



The Berwyn Roswell Incident



On the evening of 23rd of January 1974, around 8pm, the sleepy peace of the small Welsh village of Llandrillo near Bala was shattered. Firstly a large explosion was heard and the ground shook. Then bright lights were seen flying in the sky, through the mist that was beginning to descend, over the nearby mountains. Locals spilled out of their homes and the pubs to see what had happened. Police heading up the tracks to the mountains, suspecting yet another small plane crash (there have been several there), saw more bright lights on the ground. Within a couple of hours the army had arrived (surprisingly quickly many have said) and the remote moorland area was sealed off, even to the regular emergency services. A local nurse, thinking her skills may have been needed, made her way up the lane towards the lights. She described a glowing pulsating sphere surrounded by other smaller glowing orbs. She was approached by the military and ordered off the mountain. The next day army trucks were seen seemingly taking away what remained of the flying craft, and perhaps bodies in black oblong boxes, away.



View of The Berwyns in high summer

Make of this what you will, but it wasn't long before stories of an alien spaceship having crashed and alien bodies being recovered, mirroring the Roswell Incident in New Mexico in 1947. Naturally, the Ministry of Defence denies all such rumours; the official line being that the lights in the sky were a meteor shower, the ground shaking being an earth tremor measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale and the other lights being poachers returning home. The chances of an earthquake coinciding with a meteor shower are very slim, and poachers do not normally return home that early advertising their presence with lamps bright enough to be seen miles away. The reference, in a respected journal, to the meteor shower states 'Meteorite; not a shower'. This explanation conflicts with witness stories of many bright lights in the sky, not a singular event. Witnesses described the lights on the ground as like fingers of light reaching into the sky. Not what you'd expect from poacher's lamps tracing a surreptitious path across the moorland. The Army presence and cordons have not been explained, and witnesses began to change their

stories saying that they were originally misquoted – after reports of Men in Black questioning witnesses in the area started.

I spent a week in the Berwyns on a school field course many years ago. We were based just over those mountains in the picture. One trek took us to the summit of the highest, but on the way down in the dip between the two highest there was some metallic debris in the peat and vegetation. It was un-corroded and silvery, unpainted and very twisted. We were told that it was probably from a light aircraft that crashed there the year before. There were, we were told, a number of aircraft accidents on those hills. But when I first read about the Berwyn Roswell Incident later I couldn't help but wonder.

This enclosed letter does throw some light on what happened, but unfortunately is fairly non-specific. However, its main value is a philatelic one. The cover boasts a very rarely seen carmine £1 MOD stamp, used exclusively for officer to officer personally couriered mail between departments. The design and colour of the stamp is a variation on the pre-decimal key plate design for revenue stamps, despite the year being 1974. This is because the £1 value would still be valid after decimalization and the low usage negated the need to print the new design, though there were some imperforate trial prints overprinted SPECIMEN prepared later in the blue-ish shade used on post decimalisation EIIR revenue stamps. As with many official stamps, the printing of both is quite coarse or rough. Less attention to quality is paid to these issues than the regular Royal Mail postage stamp. The stamp on the cover has been cancelled with a signature and date in pen, a common practice with official non-postal stamps.

One might question why it was necessary to levy a charge on mail between departments within the same organisation, especially the £1 rate. In actual fact these official letters generally were sent either way in roughly the same numbers so the charges would cancel out. The real reason was that if couriers we used for private mail there would have been a case of theft as well as misuse against the offender. It is believed that the names of the two colonels involved are pseudonyms to help protect their identities and for national security reasons.

Shortly after the incident a commemorative label appeared, presumably to help tourism in the area. The illustration was alleged to have derived from first hand witness reports, though even I am doubtful that any reports were accurate and suspect that if there were any interviews the witnesses were having a bit of fun. In actual fact the illustration looks a bit too reminiscent of a 1960s comic book cover. Despite these doubts, the labels are eminently collectable.

Of course, only the believable part of this story is true; visit
<http://www.ufocasebook.com/wales1974.html>
<http://www.cseti.org/crashes/047.htm> or
<http://www.rense.com/ufo5/wales.htm>

