

**Location & Access:** Access: Baggy Point is easily accessible from Croyde Bay. To access Croyde Bay, the A361 road leads from Barnstaple to Braunton, and then the B3231 takes you to Saunton, Croyde village, and then Croyde Bay itself.

There is a National Trust car park in Croyde Bay just to the south of Baggy Point.

There is good wheelchair access along the wide lower path to Baggy Point.

The lower path to Baggy Point runs very close to the cliff edge in places, with some sheer drops. Anyone suffering from vertigo should restrict themselves to the upper path system only.

A regular bus service runs to Croyde Bay from Ilfracombe and Braunton.



Baggy Point

**Key Geography:** Marine erosion, glacial erratics, raised beach, cliffs & caves, wave cut platform, head deposits, and evidence of World War Two training areas.

**Description:** This short circular walk along a stretch of the South West Coast Path provides wonderful views of the north Devon coastline, and on a clear day, the outline of Lundy Island. It also includes an excursion to visit a large glacial erratic boulder that stands on the foreshore below the cliffs.

Begin the walk at the Croyde Bay National Trust car park at grid reference: SS 43212 39687 or if you prefer, */// afternoon.stumpy.tadpoles* if you use 'What3Words' location tool.

Turn right out of the car park and walk along the lane, passing a number of holiday lets and a nice café providing refreshments. Take a close look at the empty property called Atlantis Lodge, and see how the sea has hollowed out a section of the cliffs dose side of the north of the property.

The path (part of the South West Coast path) branches to the left (signed to Baggy Point), with the right-hand route providing private access to the clifftop houses. Continue past the buildings and the remains of a whale bone washed up on the beach at Croyde in 1915, until you come to a white house built in a very modern architectural style. The design of this building caused a lot of local controversy when it was first constructed – how do you think it fits with the local landscape?



Baggy Point Erratic

At this point, it is possible to take a detour to examine an unusual boulder on the foreshore. The rock in question is a large granulite gneiss boulder that has been carried from Western Scotland. It weighs some 50 tons, but sea erosion and encrusted lichens make it a little tricky to spot. It is an example of an erratic – a rock that has been transported from its original site by ice and deposited somewhere else, where it bears no connection to the local geology.

The Baggy Point erratic is not easily accessible, as it sits on the foreshore, well below the level of the coastal path at the top of the cliff. To reach it requires a steep descent

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**Curiosity Questions:**

- # How many visitors go to Baggy Point each year?
- # Baggy Point is part of the North Devon AONB. What do the letters AONB represent?
- # What are: Slab Cove, Cheesegrater Cliff, Scratling Zawn and Long Rock?

**Further information:**

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/baggy-point](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/baggy-point)  
<https://www.northdevon-aonb.org.uk/>

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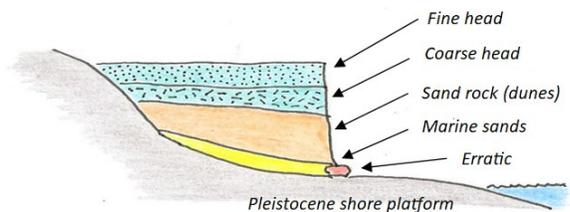
onto the foreshore and then a bit of clambering over loose rocks, gullies, and steep ridges. Bear in mind that the erratic is not accessible at high tides, so make sure you check local tide tables and visit the site at low tide so you have plenty of time to explore.

To reach the erratic, when you reach the white modern house, look for a single wooden bench at the edge of the cliffs. A route leads to it from the main path, and to the left of the bench is a steep washed-out scramble that will give you access to the wave cut platform below. Turn right, and edge your way along the base of the cliffs, over the ridges and gullies cut in the Baggy sandstone platform, until you reach the erratic (grid reference SS 4279 4000).

The Baggy boulder is one of a suite of over twenty glacial erratics that can be found along this stretch of north Devon coastline. Two of them are quite accessible (this one at Baggy Point, and another at Saunton) and are relatively easy to identify, but most of the others are much smaller and quite difficult to find.

The erratic rock sits on a wave cut platform created from the local rocks. The mix of sediments here (mudstones, siltstones and sandstones) is the product of different historic environments, including marine advances and retreats, lagoons and freshwater deposits. At this location, the foreshore consists of Baggy sandstones that overlie the Upcott slates that form Baggy Point itself. These sedimentary beds were formed in the Devonian Period between 359 to 372 million years ago. They were deposited as horizontal layers on the sea bed, but have since been uplifted and contorted, and hardened into vertically aligned layers. The sea has since carved this rock into sharp ridges and ancient fault lines are marked by long, straight and deep gullies, created where less-resistant beds have been eroded at a faster rate.

Behind the erratic boulder is a clear exposure of an old cliff line formed from Pleistocene raised beach material, or sand rock, that was created in the Ipswichian interglacial. This Pleistocene shoreline provides one of the most comprehensive records in south west England of evidence of former changes in sea level and fluctuations in climate. It is also possible to identify the old cliff and raised beach from the main footpath leading towards Baggy. The raised beach and rock platform disappear north of the headland, and are not present at Woolacombe Bay and Morte Point.



Head deposits, Baggy Point

The upper section of the cliffs contains a loose matrix of angular rock fragments of varying size. Such deposits are known locally as 'head'. This part of the cliff profile was created by the down-slope flow of saturated sub-soil – a process known as solifluction. Mass movement like this is associated with colder spells, particularly in the coldest parts of the last Ice Age that took place some 180,000 years ago. North Devon was then a periglacial tundra-like wilderness with mean average temperatures about 10 degrees Celsius colder than today. The ground would have been permanently frozen (permafrost), and only the top metre or so briefly melted to create an unstable slurry that flowed easily on the permanently frozen ground below. Frost shattering in the cold spells detached fresh rock fragments to feed the flow.

The old cliff-line was created in interglacial periods when the world was warmer and sea levels higher. Combined with a general eustatic uplift, it has been raised some 40 feet or so above the present sea level. During the ice age, sea levels fell. Since the end of the last glacial period, sea levels have started to rise again, and the cliffs are currently retreating quickly.

There remains considerable debate about how the Baggy Point erratic arrived in north Devon. It was certainly transported by ice, but there is disagreement about what form the ice took. One theory suggests that the boulder was carried here by the ice sheets from the Anglian Glaciation, the last to affect this area. Alternatively, the boulder was a dropstone carried to its present location by a grand iceberg.

To resume your walk, continue along the path from the modern house, passing Freshwater Gut, a small stream, and a wildlife pond set just to the right of the path. As you pass through a gate, you can look for a memorial stone and brass plaque set into the stone wall in memory of Henry Williamson, author of 'Tarka the Otter'. A little further along the path, a finger post indicates a choice of routes to Baggy Point. Follow the lower path to the left – unless you suffer from vertigo. If this is the case, take the right hand (upper) path. The two routes will meet together above Baggy Point.

The lower path runs very close to the edge of the cliffs, with some sheer drops into the sea. It provides excellent views of the wave cut platform below, and Croyde beach can be seen if you look back to the

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south (left hand side). At the far end of Croyde Bay is Downend cliff, marked by another controversial modern house that breaks the skyline. Further to the south is the wonderful expanse of Saunton Sands and Braunton Burrows, and the Taw estuary. The villages of Westward Ho! And Clovelly can be seen in the far distance, and on a clear day you should be able to pick out the white lighthouse on the far headland of Hartland Point. Out to sea, you may be able to see the island of Lundy, around 10 miles off the mainland, and a little further along the path perhaps pick out the buildings on the South Wales coast across the waters of the Bristol Channel.

As you continue along the path towards the headland of Baggy Point, you will pass a section of exposed local slates that mark the position of Pencil Point. This section is so-named because of the curious way the rock by the footpath crumble into shards like pencils – due to the nature of jointing in the rock and the orientation of pressure cleavage.

Take care when you reach the tip of Baggy Point, as the path is quite narrow with a steep drop to the sea below. Strong winds are also common here, so keep well away from the edge. At the rocks of Baggy Leap below the headland, lies the wreck of HMS Weazle that foundered here during gales in 1799 killing all 106 on board.

Follow the wooden finger post marked 'coast path' that leads you up towards the very top of the cliffs. Here, you meet up with the upper path that provides an alternative route to Baggy.

Continue northwards along the path that runs alongside the stone boundary wall. There are the remains of an old wartime pill box beyond the wall, one of ten constructed on this stretch of coast, that date back to the days when American troops used this area to train for the D Day landings in 1943-44. The path then passes an old coastguard training post, resembling a ship's mast and formerly used to test lifesaving equipment.



Putsborough & Woolacombe

As you continue along the path, a tremendous view opens up to the next bay to the north. This is Woolacombe Bay that sits between Baggy Point and the next headland seen in the distance, of Morte Point. The village of Woolacombe can be clearly seen at the far end of the bay.

An old Ordnance Survey triangulation pillar stands close to the lichen-covered stone wall, but is quite difficult to find. It marks a modest 94 metres ASL that defies the excellence of the views from here.



Upper erratic (Black wallet = 8 cm)

About halfway along the north side of Baggy, there is another (smaller) glacial erratic sat right next to the path. It is a 500 kg block of epidiorite of Scottish origin. It is a little difficult to spot, as it is surrounded by gorse, and is slowly disappearing into the surface. Part of the surface has been chipped away, exposing the obvious crystalline structure of igneous rock. It once stood upright in the middle of a nearby pasture field and was used as rubbing post by sheep and cattle. In the early 1970s, the field was ploughed and the rock dislodged and then laid prone. It was then dragged to edge of field where it has been ever since. The erratic can be located at grid reference SS 4356 4070, or '///overlaps.shuffle.narrate' using 'What3Words'.

Other small erratics (tuffs/agglomerates) have been ploughed up nearby and incorporated into the stone wall by the higher path, but they are tough to spot under the dense cover of grey lichen. One is a grey almost square block, another smaller, more irregular shape of pinkish tinge.

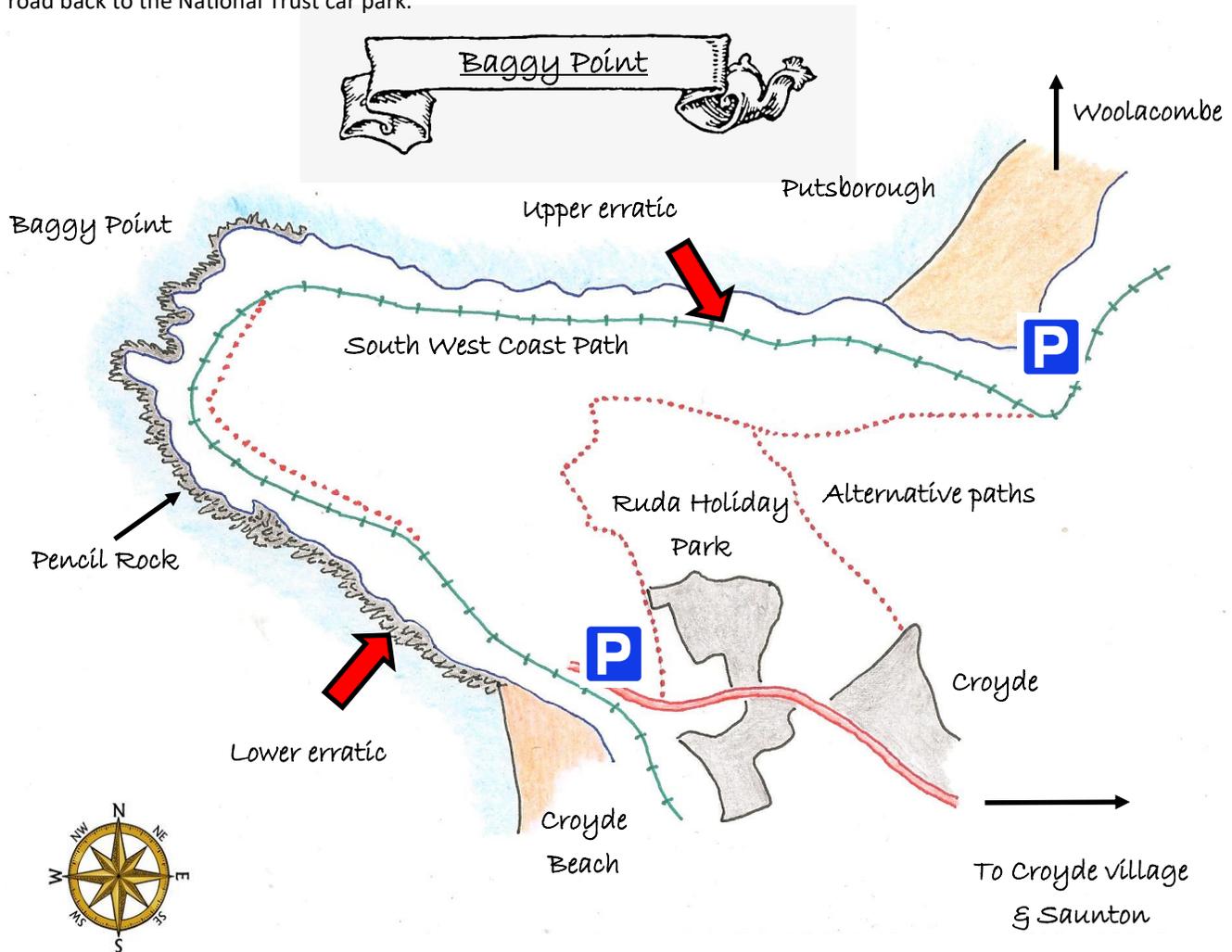
The coast path continues along the headland of Baggy Point before crossing a farmer's field and then entering the car park at Putsborough. There are award-winning toilets here, and an excellent café looking down onto Putsborough.

Putsborough was one of the locations on the north Devon coast used by American troops during the Second World War as a training ground for the D Day landings. Although the epicentre of this activity was at nearby Braunton Burrows, Baggy Point was used for company-sized landing rehearsals, while Putsborough and Woolacombe beaches were two of the main locations for full-scale amphibious assault landings. Just before you drop down into the car park, you can spot a large concrete arrow shape in the grass. This was used by the RAF to practice aerial attacks on German U Boats that disrupted Britain's merchant shipping during the war years. It guided the low altitude bombing runs towards floating targets out at sea.

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The nearby concrete building served as one of three observation posts nearby that triangulated the accuracy of the bomb attacks.

To return to Croyde, you can retrace your steps along the same route, or take a slightly different journey back. To follow a different route, from the car park at Putsborough, follow the road uphill past Cliff Court and Putsborough Cottage and turn right. After a couple of hundred metres, a track leads away to the right signed to Croyde. This will take you inland away from the cliffs, and back to Croyde beach, meeting up with the main road next to the Ruda Holiday Park. Turn right, and follow the road back to the National Trust car park.



**Answers to Curiosity Questions:**

- # How many visitors go to Baggy Point each year? (70,000)
- # Baggy Point is part of the North Devon AONB. What do the letters AONB represent? (Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
- # What are: Slab Cove, Cheesegrater Cliff, Scratling Zawn and Long Rock? (Climbing routes on Baggy point cliffs)