



PHILATELIC OPINION  
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No. 0087

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ITEM SUBMITTED AS:

1840 1d black IA Plate 3 on cover cancelled with a red Maltese Cross of unusual shade.

OBSERVATIONS

Comparisons with the letter positions and descriptions in Nissen confirm that the stamp is from Plate 3.

The cover is addressed to Shrewsbury and bears a Stafford c.d.s. for 10 July 1840 on the front (there are no marks on the back). I believe the stamp belongs to the cover: there is a tiny portion of the Maltese Cross on the cover to the left of the stamp, level with the Queen's forehead (see Fig. 1). Under a microscope the ink matches that on the stamp.

A sample of colour derived from the scanned Maltese Cross is close to samples on *Methuen* pages 9 and 10, in particular 9C7-8 and 10C7-8; *Methuen* gives the name 'blood red' to 10C8. Rockoff & Jackson (p. 452) record two covers from Stafford, one dated 2 July 1840 described by R. C. Alcock as having 'a most unusual bright coloured "RED" cross'; and another, dated 14 Oct. 1840, described by Grosvenor Auctions as having a 'blood red' cross.

SOURCES

Charles Nissen, *The Plating of the Penny Black Postage Stamp of Great Britain 1840, 1922.*

Kornerup & Wanscher, *Methuen Handbook of Colour*, 3rd edn, 1978.

S. David Rockoff & Mike Jackson, *Encyclopaedia of the Maltese Cross*, Vol. 3, 2011.

Stanley Gibbons, *Great Britain Specialised Catalogue*, Vol. 1, 16th edn, 2011.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, the stamp on the cover is a 1d black IA Plate 3 cancelled with a Blood Red Maltese Cross, and is genuine. SG Spec. AS20.

*Mike Jackson*

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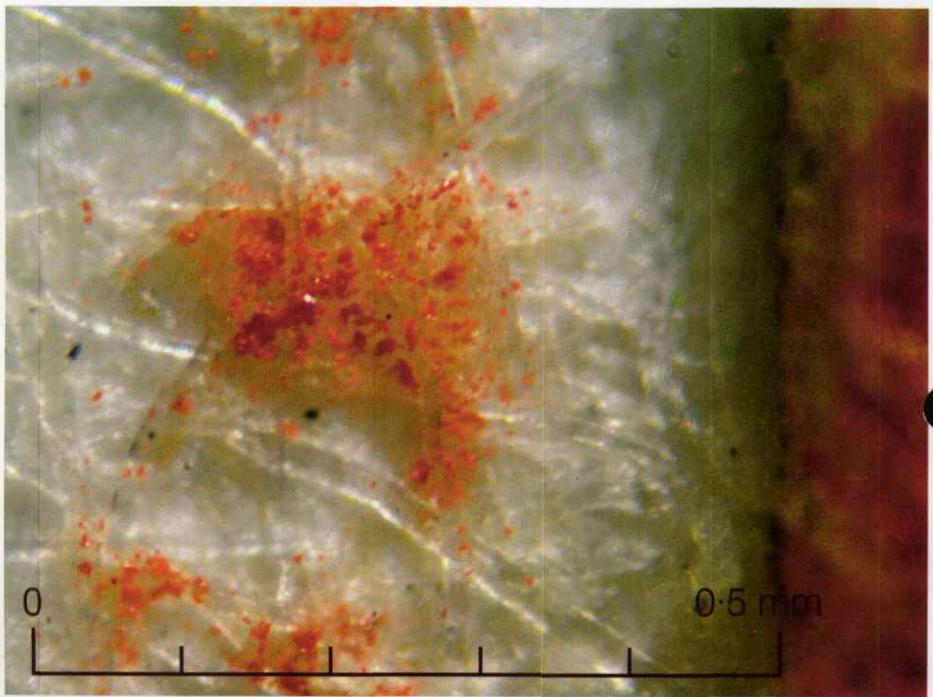


Fig. 1 — Photomicrograph showing the tiny portion of red ink on the cover.

