

Synopsis of: 'Great Britain, Cancellations of the Victorian Era'

Dec/2013

This exhibit is an attempt to acquaint the viewer with the early postal cancels of Great Britain during the reign of Queen Victoria. Beginning with the 'Maltese Cross' and the '1844 types', followed by several experimental types, then Scottish and Irish trials. Followed by 'Spoons', 'Sideways Duplex' and Trials of 'Squared-Circles' and 'Scroll' types. As the Channel Islands were under British administration during Queen Victoria's reign, the earliest Maltese cross cancels are included. Machine cancellations and Foreign Offices are **not** included.

On the introduction of pre-paid postage labels (postage stamps) on May 6th 1840, an obliterator, or cancel, was used to prevent re-use. The earliest of these was the 'Maltese Cross'. Other markings would often be struck elsewhere on the letter. The rapid expansion of the mail system resulted in many cancellation trials to find the ideal combination of date-stamp and obliterator. **All the major cancellation varieties and errors** are represented and for the most part, are on cover or dated piece. Where possible, more difficult offices have been chosen to display common types. The exhibit contains sixteen certified items.

Since being awarded Gold at 2013 Orapex (Ottawa) & 2013 Winnipeg 'Royal', exhibit has been partially re-organized with new items

Arranged in two parts: **Part 1:** Single handstamp devices.

Part 2: Combined obliterator / datestamp types

Part 1/Frame 1: The 'Maltese Cross' cancellations with an overview of the major colour variations and distinctive types used in England & Wales, Scotland and Ireland, including the Numbered Crosses of London.

Highlights: Use of a Red cross on the **First Day**. Experimental '**Black**' Cross of the London Twopenny Post Chief Office from October 1840 and a **First Day of use for the Black Cross** on 10th Feb 1841. The Carmarthen, Wales, (**two known**) & Ironbridge solid-centre crosses – (**one of the four**) both recorded by Rockoff & Jackson.

Part 1/Frame 2: Maltese Crosses continued into the transition period. The introduction of the '1844 type' Barred-Numeral cancels with colour variations, distinctive types, special uses and errors.

Highlights: **The Channel Islands distinctive MX.** A one penny Mulready cancelled with a **Dark-Blue** Maltese cross. Of the 27 towns recorded using numerals on the first day, one of the **two recorded matched pairs of Last Day** use of MC & **First Day** use of the '1844 numeral' (466 of Liverpool) (*H. Hughes database*). **Green** and **Violet** provincial colour varieties. A rare **strike in Red** on a perforated Twopence Blue.

Part 1/Frame 3: Barred-Numerals continued. The early 'Roller' cancel trials. Experimental trials and unofficial uses of town-name and receiving house hammers etc as cancels. Various types of circular cancels.

Highlights: **Matched pair** of covers showing the 'Salisbury' Experimentals with & without the pins.

Rare examples of London and Aberdeen Rollers. The London Inland Office Roller '76', only recently listed by Parmenter, (one on a block of four). The **Dublin** 'roller'. The **rare Wolsingham u.d.c.** in Blue. Very scarce use of Irish c.d.s. in green as a cancel. Only recorded example of a bulk mail 'Paid' c.d.s. as a cancel.

Part 1/Frame 4: Circular marks cont'd. Inspector's marks as cancels. Scottish 'Locals'. Special purpose types.

Highlights: Pair of Uniform PP 1d's simulating a Maltese cross. **Matched** correct / incorrect uses of Inspector's marks. The **rare Exeter** town handstamp. **Matched types** of Scottish 'Local' for Cowcaddens.

Part 2 - Frame 4: The first duplex and early combined types

Highlights: London District Post duplex used the **first week**. **The very rare second type 'Too Late' duplex** (5 recorded) (*HH / RT*) Scarce London 'Posted Since' duplex. **An example of postal fraud used in a London office.**

Part 2/Frame 5: Duplex trials, errors & odds. Scottish duplex experiments. Earliest trials in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. 'Twin-arc' experimental types. 'Dotted-Circles': Edinburgh, varieties and Greenock.

Highlights: The **Brighton duplex error**. The Edinburgh 'Unicycle' experiments: type 1 **only 2 recorded** and type 2, **one of the two known examples & the only one in blue** (*ref SPHS*). The **rare Glasgow type 1**. The first Leith experiments. The very scarce **Kilmarnock** Experimental duplex and a rare **Blue** Greenock 'Dotted Circle'.

Part 2/Frame 6: Dundee 'Dotted Circle' duplex. Scottish duplex varieties: Brunswick Stars, 'Posted Since' etc. Examples of all the Scottish and Irish provincial duplex types, with colour varieties and with odd & fraudulent uses. Introduction of the 'Spoon' experiments in England & Wales.

Highlights: The scarce Scottish, type 9 'Brunswick Star'. Edinburgh duplex in Blue. Fraudulent re-use of a stamp on a cover from Edinburgh. The Irish 'Trollope' duplex, and the very scarce Irish 'Posted Since' duplex.

Part 2/Frame 7: 'Spoons' continued, with Irish types including the 'Dublin Diamond' cancels'. Introduction of the Sideways Duplex trials of England & Wales, including the Reading 'Biscuit' and several colour varieties.

Highlights: The very scarce **Cheltenham** 'Spoon'. A rare **new find** of the 'Dublin Diamond' type 6 (RA) in Green, one of **three now recorded** and **latest date**. Example of the Devonport, Sideways Duplex numeral **error**. 'Turned' letter with two different sideways duplex, one in Blue. 'Gosport' type 2 in **Blue (unrecorded)**

Part 2/Frame 8: The 'Sideways Duplex' cont'd. Introduction of the London 'Fancy Geometric' cancels. 'Squared Circle' types of London and provincial England & Wales. The 'Scrolls' or Hooded types. Conclusion.

Highlights: Rare Geometric type 1b in **Red** on cover. The Pontyclown **error**. The scarce 'Camberwell' office on hand-drawn / coloured envelope, also before recorded date of use (SC). A Rare strike in **Red** of the Bristol squared-circle (*unrecorded by SC*). The Stamford Mercury prototype for the 'Scroll' or Hooded cancels.

Bibliography

Where specific statements are made in the body of the exhibit, the letters shown in the left-hand column identify the specific source reference. (i.e: AH is Alcock & Holland)

Specific Subjects:

- (RJ) "Encyclopaedia of the Maltese Cross". Vols 1,2 & 3 by Prof. S Rokoff and Mike Jackson (2008-11)
- (AH) "The Maltese Cross Cancellations of the United Kingdom". 2nd edition by Alcock & Holland (1970)
- (DG) "The Cancellations of the Penny Red". by Danzig and Goldsmith (1991)
- (JP) "Barred Numeral Cancellations of London" by John Parmenter (1999)
- (PGS) "Barred Numeral Cancellations". Volumes 1- 6 by Parmenter, Goodman and Saylor (1986)
- (RA) "Spoon Cancels 1853 – 1870". 2nd by Richard Arundel (1994)
- (WB) "The Spoon Experiment 1853 – 1858" by Willcocks & Bently (1960)
- (RA) "Irish Spoon Cancels" by Richard Arundel (1997)
- (TH) "The Sideways Duplex Cancellations of England & Wales" by Traill & Holland (1975)
- (JM) "Scottish Numeral Postmarks" by James A. Mackay (1987)
- (RCA) "Scots Local Cancellations Illustrated 1854 - 1860". By R.C.Allcock (1984)
- (SPG) "The Experimental Duplex Cancellations of Scotland" by the Scottish Postmark Group
- (RA) "Brunswick Star Cancels" by Richard Arundel (Revised edition by Russell Taylor 2012)
- (RA) "Dotted Circle Cancels" by Richard Arundel (1996)
- (RA) "Posted Since Last Night" by Richard Arundel (2002)
- (SPHS) Edinburgh "131 with stars" – Early articles in *(SPHS) club magazines.
- (SC) "Collecting British Squared Circle Postmarks" Parts 1 & 2 by S. Cohen & M. Barette (2006)

General Information:

- (AH) "The Postmarks of Great Britain and Ireland, 1660 – 1940" by R.C.Alcock & F.C.Holland
- (JTW) "Collect British Postmarks" 8th Edition by (Dr. J.T.Whitney) re-published by Stanley Gibbons 2011
- (BB) "Bill Barrell Ltd" a prominent GB Dealer, based in Great Britain
- (SG) "Great Britain, Volume 1, Queen Victoria" 16th Edition by Stanley Gibbons (Specialized Catalogue)

Additional information has been obtained by membership in the following Societies:

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| Great Britain Philatelic Society | Great Britain Postmark Society |
| Scottish Postal History Society *(SPHS) | Great Britain Collectors Club |

Because of the related **importance of dates of issue**, 'C' numbers are used to identify perforated line-engraved stamps which are explained on the pages where they first appear. (Reference to S.G. Specialized, vol 1)

There were thirteen separate issues of the one penny officially perforated stamps.

eg: 'C1': Die 1, Blued Paper, wmk: small crown, perf. 16, alphabet 2 corner letters. From 24 Feb 1854.

'C6': Die 2, Blued Paper, wmk: large crown, perf. 14, alphabet 2 corner letters. From June 1855.

'C10': Die 2, White Paper, wmk: large crown, perf. 14, alphabet 3 corner letters. From March 1857.

Wherever possible, the stamps have been additionally identified by plate number. Further information on the dates of issue for each plate is available in "The Postage Stamps of Great Britain" Parts 1 & 2, 3rd Edition by Seymour & Hill. "The Plating of the Penny" Volumes 1 to 5 by the GBPS. "Plating of Alphabet 2" by Wiggins. "The Plating of Alphabet 3" by Wiggins & Tonna, and "Twopence Blue" by H. Osbourne MD.