



CANCELLATION OF THE PENNY BLACK

INTRODUCTION

On 6th May 1840, the first postage stamps was issued: the penny black. At the same time, to prevent any form of fraud (re-use), it was decided that the penny black had to be cancelled by an obliterator, better known as the Maltese Cross cancellation .

On 10th February 1841, it happened a great shake up: the colour of ink used for cancelling stamps was changed from red to black and the penny black was replaced with the penny red.

SCOPE

As a rule, the attention of collectors has been drawn by cancellations of the Imperforate Line Engraved issues of Great Britain or by the first postage stamps. On the contrary, this exhibit illustrates the main ways of cancellation only of the first stamp, from its issue until the Numeral Obliterators were introduced (May 1844). Obviously, the essential focus is on the Maltese Cross, including most important Distinctive Crosses, the main variations of colour, but it's an opportunity to show other postmarks or other marks you could find on the stamp.

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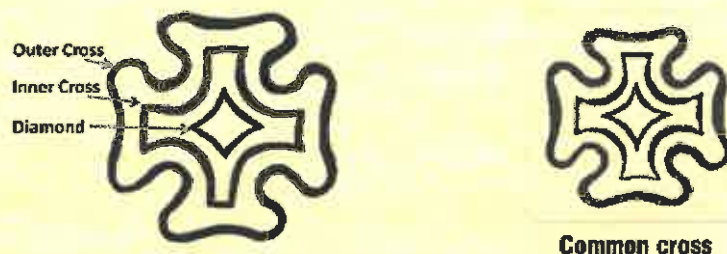
Section 1: The Maltese Cross and its development on the penny black

The penny black was the first postage stamp issued in the world and had a short life (6th May 1840 / 10th February 1841). Only 9 months, but it was utilized for many years later. Being the first one, it was examined in each detail: the plates, the colours, the paper, the watermark and obviously about the way of cancellations.

That was obtained by Maltese Cross Cancellation in red ink, but many problems cropped out at the beginning, because the red cancellation was not so clear on the black stamp and possibly removed by chemical way.

So since 10th February 1841 the red ink was replaced with the black one, while the penny black with the red one.

Nothing we know about the origin of the design of the Maltese Cross, but that "term" was used at the end of the nineteenth century. Characteristics of the Common Maltese Cross are: an outer Cross, with slight concavity; an inner Cross with the narrow arm; the center called diamond with lines of average thickness. The size of the outer Cross is 18 mm. The colour is originally red. Any alteration of the Common Cross is due to the multiple master patterns that were used, giving rise to many possibilities, known as Distinctive Crosses. During the month of May in 1844, the Maltese Crosses were substituted with Numeral Obliterators.



Penny black on cover, sent from Bewdley to London, dated 14 May 1840, cancelled with a red Maltese Cross. Double arc datestamp of Bewdley on the front. Example of Common Cross.



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Section 1: The Maltese Cross and its development on the penny black



Penny black on cover, sent from Skibo to Edinburgh , dated 7 December 1840, cancelled with a home made cancellation in orange- brown ink and dated with a Dornoch datestamp on front from the same ink. Example of home- made cancellation, because Skibo was a small village, not having a Maltese Cross.



Penny black with a part of adjoining stamp on cover, sent from Dover to Lancaster, dated 4 July 1840, cancelled with a a red Maltese Cross. 19 mm. Example of variation of Common Cross.



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Section 1: The Maltese Cross and its development on the penny black



Two " Penny black " on cover, from Stanraer to Wigtown , towns in Scotland, dated 25 October 1840, cancelled with a red Stanraer Cross. Distinctive Maltese Cross with "peg leg" deformity.



Penny black with a portion of adjoining stamp on the top on cover, from Manchester to Preston (Harnach Miller correspondence), dated 20 March 1841, cancelled by a complete upright strike of the Manchester "fishtail" Distinctive Maltese Cross, with a split point on the inner Cross like the tail of a fish.



Section 1: The Maltese Cross and its development on the penny black



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Penny black on cover, from Leeds to Hathersage, dated 4 February 1841, cancelled with a Leeds Cross in red. It is not a Distinctive Cross, but a special because of the shape of the outer Cross, really marked, possibly due to a different obliterator instead of the Common one.



Penny black on cover, from Leeds to Manchester, dated 24 March 1841, cancelled with a Leeds Distinctive Cross in black, with very rounded and marked cove-like outer cross loops, curved end plates with long points and a diamond with four long points. Two datestamps on the back: Leeds (24 March) and Manchester (25 March).



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Section 1: The Maltese Cross and its development on the penny black



Penny black on cover, from Banff to Edinburgh , dated 25 January 1844, cancelled with a black Maltese Cross. Late use. Unusual.



Penny black on cover, from Torquay to Totness , dated 26 May 1844, cancelled with a Barred Numeral Cancellation (305) and Torquay double arc datestamp alongside. It's very rare to find the Numeral Cancellation on the penny black, because 3 years and 3 months had passed when penny black was substituted with penny red.



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Section 2: Colour Variation in Maltese Crosses on the penny black

The alteration of the colour is due to the mixture of the components to obtain the red ink.

The Post Office Circular, dated 25 April 1840, gave instructions to prepare the red composition, made with printer's red ink, linseed oil and droppings of sweet oil. The results were in few occasions so different from the original one.



Penny black on cover, from Norwich to Saxmundham, dated 1 August 1840, cancelled with a **bright red** Norwich Maltese Cross.



Penny black on cover, from Halesworth to London, dated 1 February 1841, cancelled with a **blood red** Halesworth Maltese Cross, datestamp on the front.



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Section 2: Colour Variation in Maltese Crosses on the penny black



Penny black on printed circular, from Durham to Darlington, dated 12 October 1840, cancelled with a **brownish - red** Maltese Cross, then with a Heighington Penny Post "1", erased by pen strokes to pay re-direction to London, on receipt forwarded unpaid to Paris with manuscript "10" and French "25"cents, charges with 1 d valid for internal postage. Calais transit in red. Unusual.



Penny black on cover, from Brighton to London, dated 29 July 1840, cancelled with an **orange** Maltese Cross and datestamp of the same colour on reverse.



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Section 2: Colour Variation in Maltese Crosses on the penny black



Penny black on cover, from Falmouth to Halifax, dated 19 October 1840, cancelled with a **pink** Maltese Cross and double arc datestamp of the same colour on the stamp.



Penny black on cover, from Liverpool to Appleby, dated 20 October 1840, cancelled with two strikes of a **pale magenta** Maltese Cross.



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Section 2: Colour Variation in Maltese Crosses on the penny black



Penny black on cover, from Cheltenham to Dublin, dated 30 September 1840, cancelled with a black Maltese Cross. On 31 August 1840 the London District Post began the use of **black** ink within London. So, it's very unusual the use of black ink outside of London.



Penny black on cover, from Bervie (Scotland) to Edinburgh, dated 21 February 1841, cancelled with a **black** Maltese Cross. Early usage of black ink after the introduction on 10th February, that it gradually took place.



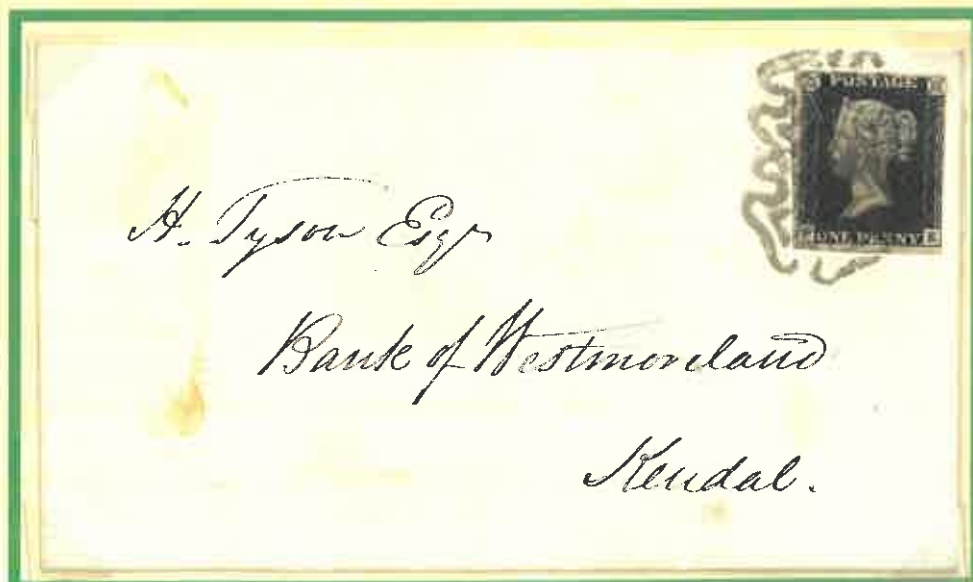
CANCELLATION OF THE PENNY BLACK

Section 3: Unusual cancellations of the penny black

According to the Post Office Circular, dated 25 April 1840, every such Stamp should be cancelled at the Post Office or Sub-Post Office where the Letter bearing the same may be posted...through... an Obliterating Stamp with which you will efface the Postage Stamp upon every Letter despatched from your office, while according to the Circular "To All Postmasters" of April 1840 each stamp must be separately obliterated. So, it was necessary to **use only one strike of Maltese Cross on the stamp and no further cancellations.** Otherwise, it was contrary to the regulations.



Penny black on cover, from London to Leeds, dated 26 August 1840, cancelled with two strikes of a red Maltese Cross.



Penny black on cover, from Milenthorpe to Kendal, dated 20 May 1841, cancelled with two strikes of a black Maltese Cross.



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Section 3: Unusual cancellations of the penny black



Penny black on cover, from Dundalk (Ireland) to Dublin, dated 23 February 1841, cancelled with three strikes of a red Maltese Cross. Late use of the Cross with the red ink, because the black one was introduced on 10th February and late mail, as written alongside.



Two "penny black" on cover, from Greenock (Scotland) to Glasgow, dated 11 June 1840, cancelled with three strikes of a red Maltese Cross, while, according to the regulations, it was necessary only two strikes, one for each stamp.



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Section 3: Unusual cancellations of the penny black

The Habit at Spilsby of adding additional strikes of the Maltese Cross. It was possible to come across this way occasionally in other towns or villages. At Spilsby it was the rule from 29 September 1840 to 27 April 1842. Here are example with red and black ink.



Penny black on cover, from Spilsby to London, dated 12 October 1840, cancelled with a red Maltese Cross and an additional strike alongside. Scarce.



Penny black on cover, from Spilsby to Sheffield, dated 31 March 1841, cancelled with a black Maltese Cross and a fine additional strike alongside.



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Section 3: Unusual cancellations of the penny black



Penny black on cover, from Darlington to Durham, dated 2 September 1840, cancelled with a red Maltese Cross, then from Durham to Harrogate, with a / 1d for extra paid to re-direction; cross in violet ink on the stamp to avoid confusion of the payment in the re-direction.



Penny black on cover, from Durham to London, dated 14 August 1840, cancelled with a red Maltese Cross, then within London, with a tombstone for extra paid to re-direction (also with / 1d); cross in violet ink and two lines on the stamp to avoid confusion of the payment in the re-direction. The letter contains the pedigree of Dale of Staindrop.



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Section 3: Unusual cancellations of the penny black



Penny black (letters T C) on cover, from Oswestry to Welshpool, dated 24 June 1840, cancelled with a red Maltese Cross, then with another penny black addressed from Welshpool to Barnmouth, cancelled with a red Maltese Cross, then addressed from Barnmouth to Welshpool and charged "1" for the re-direction.

The second penny black (letters K E) was put on the other one like a sort of further cancellation to avoid confusion of the payment in the re-direction.

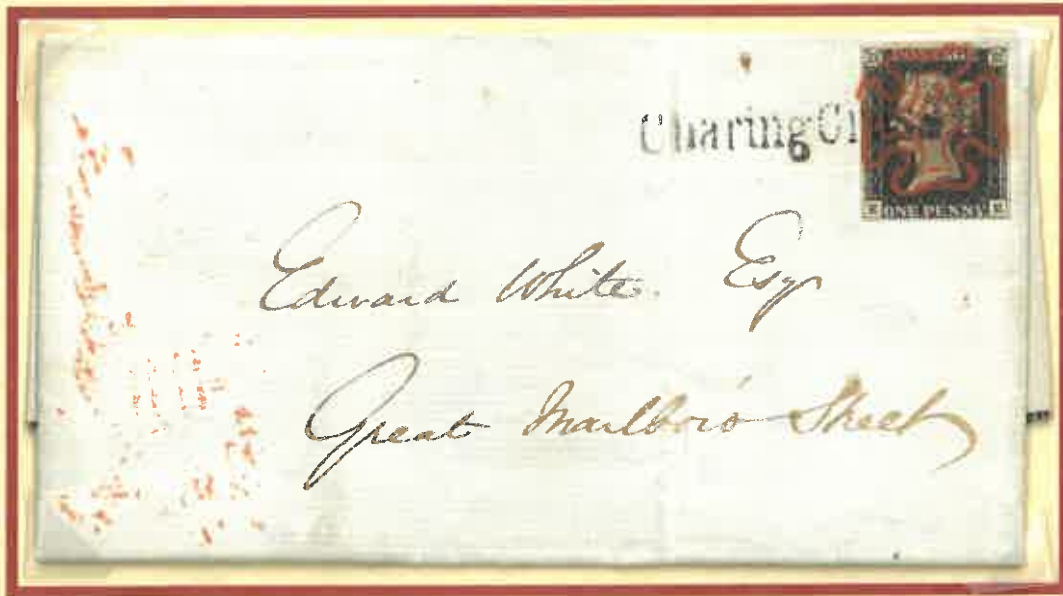
Manuscript not call for was probably written to justify the last re-direction.

It's really unusual and uncommon use to come across a stamp of the Imperforate Line Engraved Issues to cover another one.



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Section 3: Unusual cancellations of the penny black



Penny black on cover, used in London, dated 25 May 1840, cancelled with a red Maltese Cross and a Charing Cross straight line in black on the stamp.



Penny black on cover, from London to Shrewsbury, dated 5 August 1840, cancelled with a London red Maltese Cross and "T.P. Hampton" receiver in black on the stamp.