

Site Notified to Secretary of State on 25 November 1987

County: Dorset **Site Name:** Belle Vue Quarry

District: Purbeck

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

Local Planning Authority: Purbeck District Council, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SZ 014782 **Area:** 3.2 (ha) 7.9 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195 **1:10,000:** SZ 07 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1977 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

Site amended by deletion, Previously known as Belle Vue Farm Quarries.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Belle Vue Quarry comprises a steep shaft, 28 metres deep, leading to two remaining tunnels, totalling some 200 metres in length. It is one of the series of Purbeck quarries used as hibernation sites by the Dorset colony of greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, one of the rarest of British bats.

The series of quarries provides a choice of hibernation sites which are selected by the bats according to particular winter conditions. Belle Vue Quarry is important in this series: the quarry shaft was cleared of accumulated rubbish in 1964 and has been fenced off and widened in order to maintain its value as a hibernation site.

In the past small numbers of mouse-eared bats *Myotis myotis*, now virtually extinct in Britain, have been found here and the very rare Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteini* has occasionally been recorded in this quarry.