



# PHILATELIC OPINION

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### PHILATELIST

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#### ITEM DESCRIPTION

1840 1d black GE on part wrapper obliterated by a Yellow Boston Skeleton datestamp and Black Maltese Crosses.

#### OBSERVATIONS

Comparisons with the letter positions in Nissen indicate that the stamp is from Plate 9, and shows the vertical guide-line in the NE square very close to the frame as described by Nissen.

Willcocks & Jay did not record this temporary Boston skeleton (or 'traveller') postmark but Mackay listed a single example seen in a 'dealer's list' dated 'MR 1841' (no colour or other details were given); this record was quite possibly taken from the example illustrated here which is dated 11 Mar. 1841. Regarding the colour, samples derived from a scan of the skeleton postmark are closest to Methuen 4C5, to which *Methuen* gives the names 'corn' or '(golden) wheat'. Under a microscope, the ink appeared to be a brighter yellow than to the naked eye or in scans.

A digitally-enhanced image reveals the letter N of BOSTON below the Queen's head. The wrapper is addressed to Horbling, about 15 miles from Boston in Lincolnshire.

#### PROVENANCE

Mark Bloxham & Barry Fitzgerald, 2008, 'Forrester Collection', p. 32 (the 1d black was described as Plate 3).

#### 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.

R. M. Willcocks & B. Jay, *The British County Catalogue of Postal History*, Vol. 5, 1990.

James Mackay, *Skeleton Postmarks of England and Wales*, 3rd edn, 2006 (incl. Suppls 1-8 by Patrick Awcock).

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

#### CONCLUSION

In my opinion, the wrapper bears an 1840 1d Black GE Plate 9 obliterated by a Yellow Boston Skeleton datestamp and Black Maltese Crosses, and is genuine. SG Spec. AS56. (*Not only is the 1d black obliterated by an unusual cancellation in an unusual colour, but possibly it is the only recorded example of this Boston Skeleton mark in any colour.*)



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