



PHILATELIC OPINION

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DESCRIPTION

1840 1d Black lettered J B on cover obliterated by Maltese Crosses of Devonport.

OBSERVATIONS

Comparisons with the letter positions and descriptions in Nissen indicate that the stamp is from Plate 2. Nissen described and illustrated the bottom frame-line extending to left, but this may be an error because both the stamp in question and another example of Plate 2 JB have no sign of it. The extended line on the Nissen stamp might have been caused by something else. Statham recorded a slight doubling below J square and ON of ONE (evident on the stamp in question) but did not mention the extended frame.

The cover was sent from Devonport (c.d.s. 28 Jan. 1841 in similar ink to that of the obliteration) to Plymouth. Although the '2' is missing from the c.d.s., a filing note is dated 'Jany 27 1841'. The contents of the letter have been removed.

Devonport appears to have used a distinctive ink for most, if not all, of the red Maltese Cross period. Rockoff & Jackson recorded four covers from Devonport (including the one in question) dated from June 1840 to Feb. 1841, the crosses variously described as 'pink', 'pinkish red' or 'pinkish shade'. Although not ideal as a comparison, auction catalogue illustrations of two of the covers appear to show crosses 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.*

Kenneth William Statham, *The Essential Guide to the Great Britain Line Engraved 1d and 2d Stars 1840-1864*, Vols 1-18, 1995-2006.

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 2 lettered JB on cover obliterated by Maltese Crosses of Devonport in a Pinkish Red shade, and is genuine. SG Spec. AS15.

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