

THE 12TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 12th Annual General Meeting was held on 3rd April, 1974. The meeting was opened with the showing of the R.S.P.B. film "The Kites are Flying". It was brought over from UK by the British Council for this occasion.

The proposed amendment that the term of office for the elected committee should be for a period of two years was passed unanimously.

Following is the President's address, the Secretary's report and the Income and Expenditure Account for 1973 which were read at the meeting.

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have met again to hear what the M.O.S. has done in the past year, to study the Society's financial situation and to elect a new committee.

Various indoor and outdoor activities were organised. In spite of the rising cost of printing we continued to issue the Society's publication "Il-Merill" regularly. This has appeared under the new Editor Mr. Dominic Cutajar, a staunch conservationist and a co-founder of the M.O.S. We were sorry at the same time to lose Brother Edmund, the former Editor, who moved to Eritrea where birds are plentiful and bird shooters are few. I wish to take this opportunity to thank him for the sterling services he rendered to the Society during the happy years he spent with us.

The M.O.S. has taken an active part in drawing up a report with recommendations for new legislation on bird protection. Various meetings were held with Ministers and Government Departments about the preservation of Ghadira. This year should be one of great expectations. The question of Ghadira has to be settled once and for all. The shooting lease expire this year and we hope that the Government will give the area on trust to be used for educational purposes.

The XVI World Conference of the ICBP will be held this year in Canberra, Malta will be represented by a great friend and a well-known conservationist, Mr. Anthony D'Andria, a former Secretary of the M.O.S. and a member of its founding Committee who has settled happily with his family in Australia.

A poster appealing for the protection of Birds of Prey has just been published for local distribution. The R.S.P.B. has kindly helped financially in this publication. An information leaflet on the M.O.S. has also been published and locally distributed hoping to advertise our aims and enroll new members. A fortnight's course sponsored by M.O.S. and the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee was taken by Alfred Baldacchino in UK where he was able to see how Field Centres are run.

I am glad to announce that our two dynamic members, Joe Sultana and Charles Gauci, are working hard on the new Check-list of the Birds

of Malta. I have already seen parts of the manuscript and I am sure that once it is published it will be the Check-list for the years to come.

The Young Members' Section also deserve a word of praise for organising several activities, including a protest march at Buskett which was held jointly with the 4Ts.

Before I end this address I must acknowledge the full co-operation we are finding from the Representative of the British Council for the use of the premises and the loan of films. I must also put on record the continual support which we receive from Mrs. E. Coxon on behalf of the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee. My personal thanks go to the members of the outgoing committee.

J.M. Attard — President.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: MARCH 1973 — FEBRUARY 1974

The Committee for 1973 was elected as follows:

President: J.M. Attard; Secretary: J. Sultana; Asst. Sec./P.R.O. A. Baidacchino; Treasurer: B.K. German; Committee Members: Bro. Edmund and C. Gauci.

In mid-year Bro Edmund had to leave the islands and so the nominated member at the Annual General Meeting with the next larger number of votes — J. Azzopardi, was asked to sit on the Committee for the remaining part of the year. Bro. Edmund had to resign also from the editorship of "Il-Merill". D. Cutajar accepted the Committee's invitation to be the Editor.

The Committee held ten committee meetings during the past year. There were also two sub-committees — The Bird Ringing Group and the Young Members Section. The Young Members Section was composed of a Chairman (M. Grima), a Secretary (J. Azzopardi), and two members (C. Galea and V. Cilia). Various activities were held by the Section including the publication of leaflets for young members. The Bird Ringing Group was composed of the following licenced ringers: S. Borg, Bro. Edmund, A. Gauci, C. Gauci, B.K. German, J. Grech, J. Sultana and V. Vella Muskat. The Ringing Officer and Secretary of the Group were J. Sultana and C. Gauci respectively. The Group carried out bird studies in the Maltese Islands mainly by recording and ringing. Over 6,200 birds were ringed, amassing a grand total of over 36,600 ringed birds since 1965. A percentage of these birds are regularly retrapped and recovered thus helping us to better our knowledge of bird movements and behaviour. Further more a daily log of birds seen was kept by the Group. This gives a clear picture of the present status of our birds. A new breeding species for Malta has also been discovered during the year

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE M.O.S.

(March 1973 — February 1974)

MARCH

Bird-watching excursion to Ghadira for young members and for the Salesian Boys Brigade. An illustrated talk was also held afterwards at the Youth Service Organisation Barracks of Ghadira.

Blue Rock Thrush posters were published and distributed in schools and exhibited in the Notice Boards of the Information Dept.

APRIL

Filmshow: Highland Heronry — Birds of Strathspey — Wildlife for the Future.

Talk by G. Davies — The Running of Reserves and Field Centres. Publication of "Il-Merill" No. 10.

M.O.S. Delegation (A. Baldacchino, M. Grima and J. Sultana) meeting the Minister of Education and Culture to discuss Ghadira as a Field Centre and other matters on bird conservation.

MAY

Three outings for young members — two to Ghadira and one to Buskett/Girgenti area.

Three programmes on Rediffusion regarding bird conservation, Ghadira as a field centre and the need to protect Birds of Prey. Members taking part respectively — B.K. German, C. Galea and J. Sultana.

Ringling Group and RAF Luqa Ornithological Society joint expedition to Filfla.

Illustrated talk — Birds and their Songs — by C. Gauci and A. Baldacchino.

Illustrated talk at St. Patrick's School — Breeding Birds and their Protection by J. Sultana.

A documentary film on bird-watching and bird ringling was shot at Ghadira and later shown to school. (A repetition of the film was shown again on TV to school children the following October).

JUNE

Farewell dinner to Bro. Edmund.

Ringling Group's expedition to Filfla.

M.O.S. delegation (J.M. Attard, A. Baldacchino and J. Sultana) meeting the Parliamentary Secretary Dr. P. Holland, to discuss Ghadira's project.

JULY

A Day Seminar held jointly with the Natural History Society and other interested bodies. Resolutions were sent to various Ministers and Government Departments.

AUGUST

A. Baldacchino's brief course in UK on Youth Leadership in Environmental Conservation.

Rediffusion programme on Bird Ringing in Gozo.

Publication of "Il-Merill" No. 11 (special issue Ringing Group report for 1972).

Ringing Group and RAF Luqa Ornithological Society 2nd joint expedition to Filfla.

SEPTEMBER

Bird-watching outing for young members at Buskett.

M.O.S. Delegation (A. Baldacchino and J. Sultana) meeting with the Minister of Trade Industry and Agriculture to discuss matters re Ghadira, Xemxija area and bird conservation.

OCTOBER

Filmshow: Wild Highlands — Birds are Interesting — Journey into Spring.

Robin Posters distributed in schools and exhibited outside Police Stations.

Protest march with placards by Young members at Buskett against indiscriminate shooting. (Held jointly with the Teens and Twenties Talents Trust).

NOVEMBER

Two outings for young members to Buskett and Ghadira.

M.O.S. joining Natural History Society for Nature Week with an illustrated talk on Rare Birds and Bird Songs by J. Sultana and A. Baldacchino.

DECEMBER

Filmshow — The Call of the Running Tide — Wilderness is not a Place.

Illustrated talk — Activities of the Ringing Group — by C. Gauci.

Publication of "Il-Merill" No. 12.

M.O.S. support to a petition against shooting presented to the Prime Minister organised by the Teens and Twenties Talents Trust.

JANUARY — (1974)

Publication of M.O.S. Information leaflet.

M.O.S. proposals and plan for a Field Centre at Ghadira forwarded to Prime Minister.

M.O.S. delegation (J.M. Attard, A. Baldacchino and J. Sultana) two meetings with the Director of Agriculture regarding Xemxija.

FEBRUARY

Filmshow — Between the Tides — Ripple in the Reeds.

Two programmes on Radio Malta — Birds and the Environment and Bird Watching by J. Sultana.

Illustrated Talk — Wintering Birds in the Ghadira area — by J. Sultana to students attending a Field Course at Ghadira.

M.O.S. delegation (A. Baldacchino and J. Sultana) meeting with the Secretary at the Ministry of Trade Industry and Agriculture, regarding M.O.S. plans for Ghadira.

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Apart from the above mentioned activities Committee members frequently contributed articles and letters to the local press. Contacts with International and European Ornithological Societies and institutions were maintained. Exchange of literature have been taking place with various societies. A number of the M.O.S. activities were held jointly with other societies mainly with the Natural History Society.

On behalf of the outgoing Committee I would like to thank the Representative and Staff of the British Council for the use of the premises and for the loan of films; the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee for supporting financially the M.O.S. in a number of projects; and all the members and donors who continue to support the M.O.S.

My personal thanks go to A. Baldacchino the Asst./Secretary and P.R.O. and to C. Gauci, the Ringing Group's Secretary, for their unflinching help.

J. Sultana — Hon. Secretary.

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FINANCIAL REPORT --

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AS AT
31 DECEMBER 1973**

Il-Merill Bulletin (cost)	£M140-90,0	Subscriptions and	
Sundry Expenses		Donations 1973	£M193-59,3
(Note 1)	142-19,3	Il-Merill Sales and	
Postages	39-55,2	Donations	51-16,0
Loss on Exchange		Sundry Expenses	
(Note 2)	29-32,4	Donations	41-97,6
Stationery	19-56,6	Interest Received	16-03,3
Ringling Group		Seminars and other	
Expenses	14-92,6	Entertainment	4-23,0
Young Members'		EXCESS OF	
Section Expenses	4-25,0	EXPENDITURE	83-71,9
	<u>£M390-71,1</u>		<u>£M390-71,1</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1973

Capital Account		FIXED ASSETS	
Balance b/f	£M385-61,8	7% Savings Bonds	
Inc. & Exp. B/c.	83-71,9	(Cost £100) (Note 3)	£M 88-00,0
	<u>£M301-89,9</u>	Ringling Equipment	72-00,0
Reserves (Note 4)	55-00,0		
Current Liabilities			<u>£M160-00,0</u>
Subscriptions in		CURRENT ASSETS	
advance	22-87,5	Bank Bal. £M217-75,7	
		Debtors	2-01,7
			<u>£M219-77,4</u>
	<u>£M379-77,4</u>		<u>£M379-77,4</u>

NOTE 1 Sundry Expenses: Include the cost of a marble plaque (£M33) which should have been incurred in 1972 — No provision was made in this respect.

Included under this heading are: Half air fare to U.K., cost of posters, blocks, projectionist fees, outing expenses, invitation cards and telephone expenses.

NOTE 2 Loss On Exchange: This item represents the loss incurred in converting Sterling amounts to Malta Pounds.

NOTE 3 A sum of twelve pounds has been written off in order to convert Stg. £100 to Malta Pounds. This difference (£12) is included in "2" above.

NOTE 4 This is a reserve for the publication of a leaflet which is still in progress.

There are no bills due and owing as at 31 December 1973.

B.K. German — Hon. Treasurer.