

PURPLE EMPEROR (*A. iris*) REPORT FOR 2006

UPPER THAMES REGION, BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

By Dennis Dell



© Photos of **Purple Emperor** by Tony Hall (left) & Dave Wilton (right)

Acknowledgements

I'm very grateful to the following loyal subjects of the Emperor who submitted their reports to me (36 of you, including me):

Wendy & Mick Campbell, Dave Wilton, Allen Beechey, Robin Dryden, Tom Dunbar, Ched George, Nick Bowles, David Redhead, Paul Bowyer, Dave Ferguson, Adrian Hickman, John Ward-Smith, Duncan Stubbs, Phil Tizzard, Martin Kincaid, Danny Howard, Graham Elcombe, Ian Walker, Graham Taylor, Christopher Prideaux, Giles Alder, Dick Lister, Niall Lusby, Allan Showler, Owen Lewis, Mike Mobbs, Graham Lincoln, David Dennis, Ian Kelloway, Don Otter, Francis Gomme, Jackie Tuckey, Tony Croft, Becky Woodell.

I must mention, for devotion to duty, without reward: David Fuller who paid 4 visits to Windsor Forest [where he had made sightings in 2005, and also David White over several years in the nineties], each of about 4 hours duration without sight of his Royal Eminence!

Several of these observers were not known to me previously, but had: 1) sent their observations to Wendy's sightings page on the website, or, 2), had sent their sightings to several members who then put me in touch with these new observers. I am grateful to all of you. This is what networking is all about, and, for me, is a very positive aspect, because it has widened the circle of people I can turn to for data.

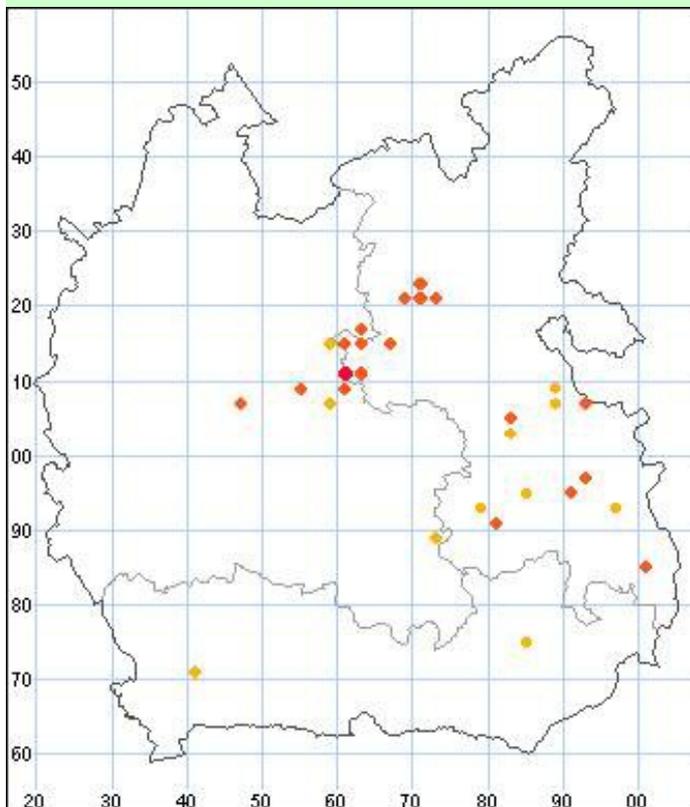
1. Introduction

As in previous reports, the observations in detail may be found in the Appendix. Also, as mentioned in previous years, it is almost impossible to be able to register the number of individuals seen. Therefore, I have used, mainly, the concept of 'sightings' together with periods of activity, or 'flight events'. In addition, I have not included, in the Appendix, the additional visits people made to their woods when they made no sightings.

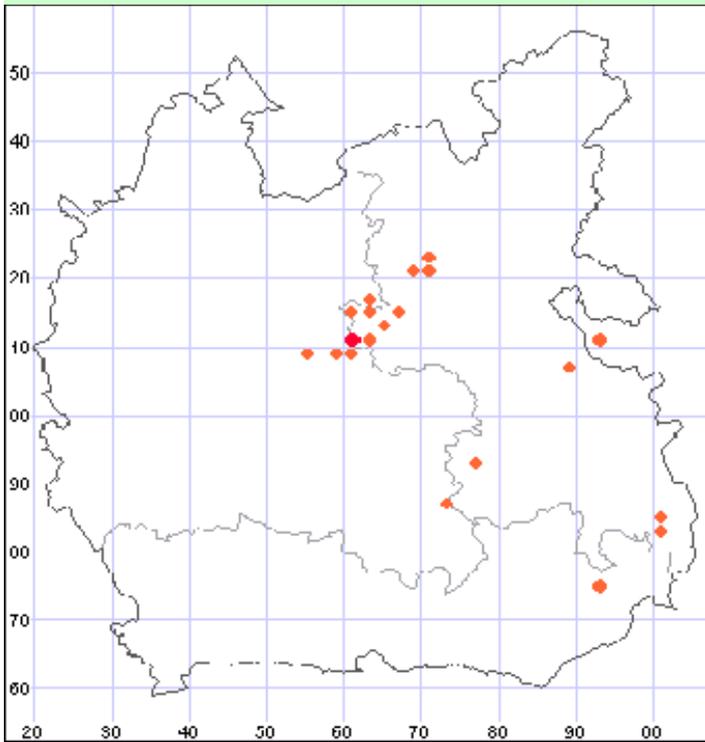
2. Summary

- 30 localities were visited, of which 5 were areas distinctly outside woods, but not more than about 1 km from the nearest wood [i.e., a golf course [1], and in or near villages or at the edge of a town [4]]. Of the remaining woods [25], 6 were in the Chilterns.
- About 130 sightings were made.
- Territories/ male assembly points. The 'Piddington Vista' was confirmed, but with not as many sightings as last year. The northern edge of Finemere is definitely a territory. Again, the most populated territory was the Oakley Wood car park. An ash canopy gap on the northern edge of Rushbeds was occupied again, but apparently not by more than one or two males. The high point at the eastern edge of Greatsea was frequented by several individuals for the third year running. The tall poplars at the southern end of Waterperry ['Drunkard's Corner'] were once again not used.
- 'New' habitats ['new' habitats means, simply, that we do not have records from these places from recent years] were: Little Hazes Wood Berkshire; Wytham Woods Oxon, Penn Wood Bucks; Downley [High Wycombe], Buckland Common Bucks; Sole Common Berks; Moored Common nr. Frieth Bucks; Braziers End Bucks; Hodgemoor Wood Bucks; Leygrove's Wood Bucks; Widnell Lane Oxon; Murcott Village, Oxon.
- First specimens seen on June 25th, the last in mid-August.

A. *iris* observations 2006



A. iris observations 2005



These two maps probably reflect, in the main, an increase of the number of members 'looking' and the number of places visited from 2005 to 2006.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Weather

The BBC Weather internet site is the source of the following information.

May: above average mean temp., well above average rainfall, and average sunshine hours.

June: well above average temperature, very low rainfall, and above average sunshine hours.

July: the temperature was in the 'exceptionally above average' category, as was the total sunshine hours; the rainfall was well below average. Previous sunniest month was June 1957.

June and July, therefore, provided exceptionally fine and dry weather, which may have accounted for a slightly earlier than usual emergence.

The following is Matthew Oates' summary:

March was cold and April dry and cool. Purple Emperor larvae did not commence feeding until the end of April.

May was the wettest since 1979 and one of the wettest ever. The first half was very promising but wet weather set in on the 15th and it remained wet until the last two days. Evenings during the second half of the month were mostly unsuitable for feeding Purple Emperor larvae.

June was sunny, dry and warm, with a series of anticyclones from the Azores. There was only one wet day (the 26th). Purple Emperor larvae were able to pupate quickly and the insect probably spent a relatively short time in the pupal state.

July began with an intense anticyclone which saw temperatures around 30C. This ended with a thundery breakdown on the 5th-6th, with heavy downpours in most parts of central southern England. The weather was rather indifferent between the 7th and 10th (inclusive), with limited flying opportunities due to cloud and / or wind, but another intense anticyclone developed on the 11th, again from the Azores. It was virtually cloudless from the 11th to the 21st (inclusive), apart from a weak front on the 13th, with temperatures above 25C on each day throughout the Purple Empire during this period. On five days the temperature exceeded 30C, with an all-time record July temperature of 36.5C at Wisley (Surrey) on the 19th. During this period Purple Emperor activity was heavily suppressed by heat, and the males especially burnt out rapidly. Thunderstorms broke out widely on the 22nd but another anticyclone promptly developed, though the weather collapsed during the last two days of the month.

July was the hottest month on record in the UK, beating July 1983 and August 1995.

3.2 Sightings

Similar to last year. Although this species is apparently quite widespread in our region, the number of sightings are certainly lower than those in two prime localities, Fermyn [Northamptonshire] and Alice Holt [Hampshire] Woods.

3.3 Distribution

In most of the areas where members went to look for *iris* it was found [see maps above], indicating that its status in our region is quite healthy. However, there is a lack of observers in most of Oxfordshire, large parts of Berkshire, and North Bucks, which might explain the absence of sightings there.

3.4 Woods in which sightings were made and suggestions for woods to be visited

WOODS VISITED IN 2006		*WOODS TO VISIT IN THE FUTURE (see note)	
BUCKS		BUCKS	
Black Park	TQ0184	High Scrubs	SP9208
Finemere Wood	SP7122	Dunsmore	SP8505
Doddershall Wood	Private	Monkton Wood	SP8301
Rushbeds Wood	SP6615	Park Wood	SU8298
Greatsea Wood	Private	Great Wood	SU7686
Penn Wood	SU9095	Leckhampstead Wood	SP7240
Wendover Woods	SP8807	Tilehouse Wood	SP6839
Woodland near Frieth; Moor Common	SU8090	Whitfield Wood	SP6439
Chinkwell Wood	SP6614	Park Copse	SP7338
Hodgemoor Wood	SU9693	Beachampton Grove	SP7836

Woods just east of Princes Risborough	SP8203	Woods on south-western edge of Milton Keynes	Oakhill, Shenley, Howe Park, Thrift, Broadway
Leygrove's Wood	Private		
BERKS		BERKS	
Sole Common	SU4170	College or Abbots Wood	SU6580
Warburg reserve	SU7287	Nettlebed Woods	SU7086
Little Hazes	Private	Hermitage	SU5171
OXON		OXON	
Piddington Wood	SP 6216	Ash Wood	SP5118
Yorks Wood	SP6120	Bagley Wood	SP5102
Waterperry Wood	SP6009	Fernhill Wood	SP6504
Whitecross Green Wood	SP6014	Coombe Wood	SP5904
Sydllings Copse, BBOWT reserve	SP5509	Roundhill Wood	SU5597
Hell Coppice	SP6110		
Little Wood	Private		
Wytham Woods	SP4608 (permit reqd.)		
Oakley Wood	SP6111		
Holton Wood	SP5907		

**Please note: These woods have not been checked for public footpaths and might not be accessible, therefore, without prior arrangement with the owner.*

The 'woods to be visited' column is just a suggestion; any woods in our three counties which have not been investigated could be added.

3.5 Territories [male assembly areas]

1. **Oakley Wood Car Park.** More seen here than last year. Most of the activity was on and around several Oaks and a Poplar just inside the main entrance from the road, on the right as you enter. This is the high point of the whole woodland complex, although the elevation range, from 60m at the southern end of Waterperry Wood to 90m in the Oakley Wood Car Park over a distance of 3.5 km, is modest. The 9th of July there was interesting; the weather was not ideal, with a strong wind blowing [3 to 4 on the Beaufort scale], but this did not seem to deter flight activity; on one occasion, three were in the air at the same time.

2. **Piddington and Rushbeds.** It is difficult, sometimes, in the UT region, to know for sure whether a particular area is a territory or not, because of the low numbers encountered. In so far as more observations have been made at a particular spot in both of these woods, two years running, we may conclude that we have identified territories. In Piddington, the 'vista' [see Appendix] is along the highest point in this wood. Rushbeds, however, is rather flat, and the Ash canopy gap at the northern edge represents neither a high point nor trees which are significantly higher than neighbouring trees [unlike the poplars at Drunkards Corner in Waterperry Wood]. Maybe a suitable canopy gap is also sufficient to encourage assembly behaviour.
3. **Finemere Wood.** A 300m stretch of the northern edge, running along the 115 metre contour line [the highest point in the wood], consists almost entirely of Ash trees with suitable 'canopy gaps' at intervals. Some observations were made here last year. This year, a number of observations were made over several July days. In particular, two people made two separate visits about 2 hours apart on July 12th, and each saw 3-4 specimens at different canopy gaps about 200m apart. This is intriguing and poses the question as to whether *iris* might occupy different, but suitable, canopy gaps and migrate between them during the course of the day. Experienced friends [Matthew Oates, Elizabeth Goodyear] have observed movement within territories during the day according to weather/angle of sun.

3.6 'New' habitats

We have continued to extend our searches to areas which have either never been investigated for this species, to our knowledge, or certainly not in recent years and have been rather successful.

- **Penn Wood Bucks, and surrounding area:** One of our members has been a regular visitor to this wood, now owned by the Woodland Trust, over many years, and 2006 was the first time he had seen *iris* here. Observations were made on four separate days, including mid-August [supported by a photo], which was by far the latest observation.
- **Little and Great Hazes Wood, Berks:** This adds to the few records we have from Berks. This is a small wood very close to and bisected by the M4. The sighting was made adjacent to a trout farm fishery. There are several small woods close by which would be worth investigating next year. The nearest known locality [but no sightings this year] is Windsor forest, about 7 km to the east.
- **Wytham Woods, Oxon:** Sightings were made on two days early in July. The large woods around Oxford should be home to *iris* but we lack recorders.
- **Sole Common, Berks:** This observation was quite close to the BBOWT reserve [pond] and was only the second one from Berks this year. It is by far the most westerly sighting in our region.
- **Moorend Common nr. Frieth Bucks:** Four specimens were seen within 15 minutes. This is a very small wood, full of Sallow. It is surrounded by a network of other small woods, all close by. Observations have been made in gardens in Frieth, adjacent, in recent years.
- **Hodgemoor Wood Bucks:** This was an important sighting, since there are no records from this area [Chalfont St Giles]. It is about 6 km south-east of Penn Wood. It is the most easterly record we have so far.

3.7 Observations away from woodland

- **Downley:** A female was seen on the ground in this village on the north-western edge of Wycombe. The nearest woods of any size are about 2km away.
- **Buckland Common Bucks:** Male seen on the windowsill of a house in the village, which is about 1 km from the nearest wood.
- **Braziers End Bucks.** In a garden, about 1 km east of the above sighting. Even further from the nearest wood.
- **Murcott, Oxon.** A worn male [25/7] settled on the observer's hand for along time. Proboscis out. This village is about 1.5 km north-west of Whitecross Green Wood, a known habitat.
- **Widnell Lane, Oxon.** This observation [27/7] was about 1km north-east of Piddington Wood, a known habitat, probably a female.

4. Conclusions and the future

This species is more widespread in the UT region than we had perhaps thought up to about three years ago. It is very gratifying to have discovered more habitats in woods on the Chilterns from year to year., although the main centres of population still appear to be in the remnant woods which comprised part of the old Bernwood Forest.

The several observations 1 km or more away from the nearest wood with a known colony are interesting. It is known from the literature that *iris* will wander away from its 'home wood'. We do not know, of course, whether any particular specimen engaged in this 'extra-arboreal' activity is merely making a temporary excursion outside its wood, or whether it is extending its range.

We need to have more observers in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and North Bucks, in order to ascertain how widespread *iris* really is in the UT region. The Sole Common and Hodgemoor wood sightings were the most westerly and easterly, respectively, so far, and these are fairly isolated from other localities. This suggests that we will find it in many more woods in these, so far, little explored areas.

It is gratifying to note that *iris* is doing quite well in woods which are managed for nature's benefit and which may, therefore, be considered as 'safe havens' [e.g. Whitecross Green, Oakley, Shabbington, Waterperry, Rushbeds, Finemere] from which the species may extend its range. We also have one private wood [Grendon/Doddershall] where the owner is very keen on his butterflies [especially *iris*] and has an English Nature grant to encourage him.

The ecology of *iris* has been a source of fascination for many entomologists. Its movement within a wood during the course of the day, and the tendency of the males to congregate in certain places has always intrigued us, and continues to do so. The predilection of the males to assemble at high points or around the highest trees is well established, and we are now studying behaviour at the high points: when does it commence? Are particular trees/groups of trees favoured? How is it affected by time of day and the weather? Why are some high points deserted after some years? Do these assembly points have to be near to concentrations of Sallow? Dialogue with friends from different areas of the country suggests slightly different behaviour from wood to wood.

Some of you might like to try to answer some of these questions. It would mean:

- concentrating on a wood of your choice where *iris* is always seen
- visiting the wood every three days [if possible] during the flight season [from about June 25th till the end of July], and only in reasonable weather
- observing for at least 30 minutes in particular areas of the wood at 'likely' micro-habitats; these are well known to you:

a) groups of trees at high points

b) groups of the tallest trees where the wood is largely 'flat'

c) glades, or areas where the trees are spaced about 20 metres apart [perhaps as the result of recent felling]

d) anywhere along wide sunlit rides

e) woodland edges, especially where there are gaps in the canopy

f) car parks within or at the edges of the wood

g) groups of Sallows [to observe female behaviour].

If you identify a 'good' territory, then pay several visits to this area at different times of the day to monitor any changes in activity/behaviour/numbers seen.

Very useful sources of information are:

1) 'The Ecology and Conservation of the Purple Emperor', published in 1987 by Ken Willmott, which was a project supported by the WWF. Ken has continued to study *iris* ecology in his wood [Bookham Common, Surrey] since then, and has accumulated a wealth of ecological information.

2) Matthew Oates has coordinated a national *iris* project during the last few years, and has published reports on the findings. He himself has accumulated an enormous amount of knowledge from his observations over many years, mainly, but not only, in Alice Holt Forest.

3) Elizabeth Goodyear and Andrew Middleton have coordinated *iris* observations for the Herts/Middx section of BC during the last few years, and have also published excellent annual reports.

APPENDIX: Details of Purple Emperor Sightings in the UTB area during 2006

DATE	OBSERVER	LOCATION	MICRO-LOCATION	NUMBER SEEN AND SEX	TIME	WEATHER CONDITIONS	BEHAVIOUR
25/6/06	Duncan Stubbs	Black Park	TQ010840	1 m	11.30		On path
25/6/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Piddington Wood	Territory SP 629161	1 probable sighting high up			High up over the central Ash tree of the "vista" . It must have been 100' up and looked too big to be a Red Admiral. The shape of the wings and flight pattern looked right for PE
29/6/06	?	Whitecross Green Wood		1			
29/6/06	Dave Wilton	Finemere Wood	Southern edge in Finemere Meadows	1 m			On the ground close to the wood edge in an area where there is a lot of bare earth. It was disturbed by my passage, took off and did three or four large lazy circles around me at grass-top height and then shot off up into the wood canopy.
29/6/06	John Ward-Smith	Little Hazes, private	Edge of wood, with scattered mature oaks. The site is south facing, close to M4 and lake at Felix Farm Trout Fishery	1 m	fleeting but clear sighting at 11.45 am. Total episode lasted approx 30 secs	Fine and sunny temp 22C	Single specimen flew out briefly from one side of an oak tree, flew round the back and then reappeared on the other side of the tree, at a height of between 4 and 5 metres (12 to 15 ft) from the ground. I was about 8 to 10 metres (25 to 30 feet) from tree.
30/6/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Oakley Wood	SP611117; tree tops near the gate in the Oakley Car Park	1	13.30, for 20 minutes		One definite sighting of a PE high up in the trees. It flew down from the Oak tree and disappeared.
30/6/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Piddington Wood & Little Wood (private)		1	11.15 to 13.30. 45 mins at Piddington territory		Spent 45 minutes at the "PE Vista". After 15 minutes Mick saw a male PE flying towards us. It was about 20' above our heads and close enough to see the purple sheen. We watched it complete a circuit of the "vista" and then it headed back to the footpath and disappeared.

30/6/06	Dennis Dell	Finemere Wood	Narrow ride SP718220	1	12.00		Flying swiftly at low trajectory southwards along ride leading northwards from turning circle
30/6/06	G.Elcombe	Bernwood	SP 612 103 Hell Coppice	1 m	11.00	Sunny	Perched on shrub, c 1 mtr above ground then skimming at low level up and down ride for c. 5 minutes
1/7/06	?	Whitecross Green Wood		1			
1/7/06	Graham Taylor	Wytham Woods (Singing Way) (permit required)	SP467075	1 m	Observed for at least 10 mins around 11:00, and for around 1 min at 14:30.	Hot with unbroken sunshine.	Male alighting repeatedly on track, possibly for salts, and skimming fast up and down ride in sunny clearing. Opening wings occasionally on the ground. Perched once on the lower boughs of a beech with wings open. Woodland in the immediate vicinity is mainly beech with ash, sycamore, oak and wych elm mixed in.
1/7/06	Christopher Prideaux	Doddershall Wood, private	Main north-south ride;	2			Down at muddy puddle
1/7/06	Graham Taylor	Wytham Woods	SP466088 SP467075	2	Fleeting glimpse at 13:45.	Hot with unbroken sunshine, but flying in shade.	Flying fast and direct through shady woodland at about head height. Woodland in the immediate vicinity is mainly sycamore with some mature ash and oak mixed in.
2/7/06	?	Whitecross Green Wood		1			
2/7/06	Giles Alder	Warburg reserve	SU72028782	1	12.30	30 degrees	Flying fast around wildlife garden and around roof top
2/7/06	Dave Wilton	Rushbeds Wood	SP666158; ash canopy gap at edge of wood	1 m	1.75 hrs; seen for 20 minutes from 15.55	33 degrees	Patrolling gap and perching
3/7/06	Dave Wilton	Finemere Wood	SP721216	1 m	15.00 to 17.30		After walking through the gate at the entrance to the wood this was the first butterfly I saw. It was orbiting the ride cross-roads by the sign board and then landed on the sallow on the SW corner of the junction, at about 10ft up, and proceeded to sun itself for about five minutes. . When it took off it headed north up the main ride and I lost it from sight.
3/7/06	A Parker	Black Park	TQ010840	1			

3/7/06	Dennis Dell	Greatsea Wood, private	highest point in wood	2			Two flying together leisurely over tops of Oaks
3/7/06	Andy Reynolds	Yorks Wood	SP61205	1m		11.00	Flying down, up and down the ride before I lost him. Landed on the ride two or three times, settling for no more than a minute or so.
3/7/06	H & T Hall	Rushbeds Wood	SP666158	1m		11.00 am	At around 11.00am we came upon a butterfly sunning itself on the ground. On studying the photo when we arrived home, it was a male Purple Emperor.
3/7/06	Dennis Dell	Finemere Wood	SP719218	1		11 to 12	Flying across intermediate territory [widely spaced mature Oaks]
3/7/06	Dick Lister	Amersham Field Centre, Mop End SU929969	Around the centre building particularly the dustbins and adjacent area	1, Sex uncertain		About 9.45 am. Observed for about 7 or 8 minutes	Very hot and sunny Noticed from window and went out to investigate. It rather lazily flew around, settled on a plank by the dustbins and then on a plastic bag containing dog poo. It then settled on a nearby wooden gate. Observed for several minutes and time to get an insect book from the centre and make a very skimpy sketch of the underside of the wing. It then flew away – not seen during the rest of the day.
3/7/06	D Ferguson	Finemere Wood	main ride (SP720217)	1m			Sunny Flew NW low across ride
			Circle (SP718219)	1m			Flew low S across W side of circle
			main track outside wood (SP721216)	1m			Resting on track. Flew off W.
4/7/06	Niall Lusby	Warburg reserve	Bottom Track SU717879	1			31 degrees Flying at head height along track in valley bottom
4/7/06	Dennis Dell	Finemere Wood	SP718218	3		4.15 to 6.30	30 degrees Flying and perching fairly low on Oaks just south of turning circle; observed for 15 minutes
4/7/06	Alan Showler	Downley	SU842946; grassy bank, above road, backed by trees	1 f		3 pm	Very hot Coming down and landing on grass in the shade, probably seeking moisture; not flying strongly: affected by the heat?

4/7/06	Mick Campbell	Hell Coppice and Oakley Wood	Oak trees lining field 2m, 1f edge at SP612106. SP611117; tree tops near the gate in the Oakley Car Park		5 to 6 pm	Hot & sunny	200 yards north of Hell coppice old car park along the track to the location where big Oak trees line the edge of a field. One large female <i>Iris</i> seen there. It landed briefly quite low down in an oak tree, about 30' up Oakley car park: 2 male <i>Iris</i> in the usual oak trees near the gate. A brief period of combat, then they glided about 25' above the edge of the track & then across it & disappeared.
4/7/06	D Ferguson	Wendover Woods	wide dry ride bounded by mature beech (SP883076)	1m	11.40 for 10 mins. In the wood for 2.5 hrs	Sunny	Flew low SW along track landing 3 times, resting for c1-3 mins each time. Disappeared E into garden of Picket Piece.
5/7/06	O.T.Lewis	Wytham Woods (permit required)	Singing Way/ The Plantation. Wide gravel ride SP466074	1 m	10.30 for 15 minutes	Sunny intervals, calm ~20C	Settling on moist gravel ride and probing with proboscis
6/7/06	Dennis Dell	Finemere Woods	At turning circle [SP718219] and at northern edge [SP715222]	3	3.45 to 5.45	24 degrees, cloud and sun no wind	Turning circle; over oaks and around big Sallow, opposite the oaks. Northern edge: flying in Ash canopy gap, one seen between 4.45 and 5.25
6/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Piddington Wood	Territory SP 629161; 2 m open area ringed by Ash and Oak		4 pm to 4.45 pm	Hot and sunny	Male <i>Iris</i> gliding around Territory 1 air space! This is the area immediately to the left of the big Oak tree (the Oak tree on the far right of the Vista). After 5-10 minutes of perching & gliding between the good quality Ash tree and the poor quality Ash tree, a second male <i>Iris</i> appeared and several combats occurred. The second male must have been chased off (along with a couple of pigeons!!) as we didn't see it again after that. The first male continued to glide & perch around the 2 ash trees for about 40 minutes until the sun went behind a big cloud.
?	Allen Beechey	BBOWT Warburg reserve	SU720881	1 f			However, this time a female <i>iris</i> did one graceful circuit of me before disappearing. The sighting was made at 17:05 on a small path that links the two rifle ranges (now strips of chalk grassland) about halfway along their length.
8/7/06	Dennis Dell [field meeting, 20 people present]	Oakley Wood	Car park SP612117	6 estimated	10.00 to 16.00	20 to 22 degrees, cloud and sun	Most sightings on and around oaks near car park entrance from road, gliding and perching [12 sightings between 11.30 and 12.45]. One

						male low down, observed for 30 minutes between 10 and 10.30, landing on car bonnets and tyres.	One female on main ride a couple of hundred yards south of car park, low down on Sallow and Birch; observed for 30 minutes [3 to 3.30]
9/7/06	Dennis Dell [field meeting, 8 people present]	Oakley Wood	Car park SP612117 6 estimated		11.00 to 14.00	20 degrees, windy, overcast and damp to start with, clearing up and getting warmer, but windy, later	Activity above and on the car park entrance oaks between 12.45 and 14.00. About 22 'flight events' noted, with 3 in the air at one time at one point: even in strong wind. At 2 pm, one male came down and settled on oak trunk.
8/7/06	Nick Bowles and Christopher Prideaux	Doddershall Wood, private	Main north-south ride 2		12.45 to 13.00	22 degrees, strong wind	One sighting entirely treetops and the other 300m away about 2-3m above ground. Both along the longest ride (section E of transects). The first sailed out from a gap between oaks on N side of ride at about 3 m above ground and made an unhurried circuit of the block of scrub. The second was high above the solitary tree in the centre (roughly) of the end of ride. It was about 5m up when saw it and it simply sailed off over the tallest canopy (again to north of ride).
8/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell, Paul Bowyer	Sydlings Copse, BBOWT reserve	Low fen area grazed 2 with ponies and surrounded by Oak & Ash trees; good quality sallow bushes in fen. SP559096			some cloud but quite warm and sunny, rather windy though.	We walked through the meadow almost to the far end where we stopped and watched the tree tops. These trees (lots of Ash, Oak) line the ridge bordering the fen area where the sallows grow. We saw a PE patrol along the top of the treeline, turn and go all the way back again to the far corner. We walked down through the wood, catching glimpses of PE gliding between the trees overhead. We walked back up and through the meadow again and a much larger PE (we believe it was a female) flew low down along the edge of the meadow and then up over the Elm trees.
8/7/06	Mike Mobbs	Hazlemere golf course bordering Penn Wood, private		1 m	11 am		Dying male Purple Emperor (bird attack?) about ten yards from fence. I have never seen one in the Penn Wood complex before, although I have walked it for some

							years, and do not know of any previous records for this area. The wood is mainly beech but there are stands of oak, some of which contain Purple Hairstreaks.
9.7.06	Becky Woodell	Whitecross Green Wood		1m			Flew along 1 st section of central ride and then into oak trees
9.7.06	G.Lincoln	Buckland Common	Window sill outside of house. South-west facing. Detached house surrounded by lawn, shrubs and flowers. Mixed copse of ash, oak, holly, rowan, hazel 25 meters to south-east. Holly trees 10 m to north-west.	1m	12.30pm. Seen for about 2 minutes resting, before it flew off.	Warm and sunny.	Fluttered outside window briefly, then settled on window sill. Open wings gently waving and never closed.
11/7/06	David Redhead	Oakley Wood	SP 6115 1165. Car Park	1m	9.30 to 9.50	17 degrees, sunny, slight breeze	Proceeded down main drag in car but decided to stop to check out car park - as I got out of car opposite path back into car park a Purple Emperor flew majestically out from over the top of the hazels on the opposite side of the ride to the car park, circled round over my head and disappeared whence it had come.
11/7/06	Dave Wilton	Piddington Wood	Territory SP 629161; 1 st visit: two: 1 f, probably, open area ringed by Ash and Oak 2 nd visit: 2 males		20 minutes for each 'visit'	sunny	Female lazily following White Admiral around me twice, about a foot behind it and about 18 inches above ground level, then shot off along the track. No sign of purple on the wings but I might not have seen it anyway because I was standing in the shade. Up in the canopy there was a single male active, mostly using the ashes at about 10 o'clock (taking the enormous ash in the centre of the semi-circle as being 12 o'clock). Back at Piddington Wood I spent another 20 minutes at "the spot" and this time there were two males active, one on the 10 o'clock ash and another on an ash at 1 o'clock (a big one but rather spindly). Unfortunately they didn't get together at all so no aerial battles were witnessed.

12/7/06	Robin Dryden	Black Park	at TQ013844 (this is where my sightings were last year).	1	13.00-14.00	Hot and sunny	Gliding across the ride and then sunning itself at in full view at the top of an oak tree (at TQ013844 this is where my sightings were last year).
12/7/06	A E D Hickman	Sole Common Map ref: approx SU 413 708	About 15m down a 'ride' leading into a young conifer plantation adjacent to Sole Common BBOWT reserve. Plenty of Sallows and Oaks nearby including alongside the first part of the ride.	1 m	Present for 30-35 mins (c10.45-11.20hrs)	Hot and sunny with light breeze	Feeding on presumed mineral deposits off fly-tipped rubbish-including discarded DIY materials, plastic bags etc. I didn't notice it until I flushed it by accident from where it had obviously been feeding. It then made a convoluted series of circuits around me, often very close to my legs, landing for a while on a nearby Sallow before continuing its low level erratic flight. It seemed highly intent on getting back to feeding on the rubbish, which it soon did. After a good half hour it finally took exception to me being within about 2 feet of it and flew out of view behind some Sallows. I checked the site just before I left at about 2pm but it did not reappear. Visited the site again on 19 July (admittedly spending only about 10-15 mins looking) and saw no sign of it.
12/07/06	Phil Tizzard	Finemere Wood SP71652226	Canopy gap in mature ashes about 10-15m wide at edge of wood --north facing.	Up to 3. Sex not determined.	Four events over a half hour period between 14.00 and 17.00	Hot; sunny; scattered clouds.	Two singles flying at canopy height; Three chasing briefly around top of ash tree then flew off at canopy height (8-10m). One landed on top of ash in middle of the canopy gap where it sat for 3 minutes before flying off. All sightings made with 8.5x42 binoculars.
12/7/06	Dennis Dell	Finemere Wood SP715222	Canopy gap in mature ashes about 10-15m wide at edge of wood --north facing.; this gap is about 200m west of the territory described by Tizzard above	3-4	12.30 to 12.45 and 13.20 to 13.30	23 degrees, sunny, light breeze	First period: two gliding and perching in canopy gap .. Second period: two circling in combat, descending together almost to ground before parting and flying back up. Shortly after, 100m east of this spot, another sighting flying eastwards. At 13.47, one seen just south of turning circle, gliding around Oak and across ride
12/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Woodland near Frieth; Moor Common	(OS ref SU803-905)	4	Total time looking was 1hr 30mins, 12.30 to 2.00pm, although all 4 were seen within 15 mins.	Hot & sunny.	The quantity and quality of the Sallow there is OUTSTANDING! There's loads of it below a whole bank of big Oak trees. Within minutes of arriving, as the footpath enters the wood we saw 2 PE chasing in one direction and then

							back again in the opposite direction. Impossible to say if they were male or female. We then saw another two, larger PE, lower down near the ground. They flew off quickly into the Oaks. We stayed for quite a while after that but it all went quiet (afternoon siesta time?).
12/7/06	Dennis Dell	Greatsea Wood, private	Highest point	2 [1 f]	12.55 to 13.10	23 degrees, sunny, light breeze	Female floated down eastern edge southwards, landing briefly on Blackthorn; one seen just inside wood from track around oak then over track and away. At outside again, seen flying across ashes
13/7/06	Dennis Dell & Christopher Prideaux	Doddershall Wood, private	main north-south ride	1 f	16.50 to 117.00		On Sallow for 5 minutes, then flew off down ride and disappeared.
14/7/06	Mike Mobbs	Penn Wood	SP913955.	1m	p.m.		We decided to go to Common Wood to see if we could see where the PE I found on Hazlemere Golf Course might have come from. But first I walked a bit further up the hill. A large butterfly flew towards me at head height. There was a flash of brown and white, then purple. It was another Purple Emperor, this time in Penn Wood itself!
14/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Waterperry Wood		4 f	between 3 and 5 pm		<p>1) 3.45pm 1 x PE - At the Southern end of the main track, it bends sharp right. Walk along there a bit further to a bank of Oak trees on your left. You'll see a nice Sallow(s) which is where we spotted <i>Iris</i> flying around the Sallow but we didn't see it settle. SP604-088.</p> <p>2) 4.15pm 1 x PE - We were heading North, back down the main ride (concentrating on the Sallows). Big female gliding very low down just above the track and then settled on vegetation sunning itself before flying off. Excellent views, close up!! SP605-090.</p> <p>3) 4.40pm 1 x PE - Still on the main ride. It flew 6 feet above ground up the face of the trees and disappeared over the tree tops. SP606-096.</p> <p>4) 4.50pm 1 x PE - Still on the main ride. Saw it land on Sallow and sun itself, then glided across to another sallow & we watched it fly into the middle of the Sallow and was seen bending its abdomen round to lay eggs. It was on the twigs, though, not on leaves. It was too high up (20-25') to see an egg through</p>

							binoculars, so we can't be sure it actually laid an egg on the twigs. SP606-098 .
14.07.06	David Dennis	Braziers End, Nr Cholesbury, Bucks	Garden, bordering farmland and woodland	1f	1.00pm	Hot and sunny	Flew around pond, settled on shirt for 10 seconds, flew off over hedge
15/7/06	Tim Watts	Piddington Wood	SP629161	1			
15/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Chinkwell Wood	SP667141	1	2.30 to 4.45 pm	Hot & sunny, breezy	We approached from the Dorton end, walking across the open fields and keeping an eye out for WLH on the flowering bramble along the hedges. As we were approaching the stile going into the wood we caught a distant glimpse of a big butterfly gliding amongst the trees ... could have been a White Admiral ... but then it shot out of the wood a few feet over our heads (now easy to see it was a Purple Emperor!) and started heading off across the open field! It had almost gone out of binocular range when it turned round and headed back again, flying back into the wood and disappearing. Most unusual! Most probably a female from its size and odd behaviour. Lots of sallow all around that edge of the wood.
15/7/06	Dennis Dell	Finemere Wood	100m north of turning circle	1	12.50	Hot and sunny	Around big Sallow along transect section F
16/7/06	Allen Beechey	Warburg Reserve BBOWT	SU720881	1f			A female <i>iris</i> did one graceful circuit of me before disappearing. The sighting was made at 17:05 on a small path that links the two rifle ranges (now strips of chalk grassland) about halfway along their length
16/7/06	Becky Woodell	Whitecross Green Wood		1			On second section of central ride
16/7/06	Tom Dunbar	Hodgemoor Wood, private	Car park	1f			In reverse to depart from carpark a male alighted to the left of the car and proceeded to entertain for the next 20 minutes feeding from leaf litter in total shade!
16/7/06	Tim Watts	Finemere Wood	SP718219	1			
16/7/06	Danny Howard	Oakley Wood		1f			A female sat on some sallow next to the main ride at about head height. It fluttered from leaf to leaf and it wasn't until it had flown back to the tree tops that I realised it may well have

							been egg laying (although a very brief search didn't yield any).
17/7/06	Becky Woodell	Oakley Wood		1 f			Low on Sallow near car park
17/7/06	Ian Kelloway	Road between Whiteleaf/Brush Hill Princes Risborough	Gap in beech trees over recently (2 years ago) excavated chalk pit	1	15.00	sunny	Flew 3 times around in a large circle before disappearing.
			0308 8201				
17/7/06	Martin Kincaid	Finemere Wood	Turning circle SP718219	1 f	12.20		Immaculate female in the turning circle. I watched her from 12.20 p.m. when she flew into the circle, made a few quick circuits, and then alighted on one of the tallest sallows. I got very excited for a bit as it looked like she was going to oviposit - crawling around the leaves, seemingly 'tasting' with her front feet.
17/7/06	Ched George	Leygrove's Wood, private	Southern edge of wood	1 f	12.30 to 15.00		1 female found flying briefly near sallows at 2.22pm and followed to next sallow where again it flew in and out briefly before "hiding" somewhere. Re-appeared around same tree (presumably from within or close by) at 2.42pm and spent a minute or two weaving in and out, presumably laying here and there. Flew through sallow and into mature forest shade behind and lost from view. Re-appeared again very briefly at 2.58pm and flight suddenly quickened and I lost contact.
17/7/06	Don Otter	Wendover Woods	Nr "the" Buddleia bush. On edge of clear felled area but with isolated clump of tall Lime trees.	1 m	Around 19.30	Hot & sunny	Flew around tall lime trees then appeared to land. Not seen again.
18/7/06	Francis Gomme	around Princes Risborough	Whiteleaf Hill, Kop Hill, Seargent's Wood	3			
18/7/06	Ian Walker	Oakley Wood and Hell Coppice	1] SP613115, ride. 2] SP611101, old car park	2	1] 8 am, and 2] between 11.05 and 11.21	Hot and sunny	1] flushed from ground, flew up through Sallow bush, and beyond; open beyond with isolated mature Oaks. Identity not 100%

							2] moving in high foliage in Oak; three separate sightings, 7 and 10 minutes apart at same place
19/7/07	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Rushbeds Wood		2	30 minutes, 1 st seen at 13.15	36 degrees	We had been sitting in the corner of the meadow in the shade of the big Oak tree, facing towards the large Ash tree for about 30 minutes when one flew over our heads and glided through the big Ash tree back into the wood. On the way back through the wood to the car we had another sighting high up, flying above an Ash tree about 100 yards from the car park
21/7/06	Francis Gomme	Whiteleaf cross, Princes Risborough	Trees below cross	1			
21/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Holton Wood, private	SP599079; public footpath lined with Oaks and Sallows	1 f	14.15; observed for 30 seconds.	Hot and sunny	Flew above and then into big Sallow along ride
25/07/06	Andy Reynolds	Yorks Wood	SP61205	1m	17.00	Hot and sunny	On his last legs and raggedy. Sitting on the parched ride, he remained there as I sat down next to him. I poured a wee puddle of water from which he drank.
25/07/06	J. Tuckey	Murcott	SP585155	1m	12 to 13		Settled on hand, proboscis out; remained there for along time
27/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Piddington Wood & Little Wood (private)	Little Wood - SP624157; at the top of wood where the first ride meets the public footpath.	Zero in Piddington Wood. 1 in Little Wood.	14.30	Hot and sunny	Gliding above a hazel tree next to the big Oak.
27/7/06	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Widnell Lane	SP634173	Probably f	a.m.	Hot and sunny	Flew low along road and then into wood
28/07/06	Anthony Croft	Whitecross Green Wood SP602146	Wide grassy ride bounded by oak, ash, willow, blackthorn	1. Unsure of gender.	1100	Sunny	First observed perched on oak three metres above ground. After several minutes flew to another oak at a similar height above ground. Remained for a few minutes then flew off into the wood.
mid-August	Frankie Woodgate	Penn Wood		1			

