The design for a cancellation stamp, commonly referred to as the Maltese Cross, was only introduced after a number of preliminary experiments.

**Use of the Maltese Cross cancellation**

The use of the Maltese cross cancellation commenced with the introduction of the Penny Black and Two Pence Blue in May 1840. In most reference sources it is stated that the cancellation is found on the early plates numbered 1 to 45, (Plates 1 to 11 being used for the Penny Black), and that the later of these plates, (40 - 45), are rare. Whilst this is correct and the presence of the Maltese cross is a good indication that the plate was put to press before 1845, there are as always exceptions to the rule and there are known examples from later plates.

The ingredients for the cancelling ink were:

- 1 lb of printers red ink
- 1 pint of linseed oil
- 1/2 pint of the droppings of sweet oil

All to be well mixed.

From this it is obvious that the components used would vary in quantity. The human element in mixing would provide additional variety and the age of the mixture would add further to the diversity. Climatic conditions, (particularly damp), cause further variations.

Another aspect which the collector must not overlook is the mistake of the clerk striking the wrong pad. Black was normally used for the date stamp applied to the cover. When this was struck in error then used on the correct colour after we get shades of reddish-black. (A brownish colour of confused hue). The use in red continued in use up to February 1841 when black ink was introduced. Occasionally red cancellations are found after this date probably due to error on the part of the clerk or the absence of black ink.

Black ink was used experimentally in the London District Post from the 31st August 1840 until the end of November and these can only be identified on dated covers. Impressions are also known struck in black in error during 1840 and those known are as follows ...

**Black Impressions struck in error**

- **Aberdeen**
  - September 1840

- **Leamington**
  - January 1841

- **Chester**
  - October 1840
Canterbury  September 1840
Chesterfield  July 1840
Glasgow  July 1840
Jersey  November 1840
Leek  December 1840
Minehead  October 1840
Perth  October 1840

A travelling salesman in Scotland was responsible for the acquisition, (by local postmasters), of coloured ink pads from which the various shades of magenta and violet impressions were made. Some of these are listed below but this is but no means a complete listing.

Scotish distinctive shades

- Aberdeen: brilliant magenta
- Aberdeen: ruby
- Fintry: brilliant magenta
- Glascow: purple
- Newton Stewart: purple-maroon
- Stonehaven: violet

Other abnormal colours, (or the use of the date stamp colours), are due to the continuance in use of old ink mixtures.

Again the more prominent ones are listed ..

- Epsom: maroon
- Horsham: yellow
- Kensington: brown
- Lancaster: blue
- Liverpool: bright - orange
- Manchester: vivid red - brown
- Mullingar: blue
- Ormskirk: pink
- Preston: blue
- St. Columb: green
- Truro: blue
- Wadebridge: magenta

**Red Impressions struck on Red Stamps**

The use of the red cancellation on the Penny Red stamps is rare. The largest known multiple of this usage is a strip of four.

The Maltese Cross, as first issued, was a mass produced item of a standard pattern. This type was in standard use throughout England, Ireland and Wales. All of these were made in London and issued during April and May 1840.
The four basic types of cross

The Maltese Cross, as first issued, was a mass produced item of a standard pattern. This type was in standard use throughout England, Ireland and Wales. All of these were made in London and issued during April and May 1840.

The standard type first issued in Scotland. These were made north of the border. There were two basic types of Scottish cross, one with the small centre, and another with a larger centre.

The necessity for additional chancellors, resulted in the almost general issue of the following types. These were mainly confined to the North of England and the Midlands.

Sources detail this as being for the North of England and the Midlands. We believe this to be mainly confined to the Midlands.

Sources detail this as being for the North of England and the Midlands. We believe this to be mainly confined to the North of England.

Scotland standard crosses

The standard type first issued in Scotland. These were made north of the border.

Large centre.

The standard type first issued in Scotland. These were made north of the border.

Small centre.
Scotland distinctive crosses

The standard type first issued in England, Ireland and Wales. These were made in London.

Ireland distinctive crosses

These are only recorded as being used on the 1841 issue Penny Red.
England distinctive crosses

The double lined cross.
This is known applied in black only on both the 1840 and 1841 issue stamps.
London distinctive crosses

The double lined cross. This is known applied in black only on both the 1840 and 1841 issue stamps.

Channel Islands
In 1843 obliterators with the numbers 1 to 12 in centre came into use at the London Chief Office. The purpose of the introduction of the numbers into the centre of these London Maltese Cross obliterations appears to have been to obtain a check on the work of the various stampers in the Inland Office.

Mr. H. C. Westley in his book, “The Postal Cancellations of London (1840-1890),” states that those numbered 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were issued on 23rd March and the others on 1st April.

The obliterator with 3 “ is omitted from the G.P.O. proof books and differs from the rest of the series in having no outside cross at the top of the stamp. It has been variously suggested that the obliterator with this number had to be re-made for some reason or that it was the prototype for the whole series.

There are slight variations in the inner crosses of these numbered cancellations as might be expected from hand-made obliterators, and it has been also suggested that of some numbers there was more than one obliterator.

The London numbered cancellations generally occur on the 1d and 2d postage stamps of 1841, “ 4 “ being the scarcest on the 1d value and “ 10 “ on the 2d value. They are much scarcer on the same values of 1840, since only specimens of that issue used late could bear such obliterations.

These numbered London Chief Office cancellations continued in use until the introduction of the numbered “ Diamond” markings in May 1844.

• Bron: http://www.philatelics.org/~allan/shrop/mx/main.html
Plates 12-45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>11 Dec 1841</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>17 Jan 1842</td>
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</tbody>
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Corner letters

A  A  A  A  B  B  B  B  C  C  C  C  A  A  A  A  D  D  D  D  B  B  B  B  C  C  C  C  B  B  C  C  D  D