

Northernmost discovery of rare tree bumblebee is made by pupils at Oxfordshire secondary

Wait for bumblebee is over

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'We have been waiting for this bumblebee to arrive in Oxfordshire for years. I am over the moon I was here'

CHILDREN at a school near Oxford are creating a buzz in the insect world after discovering one of the rarest bees in the country.

Just 13 tree bumblebees have been found in the UK. But one flew into the hands of youngsters at Wheatley Park School, in Holton.

It is the furthest north the species has been found in the UK.

The bee was uncovered as part of a two-day activity at the school.

Members of the school's eco group had been working with experts from Shotover Wildlife, re-planting trees on site and working on the wildlife ponds.

Volunteer Bonnie Collins was collecting a sample of insects with the youngsters to examine under the microscope when they made the find.

Jack Smith, 14, from Wheatley, said: "We were just sat down with our lunch and then Bonnie Collins (from Shotover Wildlife) came over and said she had caught a bee.

"We looked at it and we got one of the cards out to try and see what it was and it wasn't on there."

As the bee was a male, it was not necessary to release it back into the wild to keep the species going, so experts froze the insect to preserve it.

Shotover Wildlife chairman Ivan Wright said: "We have been waiting

for this bumblebee to arrive in Oxfordshire for years. This is one of the most exciting things I have ever found and I am over the moon I was here when it was discovered."

Ms Collins said: "The children had the nets, so I was using my hands and a little tube — so I was just lucky."

Callum Horn, 14, of Stadhampton, said: "It's really quite surprisingly spectacular that we were there when the first specimen of this bee was found in Oxfordshire."

