



# POSTMARKS



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## MALTESE CROSS POSTMARKS

In 1840, for the obliteration of the first adhesive postage stamps, issued 6th May, the English Maltese Cross postmark was introduced but not used generally until February 1841.

Later, many Irish towns had distinctive crosses, and those for Dublin, Cork and Belfast (used 1842-1844 only) were very similar but with certain distinguishing points. According to J. B. Seymour, "Stamps of Great Britain, the Cork cancel had a larger diamond and broader outside indentations than Dublin; Belfast had the largest and most spreading diamond, and the indentation of both outer and inner cross are much deeper, giving the centre a more compact appearance than in either of the others.



Belfast



Cork



Dublin



Mullingar



Westport

We quote from a paper read by Mr. D.A. Berry at a meeting of the Manchester Philatelic Society (Year and source not presently known) relative to the Cork Cross:

"The diamond of the Cork cross is large. Inner cross wide, fish tail spokes. The inner cross being much closer to the outer than usual, all the outlines being very thin. The indentations are wide. This is quite a distinctive cross, six single specimens shown, the first being a very fine example. Also one on original cover, dated Cork March 3rd, 1844. This cancellation came into operation probably early in 1843, the same as did also the Dublin and Norwich crosses and the London crosses with the numbers 1 to 12 in the centre. A different cross was in use in Cork prior to 1843, but it differs from the ordinary Maltese Cross. The outlines are thicker and the indentations are more curly. I show one on original cover dated Cork, March 26th, 1842, and there is a point to be noted in connection with this postmark that it has a small dot inside the inner cross at one of the points of the diamond."

## THE MALTESE CROSS POSTMARKS

by Tubbercurry

(Reprinted from The Revealer, Sept.-Oct. 1951, page 6)

The Maltese Cross obliteration was used to cancel the first stamps used in the British Isles. However, the cancellation is not a true Maltese Cross but apparently was formed by a combination of the following figures. See (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, and Fig. 3).



MALTESE CROSS.  
FIG. 1.



CROIX PATÉE  
FIG. 2.



TUDOR ROSE  
FOUR PETALS.  
FIG. 3.

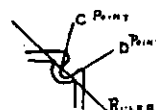


FIG. 4.



BELFAST CROSS  
FIG. 5.



CORK CROSS  
FIG. 6.



DUBLIN CROSS.  
FIG. 7.

As Irish collectors, we believe that the idea came from the four-leaf shamrock. At first only one type was distributed for use. As these land stamps became worn, they were repaired, or in some cases duplicates were made locally, thus varieties came into existence.

The Maltese Cross cancellations are usually divided into four groups: (a) London Crosses, (b) Provincial Crosses of England and Wales, (c) Scottish Crosses, and (d) Irish Local Crosses.

Ireland used the normal English Cross until 1842, and then several varieties appeared and were used until 1844. The best known are from Belfast, Cork and Dublin. Cloghan and Galway both appear to have used distinctive crosses but more of these must be found on cover before they are definitely allotted to these offices.

The distinguishing features of the Irish Crosses are the straight sides of both the inner and outer crosses.

#### SIMPLE TEST FOR CROSSES

Place ruler across corners of the cross, so that it just touches the edges of the inner cross, and runs straight across the outer indentation and measure the space from C to D. The Belfast Cross is 2 1/2 mm spaced while the Cork Cross is 3 mm.

The Belfast Cross is scarcer than that of Dublin. The inner cross is relatively wider and the diamond runs to deep points. It was used during 1843 and 1844 (Fig. 5).

The Cork Cross has two varieties, both of which resemble the Belfast Cross in general outline. It has a neat appearance but clear impressions are scarce. The center diamond is a fraction broader than that of the Belfast and indentations of the outer cross are much wider and deeper. (Fig. 6).

The Dublin Cross has several varieties. Figure 7 shows the normal type used in 1843. Note that the inner cross is less curved making the arms broader and clumsier in appearance. It measures 18 mm in size.

The second variety was used near the end of 1843. It is 19 mm in size and has a semi-solid diamond with a circular uncolored center.

The third variety was also used near the end of 1843. It is 18 mm and has a rather clipped and severe appearance. The outline is extremely heavy and blurred. The outer and inner crosses have straight lines.

Another type reported was also used during 1843, and is 18 mm in size. The inner cross is broader and the center diamond is much larger.

Dr. J. Stafford Johnson reports a Dublin cross used at Durrow. Its distinctive feature seems to be that one of the outer indentations runs more deeply in than do the others.

Mr. J. B. Seymour discovered the Mullingar Cross. This cross has "v" shaped cuts at the center of all four sides and is unique for an Irish Cross.

#### NUMERICAL CANCELLATIONS

In 1844 the G.P.O. in London, at the suggestion of Mr. F. Abbot, set up a system of numerical cancellations for important offices-- each using a number assigned alphabetically. Ireland was assigned 450 numbers in 1844 and was given a type of cancellation which showed the cancellation number in a diamond of bars.

With the years 1856, 1874, 1887 and 1906 came additional changes in the original list--new numbers were added while others were changed or deleted. In 1906 the final changes were made and the last number assigned, bringing the list to 564. They continued in use until the middle 1920's.

Many variations occurred in the initial marking which was a square diamond with the numerals in the center of a rectangle-- 5 bars above, 5 below, and 5 at either side. These variances, from the original, began in the late 1840's and continued to the middle 1850's when duplex markings came in to widespread usage.

According to Hendy, the original postmark was a well-shaped diamond, with fifteen lines of medium thickness, five of them broken for the number. These handstamps were individually cut in brass so that variations were to be found. Dr. deBurca says that the Dublin type 8 has about thirty varieties. The subject of the varieties was discussed by both William Kane and Dr. deBurca in a series of articles in the Revealer in 1960-61 and the following chart is the original chart of Mr. Kane, as supplemented by Dr. deBurca.

LIST OF NUMERICAL OFFICES

For a complete listing of the postoffices to which the numerical postmarks were issued, our members may refer to Neil Stack's listings in the Revealer Nov-Dec. 1954 pages 194-5 ; Jan-Feb. 1955 pages 202-3; Mar-Apr. 1955 pages 210-11 and May-June 1955 pages 220-21.

| PERMUTATIONS OF THE NUMERICAL CANCELLATIONS                                                                     |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                    | by Wm. Kane                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                 | 3<br>3 3<br>3<br><br>9 lines    | 3<br>4 4<br>3<br><br>10 lines   | 3<br>5 5<br>3<br><br>11 lines   |                                                                                                                    |
| 4<br>2 2<br>4<br><br>10 lines | 4<br>3 3<br>4<br><br>11 lines  | 4<br>4 4<br>4<br><br>12 lines  | 4<br>5 5<br>4<br><br>13 lines  |                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                                                 | 5<br>3 3<br>5<br><br>13 lines | 5<br>4 4<br>5<br><br>14 lines | 5<br>5 5<br>5<br><br>15 lines | 5<br>6 6<br>5<br><br>16 lines |
|                                                                                                                 | 6<br>3 3<br>6<br><br>15 lines | 6<br>4 4<br>6<br><br>16 lines | 6<br>5 5<br>6<br><br>17 lines | 6<br>6 6<br>6<br><br>18 lines |
| These illustrations are not to scale                                                                            |                                                                                                                  | 7<br>4 4<br>7<br><br>18 lines | 7<br>5 5<br>7<br><br>19 lines | 7<br>6 6<br>7<br><br>20 lines |

# IMPRESSIONS OF NUMERICAL POSTMARKS & DUPLEX NUMERICAL POSTMARKS

[Taken from the Official Post Office Archives, London and obtained thru the courtesy of Dr. Brian deBurca for illustration herewith]

418

74.

Number  
Date & Loc.  
1860.

Impression. Acknowledged.

DUBLIN

6



Sept 21<sup>st</sup>



DUNDALK



June 24<sup>th</sup>

DUNFANAGHY



Sept 21<sup>st</sup>

Stamps.

