

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT



EpG1 Beauchamp Roding Sarsen Stone

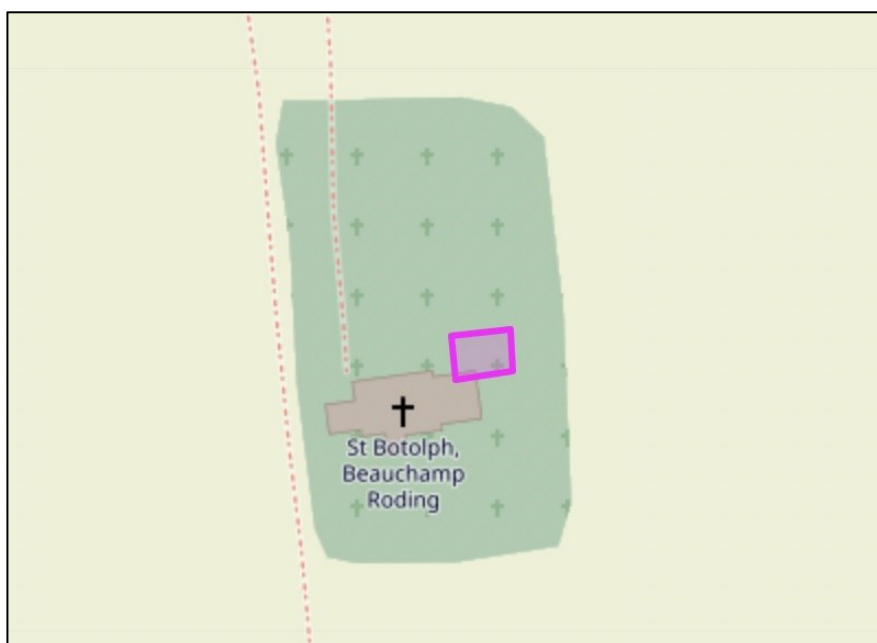
Site location: St. Botolph's Church, Beauchamp Roding, Essex

Grid Reference: TL 5779 0972

Status: Public – accessible at all times

Summary of the geological interest:

Large sarsen stone in the churchyard of St. Botolph's Church. It is close to the north-east corner of the church.



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.

Access

St Botolph's Church is reached via a track on the east side of the Dunmow Road (B184) at TL 5757 1001.

Scientific interest and site importance:

On the top of the hill, in the churchyard of St. Botolph's Church is an upright sarsen stone (120cm x 110cm x 30cm in size) with veins of flint pebbles running through it (Salter 1914; Rudge 1962).

Many superstitions are associated with this stone and it has therefore been cited in articles and books more often than any other sarsen in Essex. The stone was originally lying flat and Salter gives a size of 160cm x 130cm x 30cm indicating that a substantial portion is now below ground.

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 originated on the chalk downland north and west of Essex and were carried here by rivers and glaciers. After retreat of the ice they became concentrated in river valleys.

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.

Condition report. 21 Aug 2025

The sarsen stone is in good order and the features described are clearly visible with the surrounding grass well-trimmed.

References

RUDGE, E.A. (1962) The legend of the Pagan stone. Essex Countryside. 10(64): Page 296.

SALTER, A.E. (1914) Sarsen, basalt and other boulders in Essex. Essex Naturalist. 17. Pages 186-199.



Beauchamp Roding Sarsen Stone
Photo: G. Lucy 2002