

# LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

## BRAINTREE DISTRICT



### BraG24 Twinstead Sarsen Stone, Twinstead

**Site location:** Two sarsen stones at the side of the track just outside the churchyard of St John the Evangelist church in Twinstead.

**Grid Reference:** TL 8612 3667

**Status:** Public – on the verge next to the churchyard.

**Summary of the geological interest:**

A large sarsen stone (150cm x 70cm x 30cm) with a mamillated surface is situated just outside the churchyard. It was found under the old church when it was demolished in the late 19th century. A smaller sarsen can be seen on the other side of the track.



**Site Assessment.** Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

**Scientific interest and site importance:**

Sarsens are extremely hard boulders of sandstone that are often used as boundary or entrance markers having been dragged from nearby fields. They formed around 55 million years ago when the climate of Britain was hot and a layer of sand beneath the surface of the ground became cemented with quartz. Research has compared the conditions under which sarsens and puddingstones may have been formed with the present day climate in the Kalahari Desert and parts of Australia. They are thus very resistant to erosion and have survived the rigours of the Ice Age. They were weathered out of the geological strata where they were formed – the Lower Tertiary Upnor Formation, which outcrops locally.

**Reference:** Armfield 1893





*Twinstead Sarsen Stone - no.1, just outside south-east corner of churchyard, looking west (photo D Potts 2023)*



*Twinstead Sarsen Stone - no.1 (photo D Potts 2023)*



*Twinstead Sarsen Stone - no.2, near main sarsen outside south-east corner of churchyard (photo D Potts 2023)*