



PHILATELIC OPINION

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PHILATELIST

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DESCRIPTION

1840 1d Black lettered JE on cover obliterated by an Orange Maltese Cross of Cheltenham.

OBSERVATIONS

Comparisons with the letter positions and descriptions in Nissen indicate that the stamp is from Plate 5. The stamp shows the 'scratch outside left of N.W. square' described by Nissen.

The cover was sent from Cheltenham (c.d.s. 7 Oct. 1840) to Shipston-on-Stour. The contents of the letter have been removed and a filing note is dated '8 Oct. 1840'. Samples of colour derived from the Maltese Cross are close to Methuen 7C7 'brownish orange'. The Cheltenham c.d.s. appears to be in a similar ink to that of the Maltese Cross.

Cheltenham was using a distinctive ink for most, if not all, of the red Maltese Cross period. Rockoff & Jackson recorded covers from Cheltenham dated from Aug. 1840 to Feb. 1841 bearing Maltese Crosses mostly described as 'pink' or 'salmon-pink'. One example dated 14 Sept. 1840 was described as 'brown-orange'. An example in the Lady Mairi Bury sale (Sotheby's, 24 Nov. 2010, Lot 160) dated 21 Sept. 1840 and described as 'pink' appears to be in a very similar colour to the cross in question.

The shape of the obliteration is that of a normal Common cross. Careful examination of the ink of the obliteration under UV light and under high magnification revealed no evidence of the colour of the ink being enhanced.

SOURCES

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

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

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

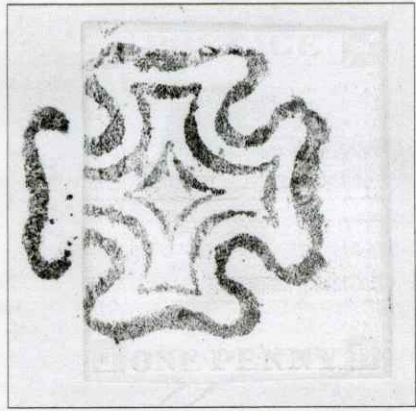
CONCLUSION

In my opinion, the item is an 1840 1d Black Plate 5 lettered JE on cover obliterated by an Orange Maltese Cross of Cheltenham, and is genuine. SG Spec. AS25vg.

Mike Jackson

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Digitally enhanced image showing the shape of the Maltese Cross more clearly.

