

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT



UfdG9 Catmere End Sarsen Stone

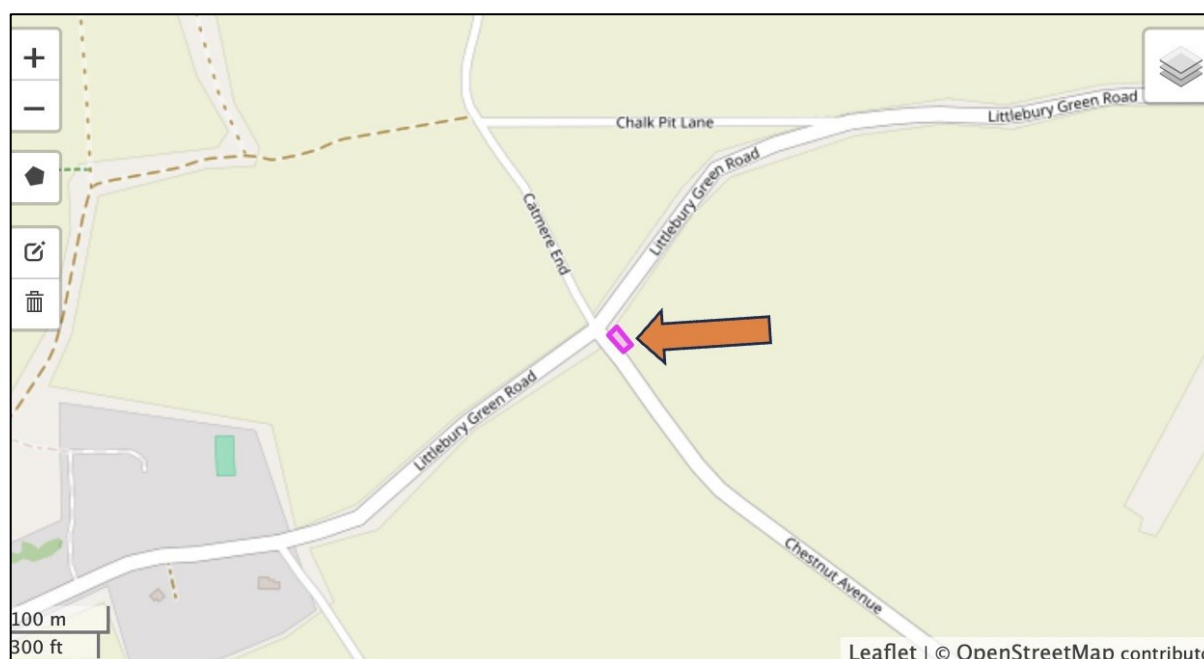
Site location: By the roadside near the crossroads at Catmere End.

Grid Reference: TL 4973 3886

Status: Publicly accessible

Summary of the geological interest

A very large sarsen stone 2.1 metres long sits in the long grass by the signpost at the crossroads. It has been here for a very long time, having first been recorded in 1914.



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

A very large sarsen stone 2.1 x 1.2 x 0.55 metres (7 feet x 4 feet x 2 feet) in size sits in the long grass by the crossroads at Catmere End.

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.



Measuring the sarsen stone at Catmere End. Photo: R. Lucy

Reference:

LUCY, G. 2003. Essex erratic boulders: a gazetteer. *Essex Naturalist* (New Series) No. 20. Pages 115-134.