

EDITORIAL

Midwives, we are facing a challenging year ahead of us. 2004 marks the 30th Anniversary of our Association, an Association that has allowed midwives to form part of a united professional body. Also, on the 5th of May activities will be taking place across the globe marking the International Day of the Midwife.

The International Day of the Midwife is an occasion for every midwife to think about the many others in the profession, to make new contacts within and outside midwifery and widen the knowledge of what midwives do for the world. Listen out to what the Midwives Association in collaboration with the MUMN shall be organising to celebrate this day.

In this issue, we shall be proudly publishing an article on the "Formation of the Midwives Association" by Ms Mary Vella Bondin, who in 1974 took the necessary measures to form the Association and till today is still

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President's Letter

Dear Colleagues,

This year 2004 marks a very important achievement for the Midwives Association of Malta. It is celebrating the 30th anniversary. We need to give credit to the enthusiastic midwives who have worked so hard to set up the Association. It is impossible to mention everyone; however, on behalf of all the Maltese midwives I thank all these midwives for their courage, perseverance and dedication towards their profession. Like these pioneers we embraced and became part of the midwifery profession on our graduation, thus we have a moral and ethical duty to safeguard our profession, and our association as it represents the profession to the general public, society, both nationally and internationally.

This year, 2004, is the international year of the family, therefore, the theme of International day of the Midwives to be held on 5 May 2004 is

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Important Notice

A membership form that is to be filled out by each paying member is enclosed within this newsletter. The purpose of this form is for us to be able to update our current database, and keep track of our membership base. I kindly ask you all to hand this form in to any council member as soon as possible.

recognised as Honorary President.

Also, we shall be publishing photos of the Annual General Meeting held at the end of February and introduce you all to the newly elected committee, whose roles have been redefined to better market the association, and meet the ever changing needs of its members.

One final thing we would like to achieve is to have our members attending Local and International Midwifery conferences. For this reason I invite you all to share your ideas with any council member or e-mail me at midwives_in_touch@hotmail.com

"Take the challenge, grasp the opportunity".



Alexia 😊



Speakers at this year's AGM



Members at this year's AGM

Letters From our Members

Dear Colleagues,

I have just received the circular announcing the agenda for the Annual General Meeting of the Association. On reading the General Report, being the Honorary President, I felt that I had to write this letter.

The second item in the Report concerned the membership of the Association. To be honest, I was taken aback when I read that only 56 midwives had paid the membership fee for the year 2003. I am sure that you know how much at heart the Midwifery Profession is to me. I am also sure that those who chose to become midwives love and are jealous of their profession.

Thus I find myself asking, 'What is preventing midwives from supporting their professional body by being paid up members of the Midwives' Association?' The membership fee has been a very reasonable annual £m5 for a number of years. I do not believe that the fee is the problem, especially when one considers the benefits one gets by being a member. I am compelled to think that some midwives do not pay because of procrastination or forgetfulness. So, my appeal is, this year settle your membership fee now and do not wait for the next day.

Some years ago, the membership of the Association was almost 100. This year is the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Association. Let us make an effort and besides paying our membership fee, let us, each one of us, encourage another midwife to become a paid up member so that we will reach the 100 mark again.

**MARY VELLA BONDIN
HONORARY PRESIDENT**



Speakers & Council Members

FORMATION OF THE MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION

(By Mary Vella Bondin)

Midwives had, since long, been feeling the need of uniting themselves in a professional body. An attempt was made to start an association by Miss M'Angela Galea (now Formosa). The first group of student midwives had also discussed this issue with their English tutor. Beside these, there could have been others of whom I am not aware and therefore I apologise for not referring to them. Here it is to be mentioned that in the past there had been an Association of Midwives, which had ceased to be active. Mrs. Sammut, was the Treasurer. During the Refresher Course of April 1974, she stated that, provided the other midwives agreed, she was ready to transfer the funds she still had to the proposed new Association.

During this Refresher Course of 1974, Mary Vella Bondin promised to take the necessary measures to form an Association. These measures included:

1. To contact Prof A. P. Camilleri as Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He wholeheartedly agreed to the proposal and promised his full support.
2. To seek the advice of the Principal Medical Officer, Dr. Alfred Grech at the Department of Health. He said that midwives had every right to form an Association and that there was no need of consent from any authority.
3. To write to Miss Brenda Mee as General Secretary of the Royal College of Midwives in U.K. She was also the representative of the British Midwives at the International Confederation of Midwives. Miss Mee supplied Ms. Mary Vella Bondin with relevant literature, which she found helpful in relations with the I.C.M.
4. To write to the Malta Federation of Professional Bodies and ask for information guiding Professional Bodies should there be any.
5. Last but not least was to contact the Secretary of the Medical Association of Malta who gave valuable information about the recognition of

an association. This was to be achieved after the approval of the statute during a General meeting

After completing the preliminary preparations and writing up of a provisional statute Mary Vella Bondin called a Steering Committee. This committee was made up by seven midwives representing different areas of the profession. The call for the steering committee was made by means of a circular letter dated 21st August 1974. The members of this committee were Ms Margaret Abela, Ms Mary Anne Baldacchino, Ms. Pauline Bezzina, Ms. Rose Caruana, Ms. Mary Dimech, Ms. Raffaella Farrugia and Ms. Mary Vella Bondin.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee was to be held on the 31 August 1974 at the Osborne Hotel, South Street, Valletta. A copy of the proposed statute was enclosed with the Circular.

A second meeting of the Steering Committee was held on the 12th September 1974. During these two meetings, points of importance were discussed and clarifications made.

Issues discussed were:

1. The name of the Association.
2. The difference between the functions of a Union and of an Association.
3. Termination of membership.
4. Student midwives to be included as Associate Members.
5. The membership fee.
6. Meaning of a Quorum.
7. The Chairman at meetings.

The first General Meeting was set for the 7th November 1974 at the 'Anglo-Maltese Club' at 221, Merchants Street, Valletta. As the function of the Steering Committee was fulfilled it was dissolved.

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The notice for the first General Meeting for the 7th November 1974 was sent to all midwives, 85 in all. This notice included a copy of the statute, which was to be approved during the meeting. A total of 40 midwives turned up for the meeting.

During this first General Meeting the statute with amendments as 'Draft 3' was unanimously approved by those present.

The Name of the association was to be "The Midwives Association of Malta".

The first nine Executive Council Members were elected.

Ms. Mary Vella Bondin was elected unanimously by all midwives present. Then it was expressed that it would be best if Council Members represent the different branches of Midwifery.

Ms. Josephine Calleja and Ms. Raffaella Farrugia to represent the MMDNA

Ms. May Pecorella and Ms. Mary Dimech to represent Domiciliary Midwifery

Ms. Frances Schembri representing Private Hospitals and Sr. M. Letizia Coreschi representing the Nuns.

There were a number of midwives contesting for the last two posts. Therefore a secret ballot took place. Those elected were:-

Ms. Rose Caruana
Ms. Mary Anne Baldacchino

The first Executive Council Meeting was held on the 15 November 1974 at the Osborne Hotel, South Street, Valletta. During this meeting Council officers were nominated as follows:

Ms. Mary Vella Bondin – President
Ms. May Pecorella – Vice President
Ms. Mary Anne Baldacchino – Secretary
Ms. Rose Caruana – Treasurer

The first financial report showed a balance of Lm14.18c



**Midwives at work
around the globe**

'Midwives, a Voice for Healthy Families'.

This theme emphasises the critical role the midwife has in society where she is an educator, counsellor and practitioner during the life-changing experience of when partners become parents, the birth of the 'family'. Midwives are there for the family during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. The Midwives Association of Malta and the Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses have got together to celebrate this date by holding a Seminar at the Vivaldi Hotel with the Theme of this year. We hope to see you there to meet, learn from one another and share our experience for the benefit of our profession and our clients, the Maltese Family.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE

Midwives around the world celebrate the 'International Day of the Midwife' on May 5 each year. The ICM established the idea of the 'International Day of the Midwife' following suggestions and discussion among member associations in the late 1980s, then launched the initiative formally in 1992. The aim of the day is to celebrate midwifery and to bring awareness of the importance of midwives' work to as many people as possible. This is done in many different ways according to what works best in each country. Examples of activities include:

- Holding a meeting, workshop or conference to hear about new developments in midwifery and exchange news with other midwives in the region.
- Giving awards to individuals or groups of midwives for special work done.
- Getting together to talk, eat, drink and have a good time.

The Midwives Association in collaboration with the MUMN is organising a half day seminar

"Midwives – A - Voice for Healthy Families"

Date: 5th May 2004

Venue: Hotel Golden Tulip Vivaldi, St Julians

**Price: Seminar, Coffee & Lunch - Lm 9
Seminar & Coffee - Lm 5**

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN-NCW

THE MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT WITH THE NCW

The National Council of Women in conference assembled at its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 31st January 2004. The President Ms. Grace Attard was re-elected for another term. She pointed out the challenges that Malta faces today and that Malta requires women and men with imagination, foresight, courage to act and to go on developing skills. The general assembly also discussed and approved a number of resolutions dealing with Women in Decision making, Promoting the Family and Education of Parents, Women and the Media, Breastfeeding, Food Safety and Security, Sustainable Development and Empowerment of Persons with Disability. Ms. Rita Borg Xuereb was present and was particularly involved with the following:

Protection, Promotion and Support of B'feeding

The NCW is aware that:

- Breast milk is a priceless natural resource
- Breastfeeding has many long lasting health advantages for mothers and babies
- Human milk is the only nutrition necessary in the first six months of life and optimally should be carried on at least two years
- Facilities providing maternity services and care for newborn babies play a critical role in the establishment of successful breastfeeding
- Women returning to work should have the right and the possibility to continue breastfeeding during working hours

Urges Government:

To support and guarantee maternity rights:

- By establishing a National multisectoral breastfeeding committee.
- By drafting legislation to support the Breastfeeding Policy for working women that entitles women to maternity leave and paid breastfeeding breaks during working hours.
- By shifting responsibility for payment from the employer to the State as a measure against discrimination in employment.

Urges National Health Authorities:

- To ratify and implement the relevant resolutions of WHO and ILO Maternity Protection Convention No 183 and Recommendation No 191.

Midwife Jokes:

If you think the only way to measure centimeters is by spreading your fingers...
...you might be a midwife

If you get more calls from ladies with broken water than the local plumber...
...you might be a midwife

If you've ever used cord clamps as hair curlers...
...you might be a midwife

If you know that perineal support is not a kind of stocking...
...you might be a midwife

If you consider a pair of black Birkenstocks "formal wear"...

...you might be a midwife

If you know that ultrasound is not a fancy stereo...

...you might be a midwife



"Look, Mr and Mrs Dobbs. This is the third time you've called me out today. Sooner or later you'll have to learn to change your own babies nappy!"

Parenting Skills Sessions at the Midwives Association

Sedqa in collaboration with the Midwives Association shall be organising parenting skills sessions to be held between the 2nd June and the 7th July 2004. The aim of such sessions is to encourage parents through interactive workshops to discuss and foster a positive attitude towards their children. This may help them identify the great opportunities within their families and the need to move on together.

Each group will consist of 10 couples or 20 participants, and the attendance fee is LM6 per couple. Midwives will be given preference. Therefore if you want to attend mark the dates in your diary and book early by contacting a council member or by leaving a message at the Association on Tel:21237117.

Sessions: Dates and Time

Wednesday	2 nd	June 2004	5:30 – 7:30pm
Wednesday	9 th	June 2004	5:30 – 7:30pm
Wednesday	16 th	June 2004	5:30 – 7:30pm
Wednesday	23 rd	June 2004	5:30 – 7:30pm
Wednesday	30 th	June 2004	5:30 – 7:30pm
Wednesday	7 th	July 2004	5:30 – 7:30pm

The topics for discussion will be clearly outlined at the first session, whereby a programme will be handed out to each participating member. On completion of the course a certificate will be awarded.

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Contact Details:

Mailing Address:

167, Marina Str., Pieta,

Malta MSD 08

Tel/Fax: 21237117

email: midwives_in_touch@hotmail.com

URL: www.midwives_in_touch.org.mt

The Newly Elected Executive Committee 2004

President:

Mrs. Rita Borg Xuereb

Vice-President

Mrs. Rita Pace Parascandolo

General Secretary:

Ms. Margaret M. Abela

Treasurer:

Mrs. Nathalie Zammit

Public Relations:

Mrs. Alexia Sciberras

Members:

Mrs. Gina Camilleri

Mrs. M'Angela Formosa

Ms. Catherine Cilia

Mrs. Astrid Zarb

