

# An Un

**T**ravellers often boast about the splendid greenery and the amazing animals and birds that grace the landscape in foreign lands. Such arrogance often leaves some of my friends both impressed and worried about our apparent 'lack' of scenic splendour. Perhaps, it is a contagious attitude for Maltese people to feel ashamed of our natural heritage....there are no tigers or big game animals to observe, there is a distinct lack of forests and lakes, and presumably a feeling of environmental neglect infiltrates our minds.

But this is far from the truth. My view is that most people do not know what fantastic scenes and marvellous creatures inhabit our island. Fewer people spend their time in the countryside nowadays, perhaps as they are attracted by more sophisticated and 'cultured' types of recreation and entertainment. This is a good thing from the point of view of wildlife, for it still leaves some virgin areas where you can find a plant world, unspoiled,

in all its abundant variety. Nevertheless, this pervading ignorance of our natural heritage is regrettably passed on to our children who grow with our same ambitions and ideals, or lack of.

Little do they know that tiny Malta is recipient for over 4,500 different kinds of animals and plants. Virtually, only scientists and their students appreciate that there are a number of endemic species inhabiting our islands. This simply means that if these organisms are eradicated from Malta they vanish forever from the face of the whole planet. One such organism is the Maltese National plant 'Widnet il-bahar'. In addition at least another twenty more endemic flowering plant species exist. This rich and unique natural heritage should be looked upon by each and everyone of us in a responsible manner. These plants are the product of millions of years of evolution, yet we have the power to eradicate them in a fraction of that time.

You have to go out in the surrounding

countryside and wander through fields and trees, through maquis and garigue, and into valleys to experience Maltese wildlife. Nevertheless, how many times does the average Maltese citizen go for a walk to Buskett and quietly observe birds, insects and other animals and plants going on with their daily lives?

Places such as the little known Qammieh in the North of our island



Landscape in Gozo

offer a rocky seashore paradise to prize, while the scenic grandeur of Ta Cenc in Gozo at dusk and dawn is a scene which records vividly in mind for a lifetime. Furthermore, one can ramble in and around one of our valleys with their associated typical flora and their intricate web of organisms, including the only amphibian found in the islands: the painted frog.

The less adventurous can also attempt to appreciate Maltese natural beauty in the



Hastings Garden Valletta

## A CONCEPT OF ELEGANCE AND COMFORT



We offer a wide variety of high quality household furniture including bedrooms, kitchens, sofas and loose furniture.

Come and visit our showroom at Mellieha and see for yourself!

**JDS FURNITURE LIMITED MAIN STREET MELLIEHA TEL: 522390 FAX: 522395**





# discovered Gem



Seaview from l-ahrax tal-Mellicha

relatively scarce but increasing number of nature reserves. The Ghadira and more recently the Simar nature reserve at Xemxija offer budding bird watchers plenty of scope to watch and learn about their feathered friends.

A truly awe inspiring experience is a drive to San Martin, limits of Ghajn Tuffieha. If you are lucky enough you may find a path to Malta's oldest oak trees with their magnificent gnarled branches and stately trunks. The atmosphere created by these trees is truly remarkable; one that has to be experienced to be appreciated.

Maltese landscapes are splendid and are a haven for a multitude of animals and plants. It is up to you to discover these jewels, and in the process of discovery do not mar them. Jewels they are, jewels they must remain.



The Future of the Maltese Islands is in our hands

**Mark C. Mifsud** B. Ed. (Hons.), P.G. Dip. Env. Mgt.



**WEMBLEYS**  
**24 hour Taxi Service**  
 Radio Controlled  
 Tel: 332074 ~ 374141 ~ 345454