

Managing eight surgeries and 50,000 bees



Amanda Lindley has worked in dentistry for 32

years. Originally a dental nurse, Amanda now manages a 'super busy' eight-surgery practice in Formby, Merseyside. Outside work, she is a beekeeper and supplies her practice with a steady stream of honey.

Interview

What is your hometown?

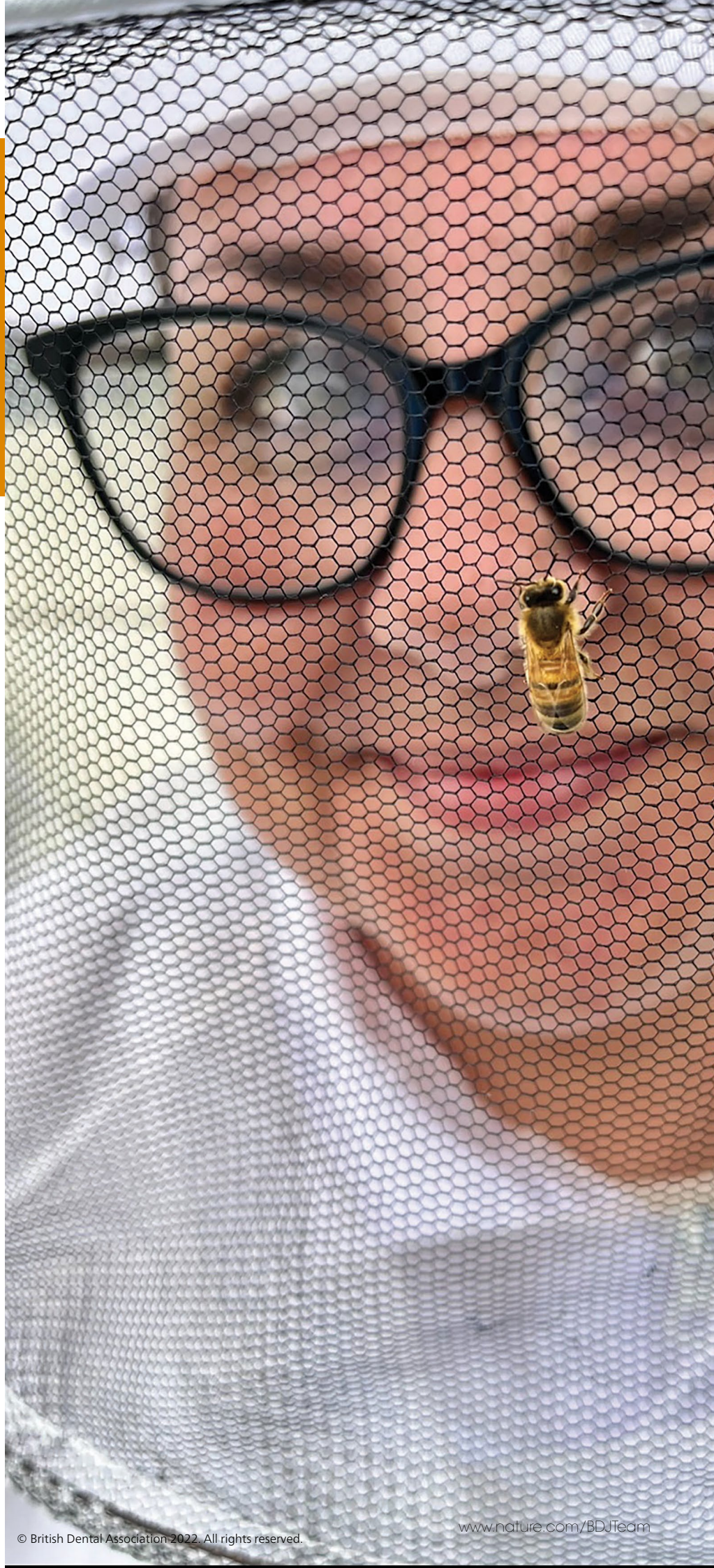
I live in a lovely part of Liverpool called Knowsley Village with my partner Paul, daughter Valentina (20) and our little rescue cat Colin. I also have a son, Joe (26) who moved into his own house last year.

What did you want to do when you were at school?

Oh that is a long time ago! I remember toying with the idea of being either a Police Officer or an air hostess.

How did you get into dentistry?

During my GCSEs, my Mum happened to be visiting our dental practice, and heard that



they were looking for a trainee dental nurse. She suggested it to me, and I took a CV in to the practice. A week later, I was invited for an interview, during which I fainted! After being sent home in a taxi, I returned a couple of days later, and was offered the job. I stayed at that practice for 16 happy years until the dentist retired.

Was becoming practice manager difficult?

As the scope of practice for dental nurses expanded, I found myself picking up more and more responsibility within the surgery and beyond, and was able to transition into the role with ease. I am now the CQC Registered Manager of an eight-surgery

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I qualified as a dental nurse way back in 1994 and went on to gain further qualifications in radiography, oral health education, fluoride application, impression taking, endodontic nursing, implant nursing, and I also hold a dental nurse tutor and assessor award qualifications.

What appealed to you about dental nursing?

I loved it from the very first day. I have always been an organised person, and like things spick and span. Back then we also did a lot of minor oral surgery in practice, such as apicectomies, which I found fascinating.

Please could you summarise your career history?

I worked as a dental nurse until my principal retired in 2008. Following this I gained my teaching qualifications and worked as a tutor/assessor for a couple of years, but I missed the surgery environment terribly and returned to dental nursing, gaining numerous qualifications along the way. I was promoted to practice manager, which is what I do currently, although I have retained my GDC registration, and quite often pop back into surgery when we find ourselves short staffed, or for anything particularly interesting.

practice with a really healthy mix of NHS, private and plan-based patients.

What does your typical working week look like?

Extremely busy! Arranging rotas, checking and ordering stock levels, team meetings, area meetings, KPI reporting, handling patient queries, compliance, auditing, arranging events and liaising with other practices in our area.

They are super busy days, but they fly by! My office door is always open, and staff pop in through the day for a chat too. I always have time for that, and think that it is one of the most important things that I do during my day.

How many staff do you manage?

I currently have 39 staff at my practice, and am looking forward to welcoming another three over the next couple of months as we expand further.

What do you enjoy about your job?

I feel truly valued and listened to working for Mydentist. Despite the size of the company, we are very much part of a wide family and there is so much support for all members of the dental team. I love to watch young dentists flourish as they build in confidence; similarly, seeing the student dental nurses as they progress through their qualification is very rewarding. We do a lot of smile makeovers here also, and the patient journey that we provide is lovely to see.





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What is most challenging?

Dentist targets as we have come out of the pandemic.

Having worked within dentistry for over 30 years, I have certainly seen a lot of changes. I feel that the current demand for NHS dentists is at crisis point. More and more clinicians are moving over to private or plan based dentistry, not for financial gain, but for a better work/life balance without the stress of targets which are almost impossible to achieve.

How did you get through the pandemic?

Very carefully! I returned into surgery for some sessions during the pandemic, so could empathise with and understand the struggles with the heavy duty PPE, stealth masks, and the fear of aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs).

My main priority was to keep my staff members safe, providing reassurance, and allowing our patients to be seen with care and

compassion during such difficult times.

Do you have a long waiting list for patients?

Unfortunately, due to restrictions during the pandemic, we, along with most other large practices, are still catching up with regular appointments.

When did you first get into beekeeping?

A few years ago, my daughter started college and she had a gap in between classes, so I suggested that she ask if there were any recreational courses available to fill the time. I was thinking maybe first aid or painting... but she came home and announced that she had chosen beekeeping!

It was not until a couple of years later, when the idea of a having a hive at home arose, that I also did a course. I thought it best from a safety aspect, but I quickly found myself totally drawn in to the funny old world of beekeeping too!

How did you learn how to keep bees?

I did a course with the British Beekeepers Association, and joined our local branch. We have monthly meetings and share a lot of knowledge, experiences, and helpful tips. Every day is a learning day: the bees rarely do

what the text books say they will!

Is the hive close to your home?

The hive is at the bottom of the garden, around 75 metres from the house. Luckily we back on to a forest, and are not overlooked with so much open space around us, and our closest neighbours love honey!

Does beekeeping involve a lot of work and maintenance?

Not especially. We inspect the bees and the hive once a week during spring and summer, assessing the strength and size of the colony, checking that the queen is laying, and monitoring honey stocks.

Honey extraction is a very very messy, very very sticky job, but worth it in the end!

During the colder months, we do not open the hive at all; the bees huddle together for warmth, and do not leave the hive until spring.

How much honey does the hive generate a year?

If we are lucky, the bees can produce 60 pounds of honey each year. This is very dependent on the weather conditions. We are just about to harvest the spring crop, and hopefully will harvest again in early September.



'We can identify where [our bees] have visited by the different colours of pollen that they deposit. It looks almost like a stained glass window in the sun. Very pretty.'

Do you sell the honey or just give it to friends and family?

We tend to give our honey away. The cost of extraction and jars is next to nothing, and as it is such an enjoyable hobby, we see it as nature giving us a gift, so we pass this on. Local honey is excellent for hay fever sufferers too, so we are glad to be able to help.

Do you have a lot of flowers and bee-loving plants?

Yes! We have lots of bee-friendly plants and flowers in the garden, although our own bees will not visit these. They tend to venture further afield, and will fly within a 2–3 mile radius of the hive to collect the pollen. We can identify where they have visited by the different colours of pollen that they deposit. It looks almost like a stained glass window in the sun. Very pretty.

Do you advise people to eat honey in moderation at mealtimes?

Of course!!!!!!

I don't eat that much honey myself. My partner likes to have it with his cereal, and I always have a jar in the cupboard for cake making. Mixed with hot water and lemon juice it is the best sore throat remedy in the world.

Do your family help with the beekeeping?

Occasionally my son will pop on a suit and film an inspection for us. Friends who are interested have also watched while we inspect, but this can be daunting due to the sheer number of bees that you see (50,000+) and they are also super noisy.

Have you had a lot of stings?

Thankfully no. My daughter has though. The most important thing to do if you are stung is to keep calm, remove the stinger and apply a cool compress to help with swelling. We are very lucky to have well behaved bees. We were asked to attend to a hive that had been abandoned recently, and the bees were so

angry and aggressive we had to close it up quickly and move away. It is at times like that you are reminded how important it is to wear the full bee suit at all times, no matter how confident you are as a beekeeper.

Are you proud of your career within dentistry?

Very. There are not many roles that I have not undertaken during my career, and I feel that this enables me as a manager to see things from different perspectives.

My team at Mydentist Formby are wonderful, and from supporting the long standing dentists as they move to plan based dentistry, to coaching student dental nurses as they learn, I feel honoured to be in such a privileged position, having enjoyed my working life for such a long period of time.

Any special plans for this year?

During the pandemic, I really missed travelling and holidays. My partner and I are heading to Las Vegas for a week in August to see The Killers in concert. We also have a Christmas shopping trip in Rome planned for December, so lots to look forward to!

Interview by Kate Quinlan

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