

# ***THE MALTESE CROSS***

## ***1840–1845 - Plate 1-45***

door Nanne Visser

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 upto 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 ...

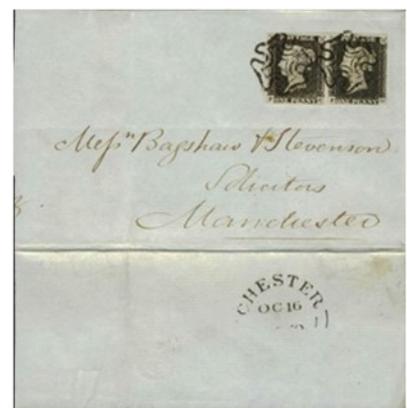
### **Black Impressions struck in error**



*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



*Pitlochrie (Port Patrick - Scotland)  
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.

Scottish distinctive shades

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



*Ruby Maltese cross cancellation  
used from Aberdeen on the  
22nd May 1840*

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

**Red Impressions struck on Red Stamps**

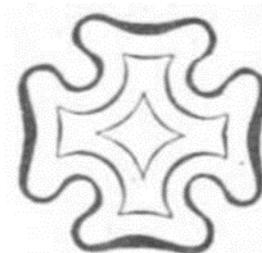


The use of the red cancellation on the Penny Red stamps is rare. The largest known multiple of this usage is a strip of four.

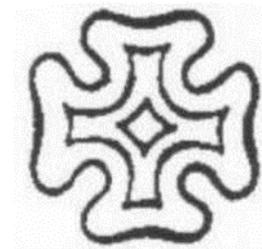
The Maltese Cross, as first issued, was a mass produced item of a standard pattern. This type was in standard use throughout England, Ireland and Wales. All of these were made in London and issued during April and May 1840.

## ***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.

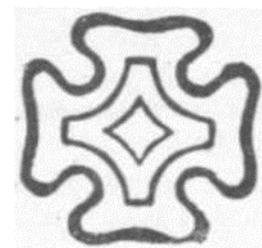


The standard type first issued in Scotland. These were made north of the border. There were two basic types of Scottish cross, one with the small centre, and another with a larger centre.

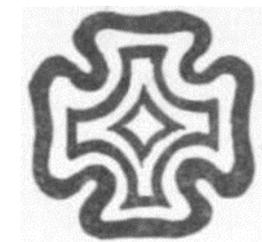


The necessity for additional chancellors, resulted in the almost general issue of the following types. These were mainly confined to the North of England and the Midlands

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**



Dumfries

**No  
Picture  
Available**

Dunnet



Edinburgh



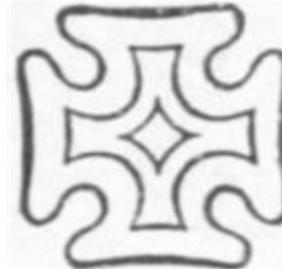
Eyrecourt



Greenock



Johnstone



Kelso



Kilmarnock



Kirkcudbright



Kirriemuir



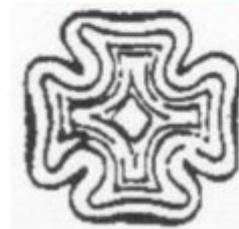
Laurencekirk



Montrose



Stirling



Stonehaven



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.



Belfast



Catterick



Cork



Dublin—Type 1



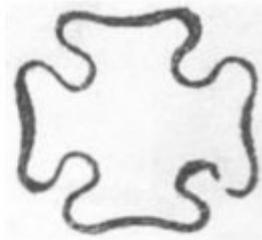
Dublin - Type 2



Hollymount -1



Hollymount-2



Hollymount-3



Limerick



Moate



Mullingar



Ross (Wexford)



Waterford



Westport

**England distinctive crosses**

The double lined cross.

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



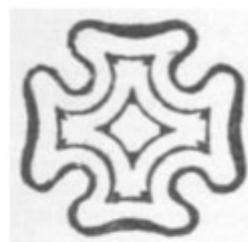
Brighton



Coventry



Dursley



Helston



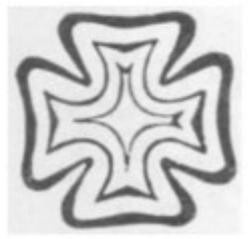
Leamington



Leeds



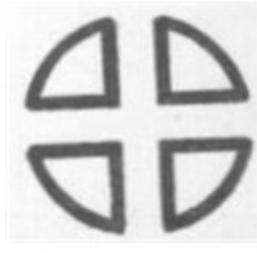
Leeds



Manchester



Manchester



Marker Bosworth



Marksham



Milnethorpe



Northallerton



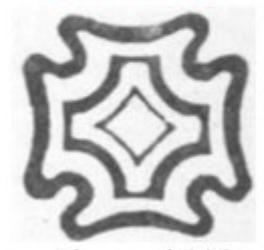
Norwich-1



Norwich\*



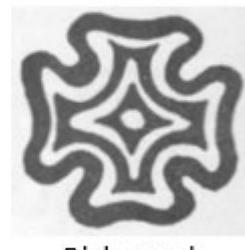
Norwich\*\*



Plymouth\*\*\*



Perth



Richmond

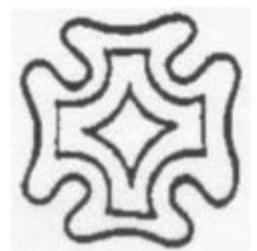


**No  
Picture  
Available**

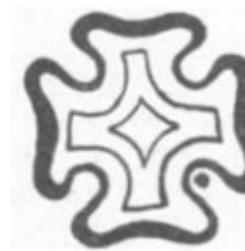
Wellington Somerset



Welshpool



Whitehaven



Wincanton



Wotton under Edge



York

### **London distinctive crosses**

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



London-1



London-2

### **Channel Islands**

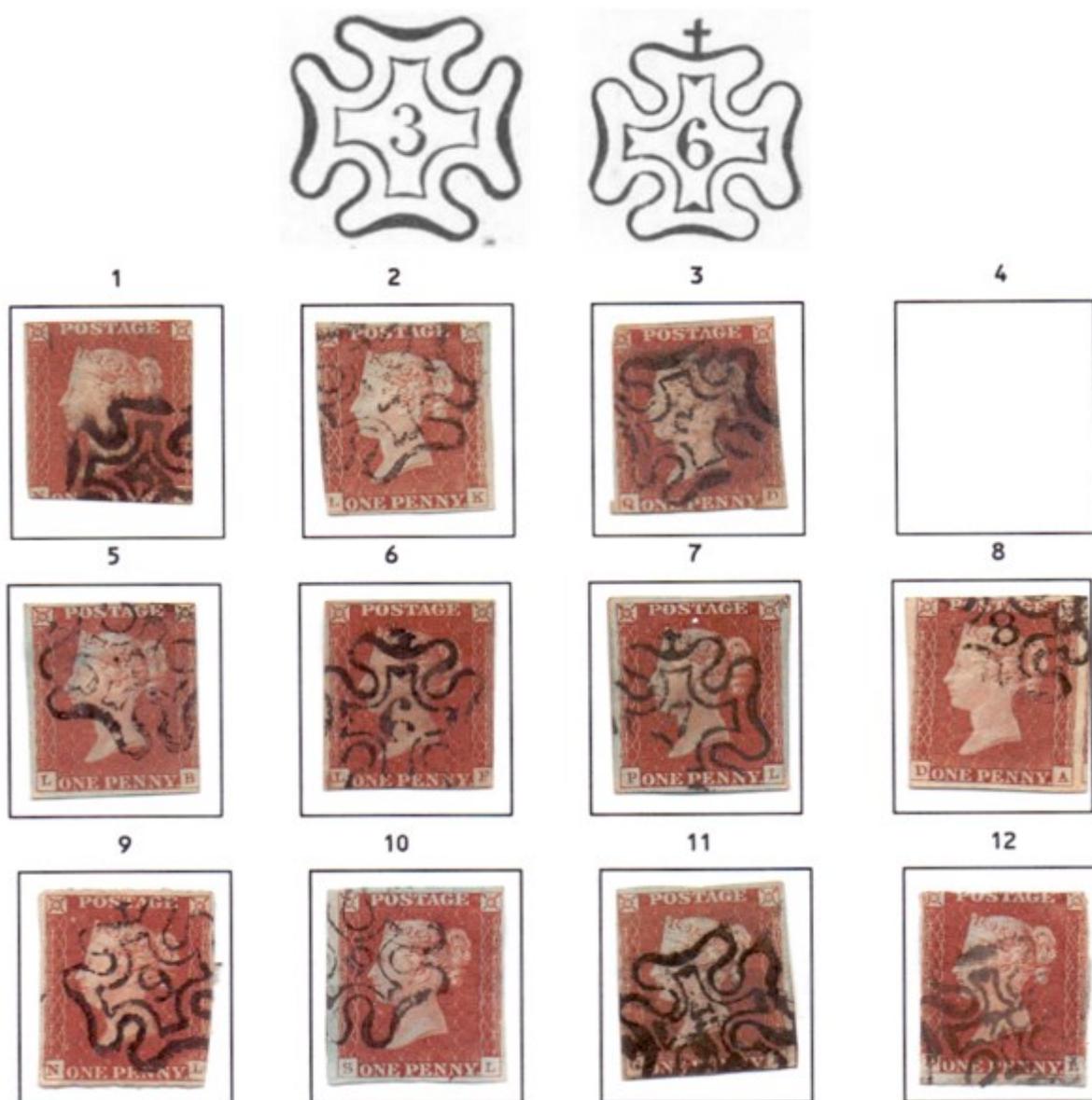


Guernsey-Jersey



Alderney

**London Maltese Crosses numbered 1 to 12.**



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 cancellations 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**



25 Febr. 1841



25 Apr. 1841



25 Apr. 1841



23 July 1841



23 July 1841



10 Sept 1841



21 Sep 1841



3 Nov 1841



15 Nov 1841



11 Dec 1841



11 Dec 1841



17 Jan 1842

**Corner letters**



A A



A B



A C



A D



B A



B B



B C



B D



C A



C B



C C



C D