

# LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT



### EpG6 Holyfield Puddingstone

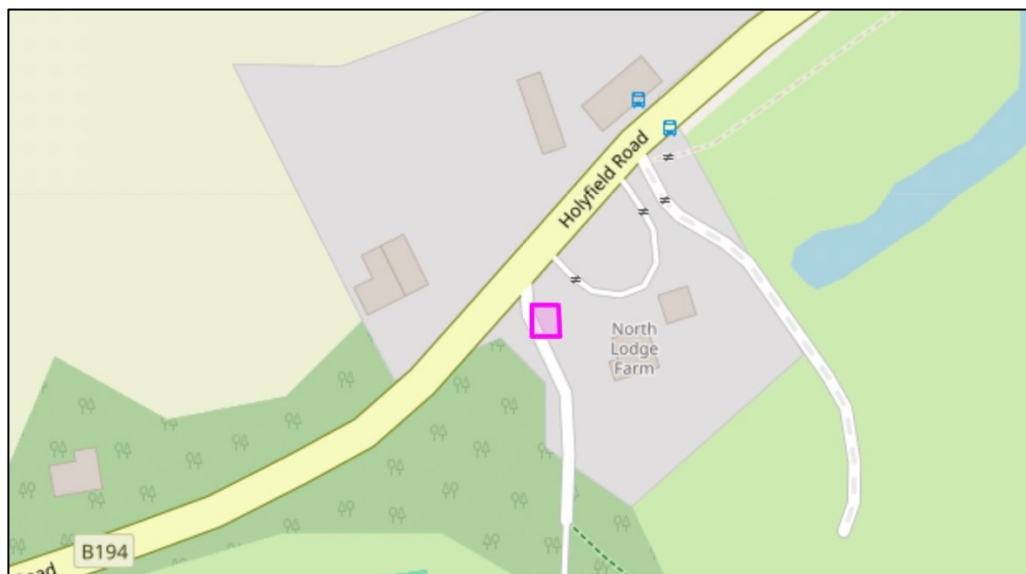
**Site location:** Holyfield, near Waltham Abbey, Essex

**Grid Reference:** TL 3867 0302

**Status:** Public – accessible at all times

#### **Summary of the geological interest:**

In the hamlet of Holyfield is a puddingstone boulder 90 cm long on the grass verge only a few yards from the main road and a short distance along Puck Lane. This is the boulder that started E.A. Rudge on his quest for evidence of an ancient conglomerate trackway across southern England.



**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**

The puddingstone lies very close to Holyfield Road (B194) on the verge a short way along the entrance to Chestnut Farm.

### ***Scientific interest and site importance:***

Puddingstone was formed around 55 million years ago when the climate of Britain was hot and a layer of pebbles 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 in eastern Hertfordshire and northwest Essex and were probably carried eastwards by the River Thames when it flowed north of its present course.

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. 25 June 2025***

The puddingstone was in good order on a verge of recently cut grass.

### **References**

LUCY, G. 2003. Essex erratic boulders: a gazetteer. Essex Naturalist. 20. 115-134.

RUDGE, E.A. and E.L. 1950. Evidence for a Neolithic trackway in Essex. Essex Naturalist. 28: 172-180.

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



Holyfield Puddingstone, Photo: P. Allen June 2025



Holyfield Puddingstone, detail Photo: P. Allen June 2025