

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

COLCHESTER DISTRICT



CoG7 Rams Farm Sarsen Stone, Fordham

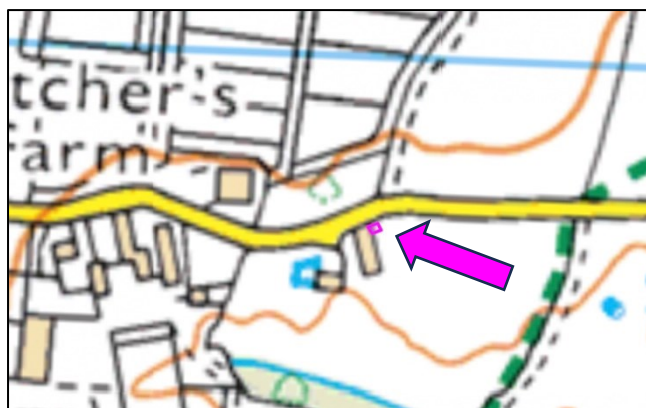
Site location: By roadside at Rams Farm, Ford

Grid Reference: TL 9347 2889

Status: Public Access

Summary of the geological interest:

At Rams Farm, Fordham is a fine sarsen stone standing upright by the roadside.



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

The Rams Farm sarsen stone is 130cm x 110cm x 50cm in size. The boulder was moved to its present position in the 1960s. This may be the stone at Fordham referred to by Salter in 1914 "in a roadside bank".



Sarsens are extremely hard boulders of sandstone 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. They are thus very resistant to erosion and have survived the rigours of the Ice Age. They were transported from the geological strata where they were formed – the Lower Tertiary Upnor Formation, by large rivers swollen by ice melt, such as the ancestral Thames which once flowed across north Essex.

The formation of silcretes (which includes sarsens and puddingstones) has been the subject of recent scientific debate. 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.