

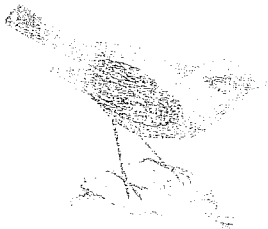
# IL-MERILL

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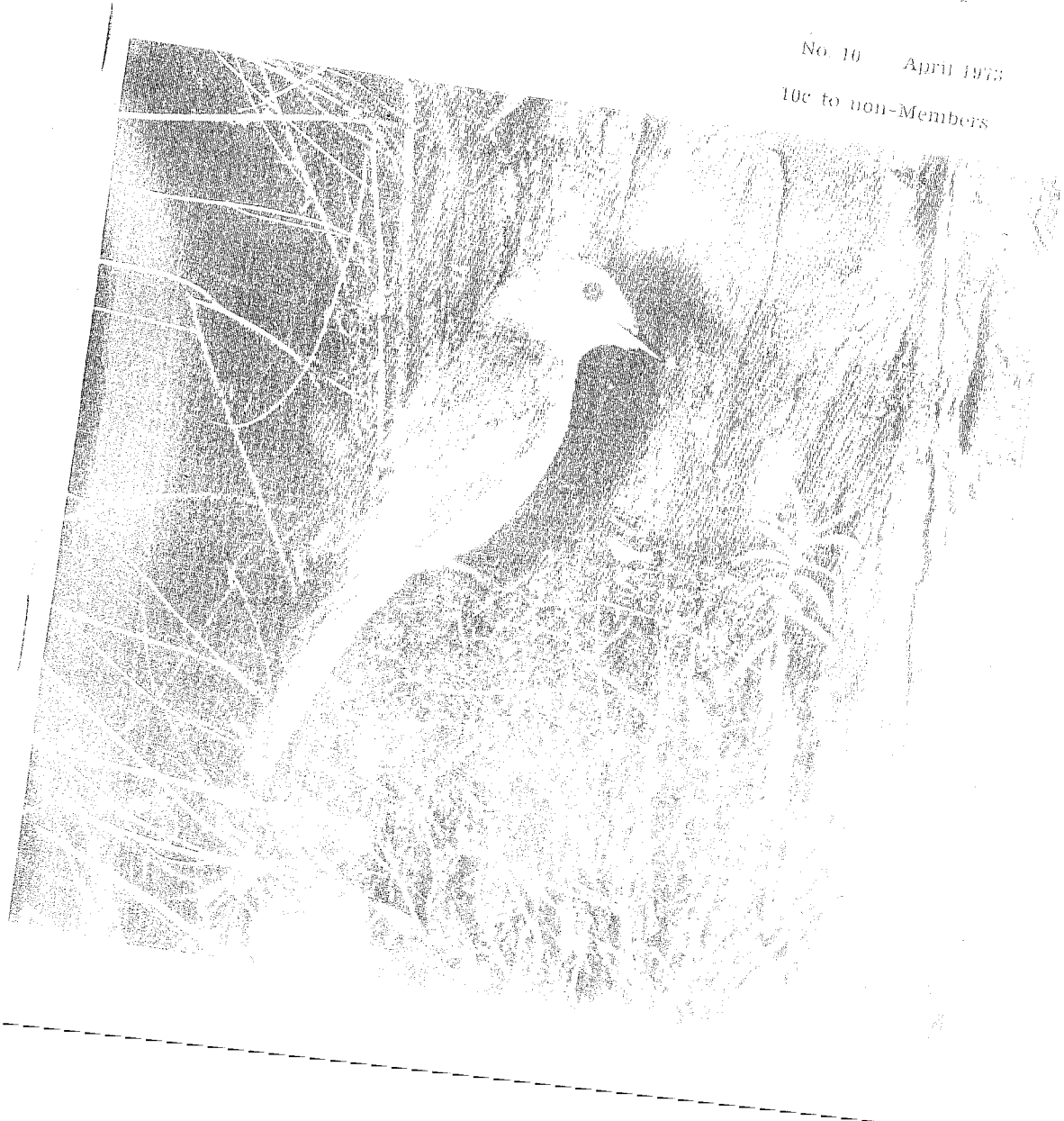


# IL-MERILL

BULLETIN OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. 10 April 1973

10c to non-Members



# IL - MERILL

The title of the Society's Bulletin, **IL-MERILL**, is the Maltese name for the Blue Rock Thrush, *Monticola Solitarius*, which is one of the few resident species of the Islands. It was chosen as the National Bird of Malta by the local National Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation and has been the emblem of the Malta Ornithological Society since the latter's inception.

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### CONTENTS:

Pages

Editorial .....	1
The 11th Annual General Meeting .....	2
News and Views — by J. Sultana and C. Galea .....	7
Aspects of the Spring Migration of Small Passengers through Malta by D.A. Rushforth .....	12

Cover picture: Spotted Flycatcher — a new addition to the list of breeding birds (photo: E. Hosking)

**EDITORIAL**

This is the 10th issue of Il-Merill and we can rightly be proud of the fact and hope that coming issues will see the magazine growing in strength of numbers and influence. It is also the last issue of the present editor, Brother Edmund of St. Michael's College, who is leaving Malta before the next issue to do missionary work in Ethiopia.

During the last five years while I have been in Malta it has been a great privilege to have been associated with the Malta Ornithological Society in trying to achieve their laudable aims of increasing the local knowledge of birds and attempting to check the senseless massacre of birds that masquerades under the ignoble title of sport.

There is little doubt that in the first of these aims much has been achieved through means of articles and letters in the Press, and we are always grateful to the newspapers who are our main supporters. MTV has also been of great help in putting our ideas across and screening some excellent bird films which we have brought over. The British Council also deserves our praise and thanks for giving us the monthly use of its rooms for lectures and showing of films. We have brought out two excellent posters, the first on the Robin and the second this month on the National Bird, Il-Merill. In these two campaigns in particular we are indebted to MBROC for their financial assistance. In addition to this we have produced a leaflet on Birds of Prey which was issued to each shooter renewing his licence appealing to him personally not to shoot the birds of prey.

St. Michael's College of Education has played no small part in educating the public in matters ornithological. It is a fact that five of the most active members of MOS are teachers closely connected with the training college and they are strongly encouraged by the staff. In addition some hundreds of teachers and trainees have had the message clearly put to them in talks and film shows. St. Michael's has also done much to further the cause of making greater use of Ghadira as a field centre and has helped in running courses there where all the facilities are brought together in an ideal site and camp. We hope that the organisers in the education department will come to realize what a glorious opportunity is within their very grasp if only they would take action.

The first aim then of educating the public through the schools and mass media is well under way and later in the year we hope to have ready a good HANDBOOK OF BIRDS for teachers' use in all the schools in Malta.

The second aim of bird preservation is closely allied to the first aim: first get to know the birds to appreciate them and then aim at their protection in an increasingly hostile world. Here we have not yet made much impact locally but hard work is going on behind the scenes to help draw up lists of protected birds, suggesting closed seasons and which areas in Malta should be very strictly reserved. In accordance with the Government's suggestion various Societies are pooling their resources to suggest to the Lawmakers the framework of legislation which we hope will help put an end to uncontrolled shooting by ignorant hunters of the bird fauna of Europe before it is too late. The migrant birds passing through Malta are also other people's natural assets.

**Brother Edmund**