

Rosehill Quarry, Billown Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)

Designation Documents

Please note:

- Notification as an ASSI confers no public right of entry to any land without the permission of the landowner.
- The citations and lists of operations requiring the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture's consent may be subject to minor editorial changes and should not be assumed to be an exact facsimile of the original legal document.

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Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

**ROSEHILL QUARRY, BILLOWN
AREA OF SPECIAL
SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**



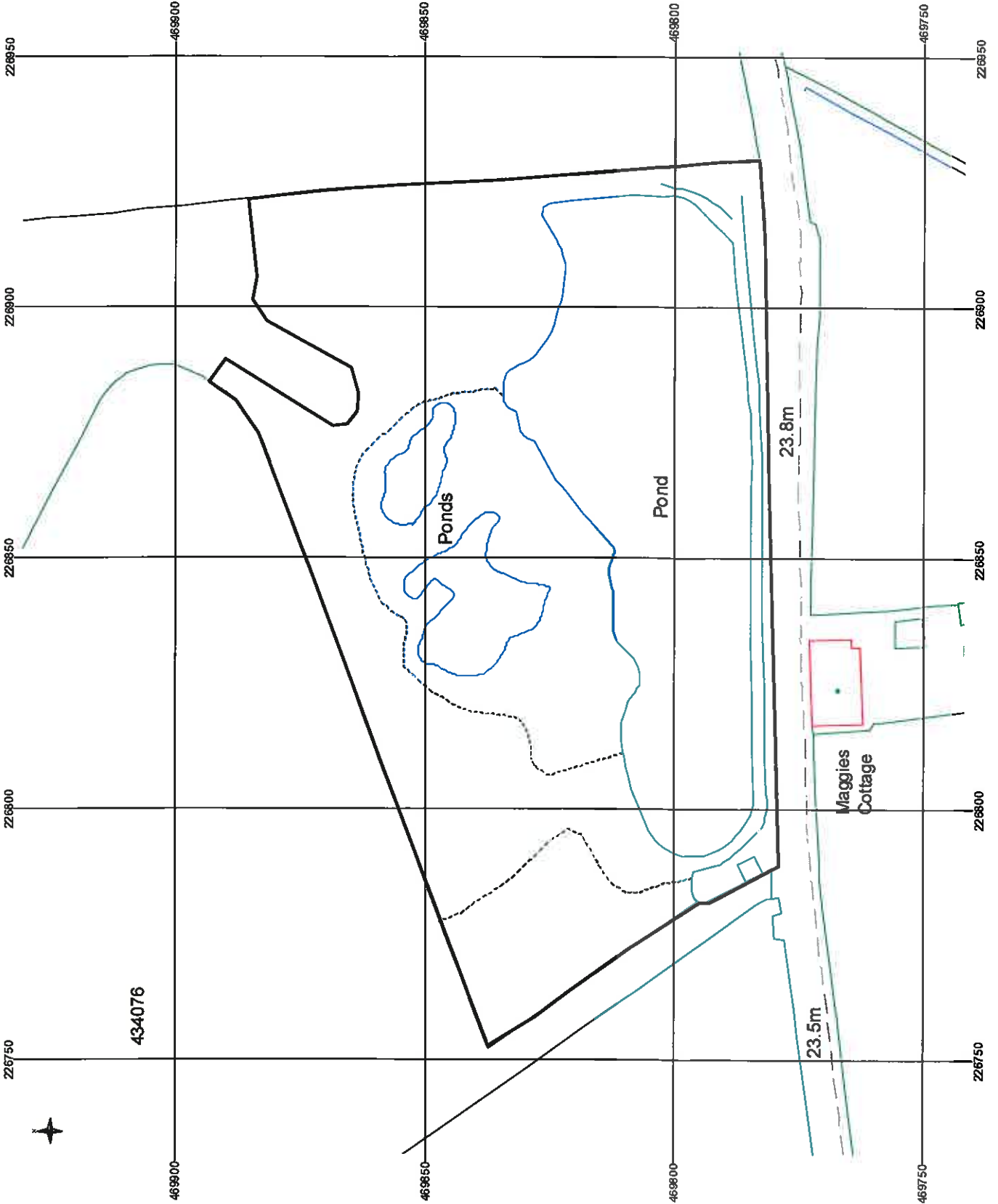
Area: 1.37ha (= 3.39 acres)

Designated: 2nd December 2005

Confirmed: 24th March 2006

The grid lines on this map form
part of the National Grid,
and are spaced at 50m intervals

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NOTIFICATION OF AN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST Appendix I

Site name: Rosehill Quarry, Billown

Status : Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) notified under Section 27 of the Wildlife Act 1990.

Area: Isle of Man

Parish: Malew

Planning Authority: Department of Local Government and the Environment

Local authority: Malew Commissioners

Ordnance Survey Sheet: 1:50,000 OS Landranger Map No.95 and 1:10,560 sheets SC 27SE

National Grid Reference (centroid): SC 26856982

Area: 1.37 ha (3.39 acres)

Date notified: 2nd December 2005

Date confirmed: 24th March 2006

Date of last revision: N/A

Purpose

The purpose of this designation is to formalise the protection of an area which is important for its flora and habitat – open water, swamp vegetation, limestone grassland and scrub.

Description and reasons for notification:

Billown Quarry consists of a deeply-excavated, disused limestone quarry which has been allowed to flood and vegetate naturally. It now has a large, deep lake in the south part of the site and a small, shallow pool and marsh to the north. Calcareous grassland surrounds the water and also occurs on rock ledges around the quarry. The edges of the shallower lake have extensive fringes of swamp vegetation, grading into sedges and marshy grassland. The periphery of the site is sheltered all round by mixed hawthorn and gorse scrub, and trees of several stages of development.

The calcareous grassland in the centre of the site is species-rich, with limited grass cover and a high proportion of wild flowers including fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, wild carrot *Daucus carota*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, common centaury *Centaureum erythraea*, common bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinalis*, black knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and eyebright *Euphrasia agg.* The sparse, fine grasses include crested dog's-tail *Cynosurum cristatum*, flattened meadow-grass *Poa compressa*, wood false-brome *Bromus sylvaticus* and red fescue *Festuca rubra ssp rubra*. The grassland is characterised by frequent patches of glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, a species common to calcareous sites and consequently of rather local distribution on the Isle of Man. The site is notable for being one of only two sites on the Isle of Man for bee orchid *Ophrys apifera****. Overall, the vegetation is similar to that of the sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* - meadow oat-grass *Avenula pratensis* grasslands – a habitat typical of the warmer, sunnier parts of the British Isles, found here at the northernmost edge of its range.

Both the two lakes in the flooded base of the quarry contain aquatic vegetation, notably stonewort *Chara* species, spiked water-milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum* and curled pondweed *Potamogeton crispus*. All three species have a local distribution on the Island, due to the limited number of suitable habitats. The smaller and shallower of the two lakes supports a dense, varied fringe of emergent plants as well as submerged vegetation. Emergent species include bulrush *Typha latifolia*, common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, mare's-tail *Hippuris vulgaris*, water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, and water mint *Mentha aquatica*.

Birds, bats and invertebrates benefit from the sheltered environment of the quarry, which is provided partly by its depth and partly by the margins of developing scrub and woodland. At least fourteen bird species are known or thought to breed on the site include song thrush *Turdus philomelos**, willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochylus*, blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, and mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*. The quarry is also known to attract feeding swallows *Hirundo rustica* and sand martins *Riparia riparia**, particularly in spring when suitable sheltered feeding areas are scarce. Invertebrates known to rely on the lakes and surrounding cover include common blue and blue-tailed damselflies *Enallagma cyathigerum* and *Ischnura elegans*, and the common darter dragonfly *Sympetrum striolatum*. In addition to birds and invertebrates, the site is known to attract feeding pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus sp***.

The quarry is of interest to geologists, providing clear, accessible exposures of jointed, folded Carboniferous limestone, interspersed with impermeable shales and overlain with glacial boulder clay deposits.

Although a small site, Billown Quarry qualifies for ASSI selection because it fulfils the Priority Site Criteria for size, location, diversity, naturalness, representativeness and rarity, and research value, and for the presence of the features described above.

* = Protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1990

** = Protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1990

*** = Protected under Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990

Other information:

Other species thought likely to inhabit the site include the common frog *Rana temporaria* and common lizard *Lacerta vivipara*, both of which are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1990. Bat species other than pipistrelles may also use the quarry for feeding or roosting. Further research on these species and on the possible presence of rare or local invertebrates and lower plants is warranted, due to the very limited Manx distribution of calcareous habitats.

NOTIFICATION OF AN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST Appendix II

Site Name: Rosehill Quarry, Billown

Operations likely to damage the special interest of the site

<u>Standard reference number†</u>	<u>Type of operation</u>
1	Cultivation including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and reseeded.
2	The introduction of livestock.
4	Introduction of mowing regime or other methods of cutting.
5	Application of manure, fertilisers and lime.
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.
8	Burning, lighting of fires and changes in frequency or pattern of burning, where applicable.
9	The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic animals *, plant or seed.
10	The killing or removal of any wild animal *, including pest control
11	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including herb, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf mould or turf.
12	The introduction of tree and /or woodland management and changes in tree and/ or woodland management.
13	Drainage (including moor-gripping, the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).
14	The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes).
15	Infilling of ditches, dykes, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.
20	Extraction of minerals including peat, shingle, sand and gravel, topsoil, subsoil, chalk, lime, limestone pavement, shells and spoil.
21	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
22	Storage of materials.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.
24	Modification of natural or man-made features (including cave entrances), clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock or scree and bettering, buttressing or grading rock faces and cuttings, in-filling of pits, and quarries.
25	Removal of geological specimens, including rock samples, minerals and fossils.
26	Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb features of interest.
27	Recreational or other activities likely to damage features of interest.
28	Game and waterfowl management and hunting practices.

† Note: each type of operation has a standard reference number; for each site, only those operations which are relevant to the site will be listed, hence there may be gaps in the numbering for some sites.

* “animal” includes any mammal, reptile, bird, fish or invertebrate.