

County: Devon

Site Name: Pridhamsleigh Caves

District: South Hams

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as amended.

Local Planning Authority: Devon County Council
South Hams District Council

National Grid Reference: SX 749679 **Area:** 7.9 (ha) 19.5 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 202 **1:10,000:** SX 76 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1964 **Date of Last Revision:** 1976

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

The boundary has been amended by extension.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This is one of three networks of cave passages in separate limestone outcrops around Buckfastleigh. Detailed study has shown that the three networks developed over the same time-span during the late Pleistocene period of Geological history about 150,000 years ago. Furthermore, stages in the development of the caves can be related to stages in the development of the valley of the River Dart. Accumulations of debris washed into the caves during their formation contain important fossil remains which give indication of the age of the caves. The caves also contain important and spectacular mineral deposits.

Pridhamsleigh Caves are important as a site for the endemic crustacean *Niphargus glennei* which is abundant in the cave waters. This animal is thought to be a pre-glacial relict.