“shipwrecked mariners on some foreign shore” — where did Wiltshire’s sarsen stones come from?

1. Sarsen stones often lie about on chalk Downland, or are found shallowly buried in our fields. How did the boulders get there?

2. Pay good attention! They have been thrown up by volcanoes!

3. William Stukeley thought the dense sarsen stones were thrown out of the chalk by the earth’s rotation!

4. Daines Barrington thought that a distant earthquake exploded them to their present locations!

5. The locals know sarsens breed and grow, no matter how many they shift.

6. George Greenough said the sarsens “are evidently derived from the destruction of a rock which once lay over the chalk.”

7. Joseph Prestwich placed their origins in the sands laid down in Lower TERTIARY beds.

Eventually, some of those sands were cemented by groundwater or drainage-line silica.

After all the uncemented deposits were eroded away, and the last Ice Age ended, the sarsens were left behind.

References:
[5] Greenough (1826) A Critical Examination...
[6] Prestwich (1850) Q. J. Geol. Soc. 10:75-158
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