

ISLE OF WIGHT GURU

ISLE SPY ON AN ISLE OF WIGHT CAR JOURNEY

Isle of Wight roads are not great. They are mostly pretty bumpy, very swervy and a bit slow. To help pass the time, here are 15 things to spot on and Isle of Wight car journey. If you spot 10 you get a bronze medal, 12 for silver or all 15 for gold. Don't come to us asking for an actual medal, it's just to distract the children...

1. GET A WAVE FROM A PASSING FERRY

As you cross the Solent head onto the top deck and wave frantically at other Wightlink and Red Funnel ferries as they pass. Unless the other passengers are miserable because they are going home, they will wave back.

Award yourself a bonus point if you hear a car alarm going off on the ferry, as that is another regular occurrence.



2. 'WOAH! RED SQUIRRELS' SIGN

Around the Island you'll occasionally see signs warning you to watch out for red squirrels. I'm not quite sure what you are supposed to do with that information, but give yourself a point if you see a sign.



3. IOW PERSONALISED PLATES

Normal Isle of Wight number plates start HW or end DL, but hardcore Islanders with more money than sense get personalised number plates including either IW or IOW. Award yourself a point if you see a personalised IOW or IW plate.



4. AN ORANGE VW CAMPERVAN

In the summer, the Isle of Wight is full of motorhomes. Award yourself a point if you see an orange VW campervan of any vintage.



5. THE ONLY DUAL CARRIAGEWAY

Just off Coppins Bridge in Newport is the Isle of Wight's only dual carriageway. It doesn't last for long, and it isn't particularly attractive but give yourself a point anyway.



6. AN OPEN TOP BUS

In the summer months there are open top buses, leading to men losing their wigs and women complaining that they are too cold. Award yourself a point if you spot one (an open top bus I mean, not a bald man).



7. THE FRESHWATER DINOSAUR SIGN

In the 1990s a big chunk of rock fell over in Freshwater Bay during a storm. Soon after, some wag altered the welcome sign to incorporate a dinosaur – it's been there ever since. Things don't change too quickly around these parts...



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8. THE UK'S OLDEST PHONEBOX

Outside the fishmongers in Bembridge High Street is the UK's oldest working phonebox. Award yourself a point if you can spot it.



9. KITESURFERS FALLING OVER

If you're travelling along the Military Road (near Brook) or around Gurnard, peer out towards the sea and you might just see a kitesurfer attempting to catch some gnarly waves, dude.

Give yourself a point if they fall over.



10. RIDICULOUSLY STEEP ROADS THAT REQUIRE FIRST GEAR

Around the South Wight (Ventnor, St Lawrence etc.) are a series of roads that are so steep that you'll have no choice but to stick the car in first gear and rev like there's no tomorrow. If you've got an automatic I guess you can have a point for a sign which says 'low gear now'.



11. THE REAR END OF A TRACTOR

Being stuck behind a tractor is an Isle of Wight tradition, usually when you are rushing to catch the ferry on the way home. Compensate for your road rage with an Isle Spy point.



12. THE REAR END OF A CYCLIST

Once you've overtaken the tractor (see #11) you can be fairly confident there will be a cyclist up ahead, wiggling their bottom frantically as they climb a hill. Please give them a wide berth, they really are lovely people and they aren't destroying the planet like you and me.



13. CLICK IT OR TICKET SIGNS

This road safety campaign can usually be found in the USA, but for some reason it also runs on the Isle of Wight. Try not to concentrate so hard on looking for it that you crash the car.



14. RAMBLERS LOOKING AT A MAP

Walkers seem to spend most of the day looking at maps (often in the rain). Give yourself a point if you see ramblers looking at a map.



15. THE GREAT BIG MULTICOLOURED CONE/KOAN

Is it a wonderful piece of contemporary art or is it a great big piece of junk? Make your own mind up, but award yourself a point if you see Liliane Lijn's 'Land Sea Light Koan' outside St Mary's Hospital in Newport.

