revd Sarah Eddington incorporated the Imposition of Ashes into our planned Holy Communion Service. We were delighted to be joined by MU members from St Andrews in Chippenham and St James' in Trowbridge and our thanks



go to Revd Sarah for a lovely service which everyone enjoyed and said it was a nice way to start Lent. After the service we had refreshments home made by all the MU P&F Group members and all the visitors were given a short history on the church, it's origin and an explanation of the beautiful stained-glass windows. Everyone left feeling refreshed, not so much in body, but

8 definitely in mind and spirit. Barbara Parry



# JEAN DOWNHAM'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Jean, a long-time members of MU, celebrated her birthday in style last November and her son Phil writes:

Jean celebrated her 90th birthday on 16th November at Kingston House in Derry Hill; also there were members of Jean's family and friends from St Mary's

Church, Calne. We all enjoyed a lovely tea provided by the wonderful staff at Kingston

House. Earlier in the day, bell ringers from St Mary's, joined by eldest son Phil, rang the bells to mark the occasion. Jean enjoyed hearing the bells as she had been a keen bell ringer in Calne for many years.

I would like to add that I have had the privilege of knowing Jean for many years starting when she took over the role of Admin & Finance Co-ordinator in 2010. Jean and I worked together and also shared many laughs and I am happy to say that our



friendship continues to this day. Jean has had several roles within MU and she is still a member at Calne MU and also a welcome visitor to Derry Hill P&F Group.

Happy Birthday Jean and we wish you many more!

#### **Tribute to Iris Parker**

I am writing this in memory of a dear, kind friend and long-standing member of the Mothers' Union who, with the support of her husband Tony (also an MU member) gave a lot of her time and energy helping others. She was first a member of a branch in Hayes, Kent and when she retired to Dorset became a trustee in Salisbury Diocese and Dorset MU Archdeaconry Chairman. She enjoyed visiting her many branches and was a great ambassador for overseas and local projects especially the AFIA holiday home which was then at Durdle Door. Her warmth, enthusiasm and time for others were an inspiration to many. While leader of the Lower Stour Valley group, she brought the local community together in organising 'Messy church' sessions in two local schools. These occasions always ended with sharing a meal where children, parents and helpers chatted happily together and with Iris not forgetting to talk and share information about how the Mothers' Union cared about and supported family life. Children and families were very important to her. She was involved with providing early learning opportunities for children with special needs and became a leader of the first Opportunity Group in Lewisham as well as supporting groups all over London and the South East, a RNIB school in Kent and later the Opportunity Group in Blandford Forum.

Iris loved time spent with her family and particularly her grandchildren and will be greatly missed by all who knew her. She was caring, fun and loved life.

One of her favourite sayings was "If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours." **Pam Elliott** 

#### Malosa

Harnham send money each year for the Malosa MU to buy fertilizers for their maize crop. Here they are planting the group maize garden near the church.





The presentation to Jayne by Sandra as she retired as Diocesan Chaplain.

# **St Thomas's Christmas Tree Festival**Salisbury MU showing the variety of our projects





Harnham MU: All about literacy

#### **Angel Tree**

This year we wrapped and packed the Angel Tre Christmas presents at Harnham. We were very busy with over 40 to wrap but thanks to the volunteers we got it done before lunch.





### VIRTUAL BABIES -URGENT HELP IS NEEDED

This unique project is still being run virtually singlehanded by Suzanne Waters. We are urgently looking for a volunteer to take over from Suzanne to organise and deliver the project and babies to the various schools. We currently take babies into seven schools around

the Diocese and in the academic year 2024, 130 pupils took part. It is a voluntary role but there is the future possibility of paid work with expansion and further MU projects as a Community Development Co-ordinator. We would also be interested if you know of someone who is looking for such a role. This is such a worthwhile project and it would be sad to see it come to an end, but Suzanne needs some help running this project as well as being your Treasurer.

#### Do you know anyone? Would you like to help?

If yes please get in touch: mufinsals@outlook.com or phone for a chat 07812365906



#### **Honouring Volunteers**

Chris and Evelyn Grant from Urchfont were selected by their community to attend a special celebration held in St Mary's, Marlborough to honour volunteers. On behalf of the Diocese of Salisbury, who organised the event, the Bishop of Ramsbury, Andrew Rumsey, thanked everyone present for their many years of exceptional service and dedication.



#### **West Lavington**

Mother's Day Service at All Saints Church. The picture shows Jackie Knipe, and Anne Wilson, who led the service. We had a treasure hunt in the church, the clues were placed around the church, which, when worked out, led to the answers which were the Fruits of the Spirit. Mothers' Union donated the plants to be distributed to parishioners and ladies of the village.



We also had a very informative talk on Thursday 12 June by Mary Wood (seated) from Wiltshire Fear Free, the organisation which helps victims of Domestic Abuse.

The photograph shows Mary and Jackie Knipe, Branch Leader, with our Rise Up Bronze Award, which was presented to us on the day by Sandra Gamble, the Diocese President.

### **Rockley Park**

St Mark's & St Andrew's Laverstock raised money last year to fund a holiday for a family connected with Salisbury Pantry. The family stayed at the caravan for the Spring Bank Holiday week and this is the message they want to share:

"It's a wonderful break for families who are experiencing difficulties in their day-today life and know that finances may not allow them to just be away and be together without all pressures.

It's a godsend and a precious time together. A precious gift to give."



#### **Stoles for Sudan**

This photo shows a visitor to the Sudan Garden Fete purchasing one of our stole packs. This annual event was held as usual in the Bishop of Salisbury's Garden on 15th June and was very well attended. It was blessed with wonderful weather and we were delighted to be there to tell people about this ongoing project. Our packs cost £3.50 and come with full instructions.

If you think you could make one, do not hesitate to contact the office - 01772 333 12 402 and we will send you one.



# SPIRIT OF WATER FLOWER FESTIVAL AT SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

I'm sure many of your will have visited the flower festival in May. It was an amazing event and here are some photos to remind you and encourage you to visit the next one in a few years' time. Maybe your branch could have a display?





**Salisbury Diocese MU** - The arrangement was designed by Gill, with Carrie, Jenny, Suzanne, Liz, Veronica and Rosemary all helping.





Fish all made by local communities and schools.



**The 5 Rivers** 

**Harnham MU** 





#### **Bothenhampton and Walditch**

In early April our MU met at Walditch for a sketching session run by a local artist and regular workshop leader, Rowan Boocham. Rowan set some simple artistic exercises to encourage everyone to believe they had an "inner artist". She said her aim was to make sure people felt confident in expressing themselves

and not to worry too much about their sketch and enjoy the process. The session was open to members of the public as well as local MU branch members and the archdeaconry MU representative, Jo Higgs also came along.

#### **Audrey Grobecker**

Dear Audrey became a supportive member of the Mothers' Union in 1977 and continued to attend meetings and church services at St Francis Church in Salisbury until her death on 17th February 2025 at Breamore House. She had attended St Francis Church on Sunday as usual which is amazing as she was due to celebrate her 100th birthday in May. She was a staunch member of St Francis MU and later the P&F group, was much loved in her church as an active member and led many people to Christ through her life and witness. Few people knew that she was an alumni of Girtin College in Cambridge where she studied during the war. Quite an undertaking at that time. Her quiet spirituality, wisdom and hospitality will be much missed by all who knew and loved her.

#### IN MEMORIAM -

We give thanks for the lives and dedication of the following members, all remembered with love.

Kath Glover Harnham

Jeanette Salmons Harnham also Sixpenny Handley

Rachel Shergold Harnham
Anne Chapman Harnham
Pam James Harnham
Audrey Grobecker St Francis

Mike Lee Ferndown P & F Group

Elizabeth Currie All Cannings
Doreen Wiltshire Seend
Barbra Nash Broadstone

**Barbara Jenkins** Diocesan Member, Parkstone, Poole

Brenda Skinner
Revd Harry Chapman
June Doran
Diocesan member
Devizes Deanery
Shrewton

#### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Trustees meeting
Autumn Gathering at West Moors Memorial Hall

11 September 18 October

#### **SALISBURY CATHEDRAL MU COMMUNION SERVICES - 2025**

All Services take place in the Trinity Chapel of Salisbury Cathedral on the fourth Tuesday of the month (except August and December) starting at 12 noon. Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Please send news for the Autumn edition of Windows to Mrs Elizabeth Goater, 17 Chiselbury Grove, Salisbury SP2 8EP, Tel: 01722 433855, Or best by Email: lizgoater@hotmail.com

Please send pictures and photos in a separate file and not as part of the article.

Before 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025