



PHILATELIC OPINION

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DESCRIPTION

1840 1d blacks lettered PE-PF on cover obliterated by Maltese Crosses of Stranraer.

OBSERVATIONS

Comparisons with the letter positions and descriptions in Nissen indicate that the stamps are from Plate 1b, 12 June 1840 being the earliest known date of postal use. Stamp PE shows the weak upper right side as described by Nissen. Although not mentioned by Nissen, there are scratches in the top margin of PE above 'POST' of 'POSTAGE' which are also on the Nissen example.

The cover was sent from Stranraer (9 Oct. 1840 c.d.s. on the reverse) to Wigtown.

The shape of the crosses (*see illustration*) indicates that they are the Stranraer Special, characterised by the tapered narrow arm of the inner cross. This identification is supported by digitally overlaying the cross in question on to a reference example. Rockoff & Jackson recorded the use of this cross from May 1841 to near the end of the Maltese Cross era. There is no evidence to indicate that Stranraer had more than one Maltese Cross obliterator, and I believe it is likely that the Special was issued to Stranraer in May 1840. The obliteration is in a brownish red shade and the Stranraer c.d.s. is in matching ink.

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. 1, 2006; Vol. 2, 2008; Vol. 3, 2011.

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

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, the cover bears a pair of 1840 1d blacks lettered PE-PF obliterated by Stranraer Special Maltese Crosses in a shade of Brownish Red, and is genuine. SG Spec. AS5(var.*).

* SG lists the Stranraer Special cross on the 1840 1d Mulready and 1841 1d and 2d, but not the 1840 1d and 2d adhesives.

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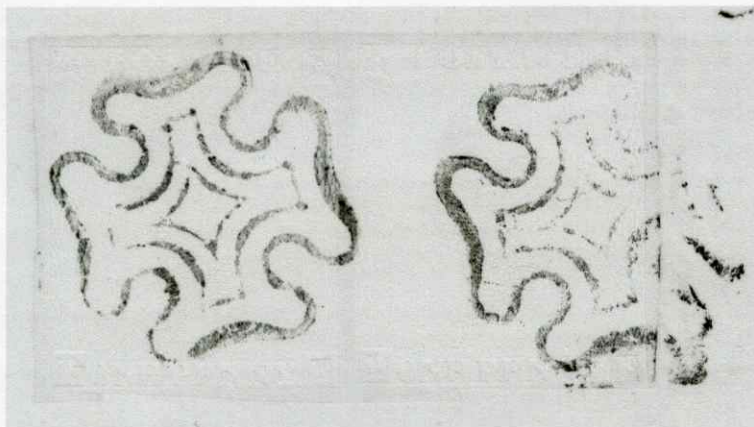




*Stranraer 6 Sept. 1843
for comparison.*



Digitally enhanced image to show the c.d.s. more clearly.



Digitally enhanced image to show the distinctive shape of the Maltese Crosses more clearly.

