

Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty presents

Isle Spy

Over 100 things
to spot on the
Isle of Wight!

Go rockpooling
on a chalk reef

witness the Milky Way
on a dark night

Stand on a spot where
dinoSaurus roamed

You may even Spy
a red squirrel!

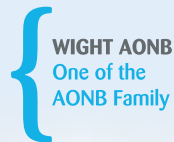


Isle of Wight
area of outstanding
natural beauty

Visit www.wightaonb.org.uk for hints and tips and to post your score on the Wight AONB Isle Spy league table.



Landscapes
for life
.org.uk



The Isle of Wight is a beautiful county, with varied landscapes, pretty villages and friendly people; it's a lovely place to live - and to visit.

About half of the Island is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which means it is a treasured place where the landscape is protected, conserved and enhanced for future generations.

Have fun with your Isle Spy book. It will help you find some of the Island's hidden secrets plus some more common, but equally interesting, local sights.

Can you spot them all?

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This book belongs to:

Landscapes

The landscape of the Isle of Wight AONB is one of the most highly protected in England, because of its complex variety of landscape types, all found within a small and accessible area. Visitors can enjoy wide open countryside, hidden valleys, cliffs and high downs, heaths and forests.

The Isle of Wight is strongly influenced by the sea, which also has many different aspects, from the wilder south-western coast facing the English Channel to the bustling waters of the Solent in the north.



1. Estuary

There are five main estuaries on the Island. An estuary is a river valley that has seawater in it. They are often busy places with boats and harbours. Look to see if the tide is going in or out.



Date seen

10

points

2. Plantation woodland

A tree plantation is a forest where trees have been planted rather than growing naturally. They are often in straight lines, and all the same type and age of tree. Look out for piles of cut timber.



Date seen

10

points

3. Chine

A chine is a steep-sided valley through soft cliffs, where a stream flows down to the sea. Chines are important as they allow people to get up and down cliffs, and also provide good places for wildlife to live.



Date seen

20

points

8. Cripple path

This very old path is hard to find, and hard to climb! It was once used by smugglers as a secret way down the cliffs. Its curious name comes from an Old English word 'crypel', meaning a narrow passage.



Date seen **50** points

9. Intertidal mud

The muddy shore in estuaries and creeks is revealed at low tide and can be very wide. These intertidal areas are important places for wildlife. Birds, particularly, visit to roost and feed.



Date seen **20** points

10. Dark skies

The Isle of Wight has some of the darkest skies in England because there are not many houses and lights. On a clear night, go to a dark place and look up at the stars. Can you see the Milky Way?



Date seen **30** points

11. Chalk down

The hills on the Island are called downs. The rocks underneath are chalk, so the paths and tracks often look white. Chalk downs don't have rivers or streams as water soaks into the ground.



Date seen **10** points



Rocks & fossils

There are many places where the geology of the Isle of Wight can easily be seen, especially around the coast where many cliffs and beaches give us a chance to see the complicated variety of rock formations which underlies the Island. Since Victorian times it has also been famous as a good place to find fossils, and it still attracts professional and amateur fossil-hunters and dinosaur enthusiasts, looking for fossilised bones, sharks' teeth, petrified tree deposits and footprints of herbivorous dinosaurs such as the Iguanodon.



12. Dinosaur footprints

At Hanover Point you can sometimes see fossilised dinosaur footprints on the beach at low tide. Although hard to find and often hidden by sand they are worth hunting for.



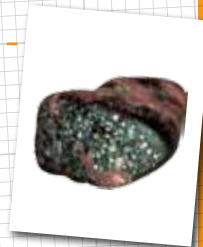
Date seen

50

points

13. Fossilised turtle shell

On the northwestern coast you can sometimes find bits of fossilised dark shell and bone. These are from animals such as crocodiles and turtles. They look spongy inside, not like ordinary black stones.



Date seen

40

points

14. Coastal erosion

Many of the cliffs on the Isle of Wight are made of soft clays and rocks. They wash away with the rain and sea. Sometimes you can see where this has happened, for example when a path is closed.



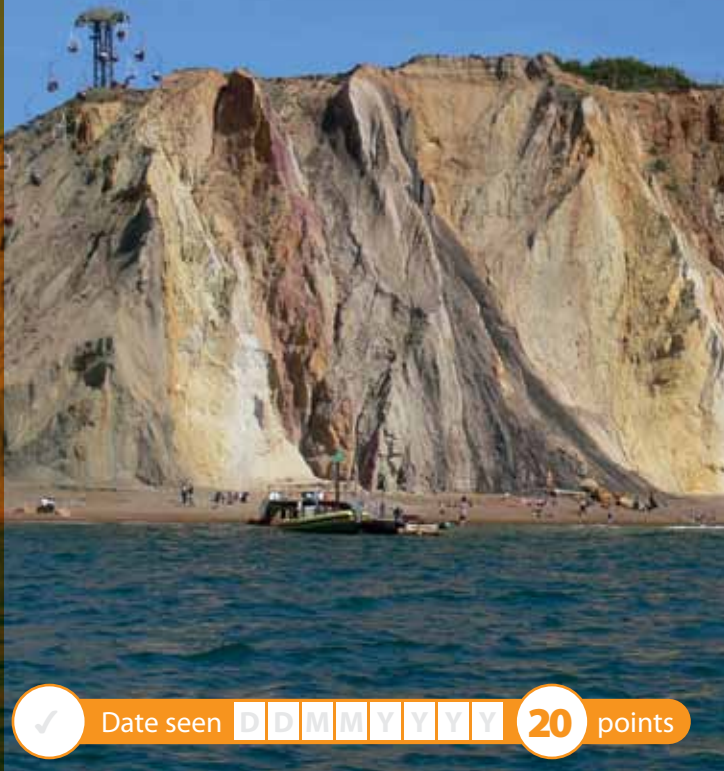
Date seen

10

points

15. Alum Bay Coloured Sand

The famous sand at Alum Bay is naturally found in many different colours. Visitors have used it to make souvenirs for many years, and you can still do so now.



Date seen

D

D

M

M

Y

Y

Y

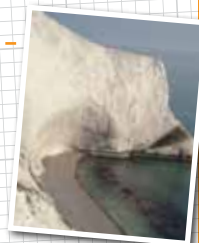
Y

20

points

16. Chalk cliff

At both its eastern and western ends the Island has tall white cliffs which are made of chalk, a rock which was formed about 100 million years ago from the shells of tiny sea creatures.



Date seen

D

D

M

M

Y

Y

Y

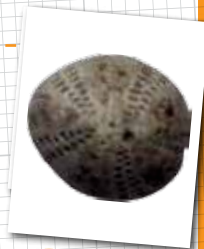
Y

10

points

17. Echinoid

Fossilised sea-urchins, or echinoids, come in many different shapes and sizes. You might find them in rocks on the Island's coast, particularly in chalk and flint. Some beaches are great places to find fossils.



Date seen

D

D

M

M

Y

Y

Y

Y

30

points

18. Heritage Coast

Parts of the Isle of Wight's coast are designated as Heritage Coast. These areas are often good places for visitors to enjoy, and include some of the most beautiful and scenic coastline in England.



Date seen

D

D

M

M

Y

Y

Y

Y

10

points

19. Quarry

Often by the roadside and on hills, these pits - called marl pits - are where chalk and other minerals are dug out; chalk was used in agriculture. Some pits are still in use, others are grown over and hard to see.



Date seen

10 points

20. Ammonite

Ammonites lived in the seas between 240 and 65 million years ago. They look like snails, and are common fossils in chalky rocks. You can often find parts of their shells, and if you are lucky, a whole one.



Date seen

30 points

21. Landslip

The mysterious Landslip was a pleasure-garden, but regular landslides and rockfalls have changed and moved many of the paths. There are some hidden rock staircases leading down the inner cliff.



Date seen

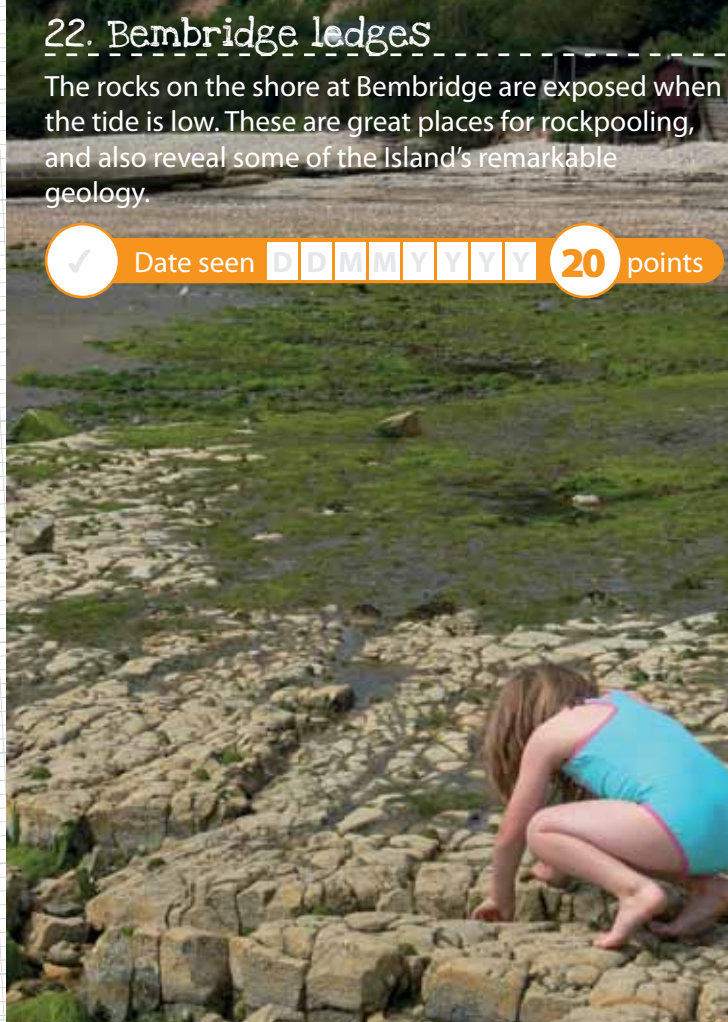
20 points

22. Bembridge ledges

The rocks on the shore at Bembridge are exposed when the tide is low. These are great places for rockpooling, and also reveal some of the Island's remarkable geology.



Date seen

20 points


Bonus: all four corners



North



Osborne: East Cowes home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

East



Culver Down: high, chalky promontory at the eastern end of the Island.

South



St Catherine's: the lighthouse at the southern tip of the Island.

West



The Needles: three chalk rocks make up this famous landmark.

Wildlife

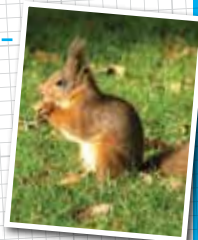
Like many islands, the Isle of Wight has an unusual range of animals and plants living on it. Because of the varied landscape, there are many habitats for wildlife to live in, and the mild climate means that some things can survive, which might not live further north.

In particular, the Isle of Wight is a haven for some mammals. Red squirrels, dormice, water voles and many different sorts of bats live safely on the Isle of Wight, but are rare or absent on the nearby mainland.



23. Red Squirrel

Red squirrels thrive on the Isle of Wight, where there are no grey squirrels. They are hard to spot, but very distinctive. Look up - they spend most of their time up trees, not on the ground like their grey cousins.



Date seen

30 points

24. Sea anemone

These strange and beautiful creatures cling to rocks on the shore. You can find them in pools when the tide is low. When they are out of the water they curl up their tentacles, waiting for the tide to return.



Date seen

20 points

25. Holm oak

These big, dark trees have leaves on them all year round. The Victorians planted lots in seaside parks and towns, in particular Ventnor where a whole hillside of holm oak has grown up above the town.

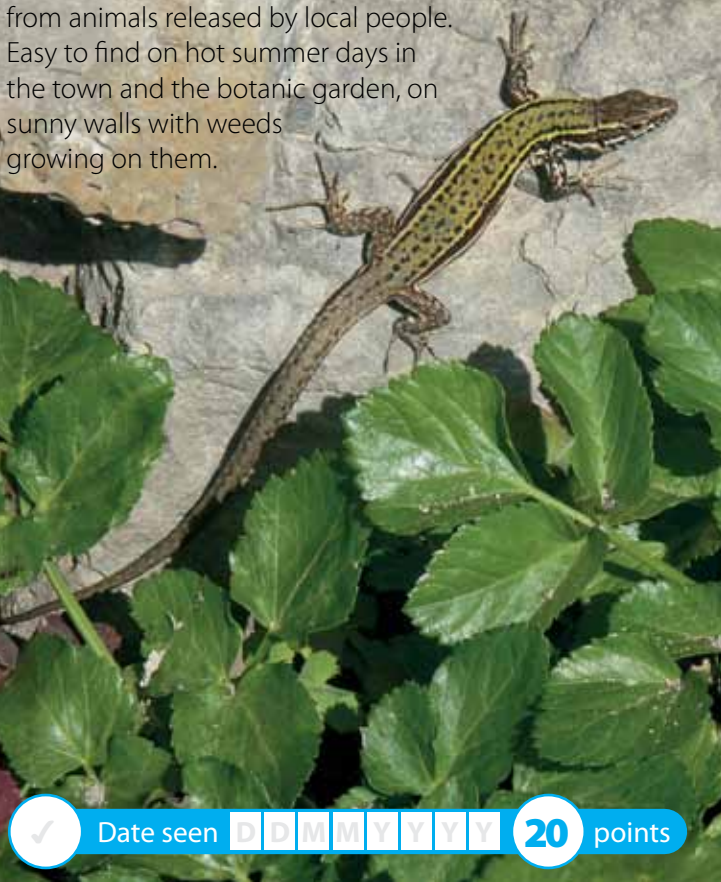


Date seen

10 points

26. Wall lizard

Bigger than the common lizard, the spectacular wall lizards found in Ventnor probably came from animals released by local people. Easy to find on hot summer days in the town and the botanic garden, on sunny walls with weeds growing on them.



Date seen **20** points

27. Bladderwrack

Seaweed found on the shore often has little bubbles or bladders on its fronds, which lift it up so it floats in the shallow water, and gets more light. Some seaweeds can be used as garden fertiliser.



Date seen **10** points

28. Mallard

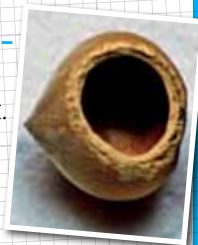
Ducks can be found on many ponds and rivers, but also sometimes on beaches and in the sea. They enjoy eating bread but it isn't good for them - feed them grass or seeds instead!



Date seen **10** points

29. Dormouse-nibbled nuts

Dormice are almost impossible to see, but you can find the hazelnuts they love to eat. Dormice leave a neatly chiselled hole in the nut. Look for them in woodlands where hazel trees grow.



Date seen **50** points

History

Humans have lived on the Isle of Wight for many thousands of years, shaping the landscape and leaving many signs of their activities.

The Island has played a part in some of the larger events of history, famous as the prison of King Charles II at Carisbrooke, it became particularly popular in Victorian times when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert set up home at Osborne, attracting many famous Victorians including Darwin, Dickens, Marx, Julia Margaret Cameron and, one of the era's national celebrities, the poet laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson.



34. Sea fort

Victorian engineers built four strange fortifications in the Solent to protect the important naval port of Portsmouth from enemy ships. They have been used for many purposes, but not in a battle.



Date seen

10

points

35. Roman remains

The Romans lived on the Island for about 400 years from 43AD onwards. They built farms, harbours and villas. Some Roman remains can still be seen; the best known is Brading Roman Villa.



Date seen

30

points

36. Pillbox

In the Second World War there was a risk that armies from Europe would land in England. Many fortifications were built, mostly from concrete, including small sentry posts called pillboxes.



Date seen

20

points

37. Seamark

Some monuments are meant to be seen from the sea; they are called seamarks and there are many on the Isle of Wight. In the past, sailors used them to help navigate, although today electronic instruments are used instead.



Date seen

20

points



38. Victorian fort

The Victorians were worried the French Navy might attack Portsmouth, so they built forts to protect this key naval dockyard. A lot of these can still be seen today, and some are open to visitors.



Date seen

10

points

39. Whitwell water pump

In 1887, Mr Spindler installed water pumps in Whitwell to supply fresh water for the villagers. They fell out of use when piped water arrived, but at least six of the red pumps remain. How many can you spot?



Date seen

30

points

40. Barrow

In prehistoric times, people built mounds, called barrows or tumuli, on the tops of hills, usually to bury important people. Although many have disappeared over the years, some barrows are still there.



Date seen

30

points

41. Park lodge

Lodges were once the gates of big houses, where a gatekeeper lived. You can spot a lodge by the name, a track passing close by the house leading to a bigger house, and often a big pair of gates.



Date seen

10

points

42. Longstone

There is only one prehistoric standing stone on the Isle of Wight. The Longstone is thought to be from the stone age, but what it was and why it was put there is a mystery.



Date seen

40

points

43. Seawall

Many towns on the Isle of Wight are by the sea. Constant action of the waves can wash away the shore, so some of the coastline has sea defences or a seawall to help prevent erosion and damage.



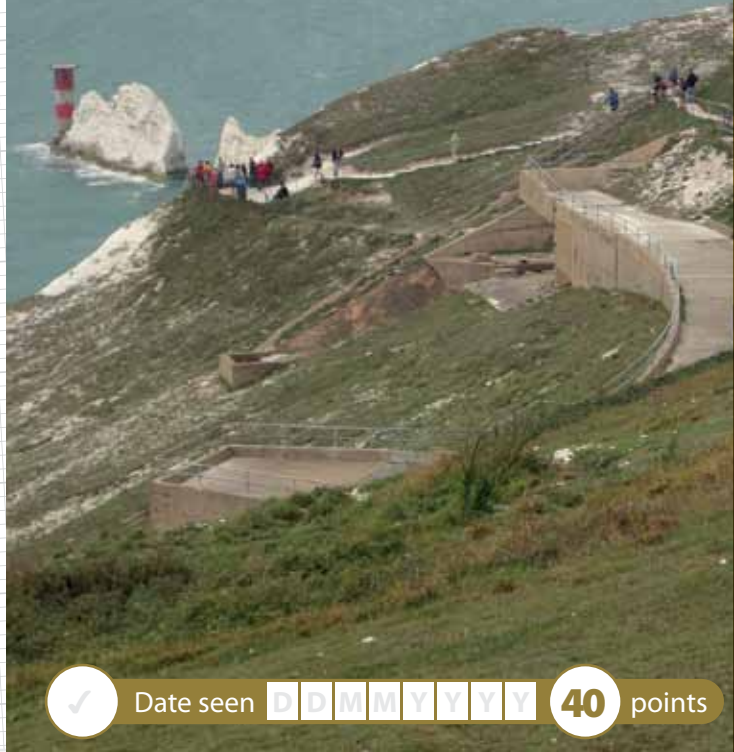
Date seen

10

points

44. Rocket testing site

When British engineers were designing rocket engines to send missiles and satellites into space in the 1950s, they needed to test the engines in a safe and secret place. So they built a testing station on the Isle of Wight, in a place that wasn't easy to get to.



Date seen

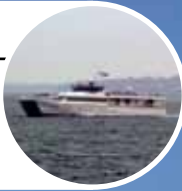
40

points

Bonus: crossing the Solent

Catamaran

High-speed passenger service from Portsmouth to Ryde Pier.



Red Jet

High-speed passenger service from Southampton to Cowes.



Hovertravel

Hovercraft service from Southsea to Ryde.



Red Funnel

Car ferry from Southampton to East Cowes.



wightlink

Car ferries from Lymington to Yarmouth and Portsmouth to Fishbourne.



Towns & villages

For much of its history the Isle of Wight had few people living on it, with most of those who did living in communities that grew up around the sea and harbours. When the railways were built in the nineteenth century, many more people came to live on the Island, especially on the eastern side.

These days, there are more small towns and villages inland; much of the western part of the Island is a quiet area of countryside with few settlements.



45. Telephone box

A telephone box - some a distinctive red colour - used to be the only place to make a phone call if you were away from home. A few are still in use on the Island, including one of the oldest in the country.



Date seen

20

points

46. Cemetery

Most churches have graveyards but they can get full up, so cemeteries are created at the edge of town or even out in the countryside. They are peaceful places and often good habitat for wildlife.



Date seen

10

points

47. Stocks

Criminals in a village were sometimes locked into the stocks as a punishment. There's at least one set of stocks still on display on the Isle of Wight, although thankfully they are not used any more.



Date seen

40

points

48. Harbour

Sailing and fishing are popular pastimes, and many people keep their boats in harbours and marinas. Harbours are also useful places for ferries to use, and so if you have been on a ferry, you will definitely have seen a harbour.



Date seen **20** points

49. Rural church

Most villages have a church; some of them were established hundreds of years ago. Many have bell towers and, if you are lucky, you may hear the peal of the bells. You might see a church that is now a house.



Date seen **10** points

50. Fishing boat

Fresh fish and shellfish makes a delicious meal, and there are several places on the Island where you can see the fishing boats bringing home the day's catch. Locally-caught seafood includes crab and lobster.



Date seen **30** points

51. War memorial

Every town and village was affected by the two World Wars, and the dead from those and other conflicts are commemorated by war memorials. Some are in public places outdoors, others are inside buildings.



Date seen **10** points

52. Pub name

Pubs don't often get their names changed – some are very historic and represent activities or people that were in the area a long time ago. For example, bugle used to be a traditional name for a bullock.



Date seen

10 points

53. Rural post office

Although some post offices have closed down, there are still many to be found. Some share space in shops, which means that they can stay open. What sort of things can you buy in a post office?



Date seen

20 points

54. Horse trough

Horses used to be the main way to get about. Most junctions and roadsides had water troughs for horses to drink at as they worked. Many are still there, now often filled with flowers.



Date seen

30 points

55. Village pound

When animals strayed, they were put into the village pound until their owner could be found. This was usually a small enclosure in the middle of the village, with a lockable gate and high walls. Sometime criminals also had to stay in there!



Date seen

50 points



Food & farming

The Isle of Wight has long been an agricultural Island, growing food and produce for export. The Romans established farms on the Island, the remains of which can still be seen today.

Food produced on Island farms and landed from the sea remains a significant part of local life. The working farms which contribute towards this industry are very important in maintaining the beautiful landscape. So, by enjoying Island produce - including cheese, milk, beer, bread, meat, fish and wine - you can help to support the countryside.



56. Barn

Farmers need to shelter animals and store things, and barns have been a part of human settlements since prehistoric times. Modern barns are built of metal, but older ones are stone and tile or even thatched.

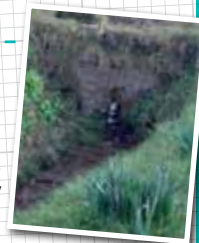


Date seen

10 points

57. Sheepwash

For many centuries sheep have been washed in the spring, to clean their wool before shearing. Many villages had a place for this; look out for the name 'Sheepwash', usually near a stream or pond.



Date seen

40 points

58. Cow

Cattle are farmed for milk and beef. On the Isle of Wight it is easy to find Island milk, butter, ice cream and cheese in the shops, plus Isle of Wight beef and veal are also available in some places.

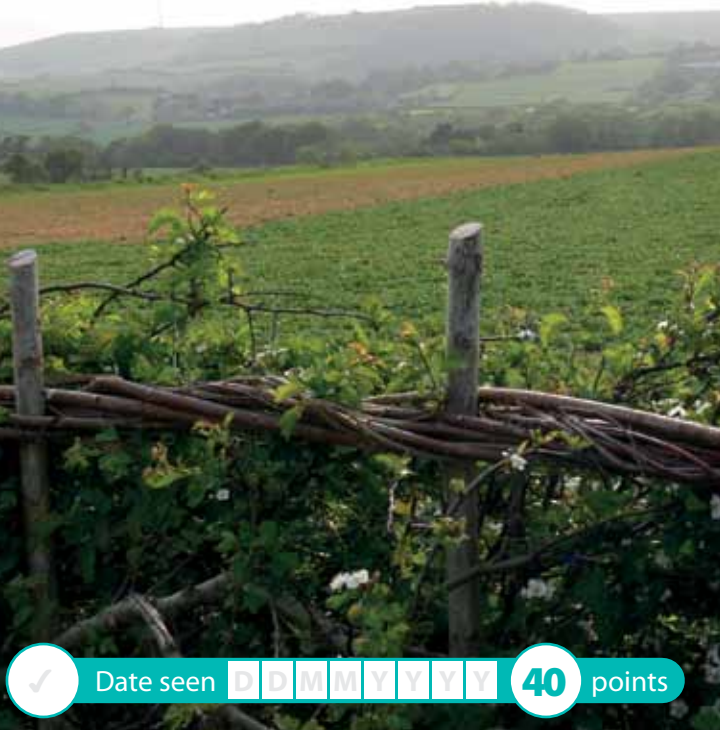


Date seen

10 points

59. Laid hedge

Hedgelaying is the traditional way of managing hedges throughout much of England and Wales. It creates a thick barrier from untidy, gappy and straggling hedges. Stems are cut most of the way through so that they can be bent over without damaging them. A laid hedge is hard for livestock such as sheep and cows to escape through.



Date seen

40

points

60. Glasshouse

Plants grow better in warmth and sunlight, and so by keeping crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers in glasshouses growers can use artificial light to make the growing season even longer.



Date seen

20

points

61. water trough

Animals grazing in fields need fresh water to drink. Usually the farmer will put a metal trough in the field. Look out for the ball-valve that automatically fills the trough up again when the animals drink the water.



Date seen

30

points

62. Stone wall

Stone is often used to make buildings, but traditionally in some parts of England farmers use stone from their fields to make boundaries. There are only a few dry stone walls in Island fields - can you find one?



Date seen

40

points

63. Livestock warning

Even a well-behaved dog can frighten farm animals, and so it is a good idea to keep your dog on a lead around livestock. Some farmers put up signs to remind walkers to keep their dogs under control.



Date seen

20

points

64. Isle of Wight produce

Most milk sold on the Isle of Wight comes from local farms. It is used to make award-winning cheese. You can also eat locally-produced eggs, garlic, meat, beer, wine, honey, apple juice and even chillies.



Date seen

20

points

65. Gate

Farmers move livestock and vehicles into fields by going through a gate. Some gates are wooden and others metal, and are usually fastened with a catch. Make sure that you close a gate behind you.



Date seen

10

points

66. Scarecrow

Farmers sometimes make scarecrows to keep birds off the crops. Plastic bags on sticks are a common way to do this, but sometimes the birds have to deal with a scarecrow shaped like an angry farmer!

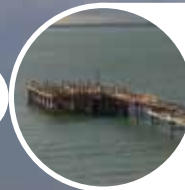
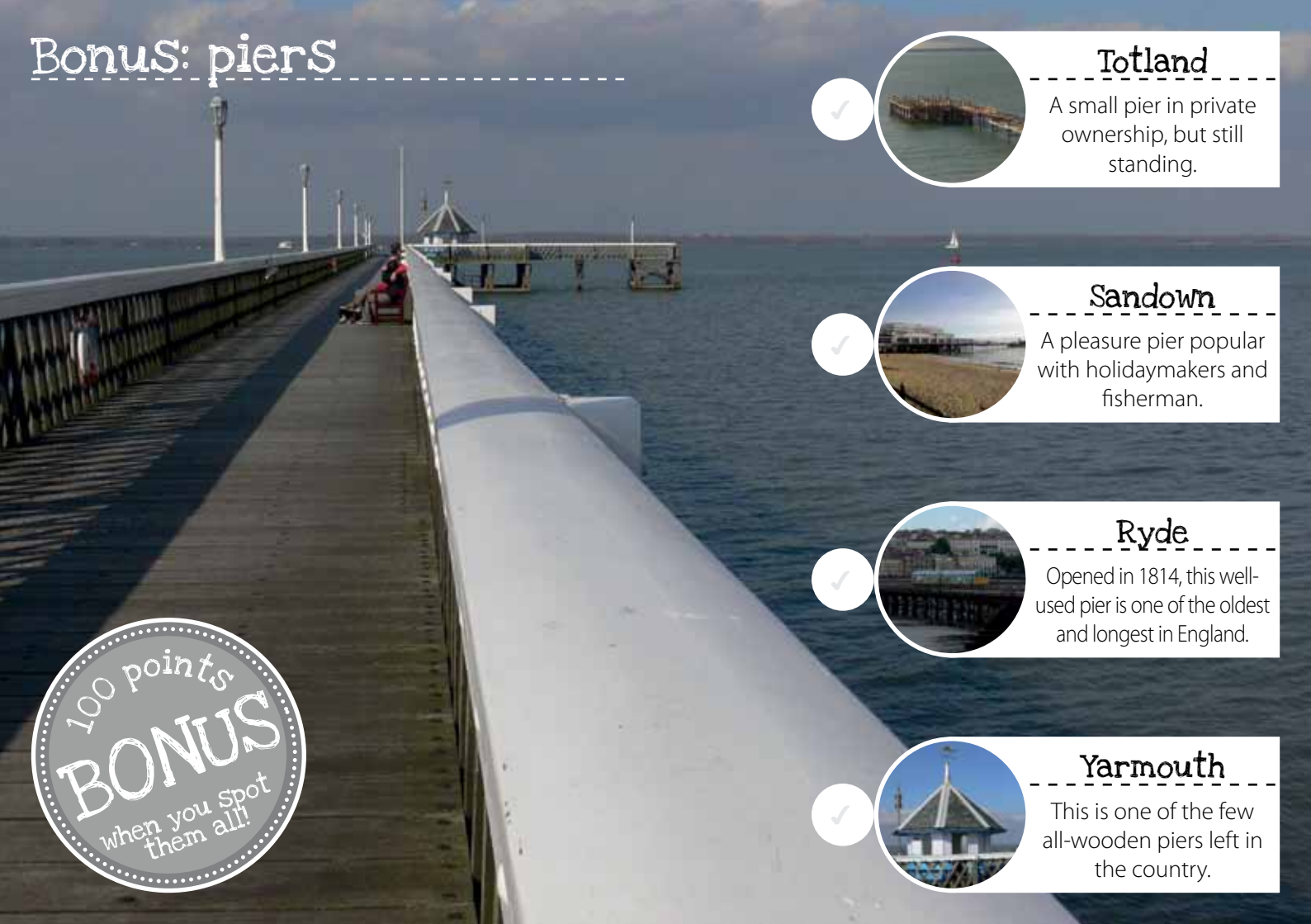


Date seen

45

points

Bonus: piers



Totland

A small pier in private ownership, but still standing.



Sandown

A pleasure pier popular with holidaymakers and fisherman.



Ryde

Opened in 1814, this well-used pier is one of the oldest and longest in England.



Yarmouth

This is one of the few all-wooden piers left in the country.

Getting about

A visit to the Isle of Wight gives the traveller the opportunity to try many different means of transport. Most visitors arrive by boat or hovercraft.

Although the Island has few big roads, it's not hard to get to most places by bus or car. The railways once went to the main towns; the remaining line now serves only the eastern part of the Island - although a heritage railway keeps a little part of the old steam network alive. The Island's famous network of footpaths and cycle routes is also a great tourist attraction.



67. Shute

A high-sided lane or path going down a steep hill is called a shute on the Isle of Wight. Some of these have given their name to the road that passes through them, such as Knighton Shute.



Date seen

30

points

68. Floating bridge

The busy river Medina is crossed by the floating bridge, a ferry that is guided by chains fixed to the banks. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorists use it to cross between Cowes and East Cowes.



Date seen

30

points

69. Cycle track

Most of the cycle tracks on the Island are made on old railway lines. The lines are gone, but they leave a decent flat car-free route for cyclists, often through some lovely countryside too.



Date seen

10

points

70. Stile

When a footpath crosses a fence or hedge, it's important not to let out the animals grazing in the field. A traditional way to do this has been the stile - a kind of fence that it's easy to climb over.



Date seen **10** points

71. Underground train

The Island's main railway has used old London Underground trains since 1967, as the small tunnel at Ryde is too low for standard-sized trains. Some have been repainted in original Underground livery.



Date seen **20** points

72. Cycle route

The round the Island cycle route is a 62 mile route through some of the Island's best scenery. Look out for the signs - a white bike shows the clockwise route, and a blue bike the anti-clockwise route.



Date seen **20** points

73. Quiet road

Some roads on the Isle of Wight are designated as 'quiet roads', where walkers, cyclists and horse-riders share the road with cars. There are some little roadside signs to show you where these areas are.



Date seen **40** points

74. Lifeboat

The sea can be a dangerous place, and the Isle of Wight has several lifeboats and inshore rescue stations on watch at all times to save lives at sea. Look for the distinctive bright orange vessels.



Date seen

30 points

75. Airport

The Isle of Wight had several small airfields. Two remain, at Sandown and Bembridge; mostly used for recreational flying, gliders and microlights. Look out for low-flying aircraft - a sign an airfield is nearby.



Date seen

20 points

76. Old railway station

Railways served most of the main towns on the Island, but many lines were closed in the 1960s. Some stations and bridges that were left behind can still be seen - can you spot where the old lines used to go?



Date seen

20 points

77. Military Road

Until the nineteenth century some rural parts of the Island had few roads. During Victorian times many forts and military installations were built around the coast, and so the army needed roads to get between them. Various roads were created by the military, some of which are still in use today. They are often quite straight, and lead from one fort or barracks to another. The longest is still called 'The Military Road', but there are others.



Date seen

20 points



Tourism

The Isle of Wight's beaches, beautiful landscapes and sunny climate have long made it attractive as a tourist destination. Perhaps the most famous visitor was Queen Victoria, who valued the privacy and slow pace of life that could be found at Osborne - and these things still draw many visitors to the Island year after year.

The Island has hotels, tourist attractions, campsites and other businesses which provide services for holidaymakers, and also give jobs to local people.



78. Brown Sign

Tourist attractions like to make sure visitors can find them, and so there is a system of brown signs at road junctions. Pictures are used to illustrate brown signs, some are more informative than others!



Date seen

10

points

79. Carnival

Every summer Island towns celebrate with carnivals, culminating in Ryde Illuminated Carnival when floats and parades from across the Island converge on the town. If you get a chance to see one don't miss it!



Date seen

30

points

80. Golf course

Golf has been played on the Island for years; there are golf courses close to most of the main towns. The oldest course was at St Helens, and although it is now closed the clubhouse is still there.



Date seen

20

points

81. Guided walk

If you want to explore the Isle of Wight on foot, you can join a guided walk. The annual Walking Festival organises many of these, but you may also spot groups of walkers at any time of the year, enjoying the Isle of Wight's footpaths and landscapes at a gentle pace.



Date seen

30

points

82. Music festival

Two of the biggest tourist events in the Isle of Wight's calendar are the Isle of Wight Festival and Bestival. Even if you're not lucky enough to go, can you spot a poster or festival promotion on the back of a bus?



Date seen

30

points

83. Coastal footpath

The coastal path is a footpath that leads all the way around the Isle of Wight; most of it is round the edge although some of it traces a route inland. The path is marked with blue signposts and a seagull logo.



Date seen

10

points

84. Round the Island Race

The annual Round the Island Race has been running since 1931 and is one of the world's largest and most famous yachting races. You can get a great view of the race from the shore.



Date seen

30

points

Bonus: Seven wonders



Newtown

...which is very old!



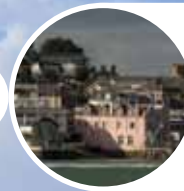
Lake

...you can walk through without wetting your feet!



Cowes

...you cannot milk!



Freshwater

...you cannot drink!



Newport

...you cannot bottle!



Ryde

...where you walk!



Needles

...you cannot thread!



For centuries people have been drawn to the Isle of Wight, attracted by its idyllic countryside, peaceful way of life and exciting and varied coast and beaches.



The Isle Spy book will help you find some of the Island's hidden gems plus some more common, but equally interesting, local sights.

Can you spot them all?

Ride on a floating bridge

Spot all seven wonders of the Isle of Wight

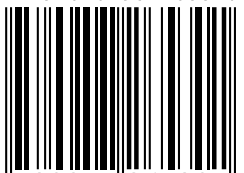
See the famous coloured sands at Alum Bay

You might even find a fossil

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