

Our History

[audio:http://www.oxeyes.org.uk/website/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/01_our_history.mp3|titles=[Our History]

Here we chart our journey from our humble beginnings in 1877 right through to the present day with our recently opened annexe to Bradbury Lodge. We hope you find it of interest.

1877

Foundation of “Oxfordshire Association for the Home Teaching of the Blind”. The group’s aims were to provide instruction in reading and writing, and to assist in obtaining work for blind people.

1896

Name changed to “The Oxford Society for Visiting and Providing Books for the Blind”. However, it appears that this name was soon shortened to “The Oxford Society for the Blind”. The books and magazines provided by the Society were in Braille and Moon. The teacher’s salary was 30 shillings (£1.50) a month.

1903

It was agreed for the next year “to provide for visiting, at their own homes, the blind throughout the county”.

1904

“The Oxford Society for the Blind” amalgamated with “The Oxfordshire and Midland Home Teaching Society”. In that year a County Visitor was employed, but only from January to the end of August as: “it seemed to the Sub-Committee that this was as long a period as the subscriptions would allow them to employ his services”. A total of 122 people were helped during the year, with annual subscriptions totalling £76 – 0s -2d.

1913

“The Oxford Society for the Blind” opened a shop at 4 Little Clarendon Street, Oxford, where blind people were employed to sell their own work and orders taken for piano-tuning and chair-caning. The shop also contained a library of books in Braille. The Society’s register contained 145 names of blind people, of which 53 were in the city.

1920

“The Oxford Society for the Blind” was registered under the Blind Persons’ Act (1920).

1922

Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council accepted the assistance of Oxford Society for the Blind in providing teaching to blind people in the county.

1929

Shops employing blind people to sell their own work were opened by the charity in Banbury and Bicester.

1948

The name of the charity was changed to “Oxford (City and County) Society for the Blind”.

1962

The Rt Hon. the 8th Countess of Macclesfield became vice-president.

1974

Offices at 3 Enstone Road, Charlbury, were purchased.

1975

Changes to local government boundaries led to an extension of

the area covered by the charity to include Abingdon, Didcot and Wallingford.

1977

In its centenary year, the charity's name was changed to "Oxfordshire Association for the Blind" (OAB). This was also the year in which OAB registered with the Charity Commission.

1994

The Rt Hon. the 9th Countess of Macclesfield became patron, following the death of the 8th Countess.

1996

OAB sold its Charlbury property and relocated to rented property at The White House, Rivermead Rehabilitation Hospital, in Oxford City.

1997

A "Sight Advisory Service", providing on the spot information, advice, counselling and emotional support for newly registered blind or partially sighted people, was established by OAB at Oxford Eye Hospital.

2002

Moved temporarily to 9 Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford, following the sale of Rivermead Hospital by the NHS.

2005

Purchased property in Gordon Woodward Way, Oxford, on the site of the old Rivermead hospital. The building was purchased thanks to a grant from the Bradbury Foundation.

2006

Moved into Bradbury Lodge in August. The new centre was

officially opened by The Rt Hon. the 9th Countess of Macclesfield.

Equipment and visual aid demonstration services were provided from a temporary building in the car park.

Over the course of the year more than 2,000 visually impaired people and their carers were supported by OAB in some way. The charity also worked with 11 local self-help groups for visually impaired people.

2010

In February, OAB teamed up with Banbury Museum to host BlindArt's "Touching Art Touching You" exhibition. The exhibition had more than 25,000 visitors, helping to promote the needs and abilities of local blind and partially sighted people.

OAB's volunteer home visiting scheme awarded accreditation by the Mentoring and Befriending Association.

North Oxfordshire project helped to form two new societies for sight impaired people in the area.

2011

Major fundraising campaign to build an annexe to our existing building. Our appeal champion was Colin Dexter, famous local author of the "Morse" mysteries and visually impaired himself.

OAB becomes registered as a company limited by guarantee.

2012

The Campoli Centre opens to offer Oxfordshire's largest, best-equipped and only specialist visual impairment drop-in resource centre.