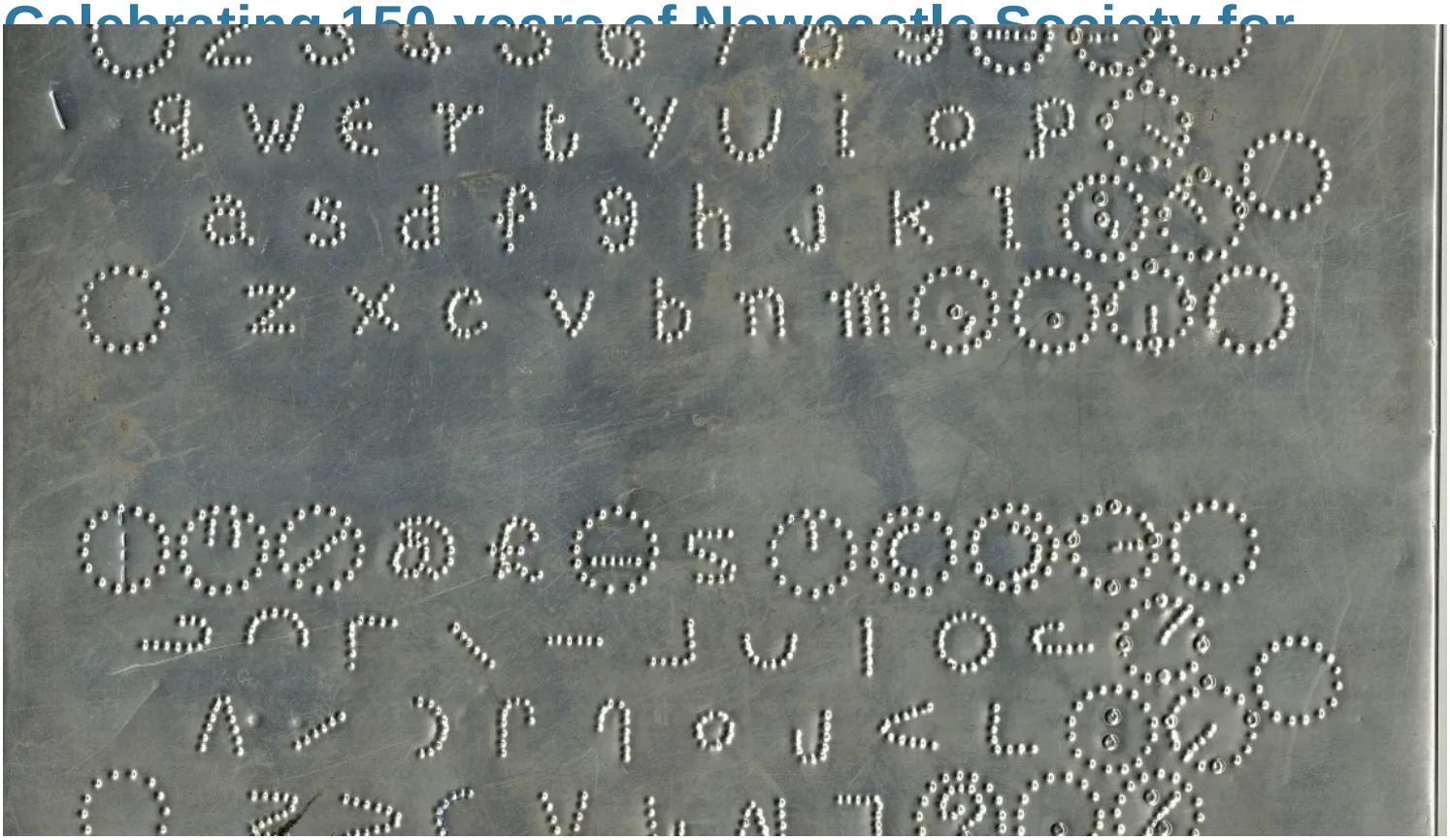
Celebrating 150 years of Newcastle Society for



A moonboard which was used to teach blind people to read from the 1850s NSBP

A National Lottery supported project needs your help to explore the history of visual impairment in Newcastle.

Newcastle Society for Blind People (NSBP) has been awarded £7,600 to celebrate its milestone anniversary of providing support to visually impaired people living in the city.

Volunteers and society members will digitise hundreds of historical items, reveal previously untold stories and use their past to inspire future work in improving lives.

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: “Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we’re delighted to support this project which will not only celebrate a milestone anniversary for the NSBP but also put the history and stories of its members at the heart of building a stronger future for visually impaired people in Newcastle and beyond.”

Revealing history and transforming the future

NSBP was formed in 1867 as part of a wave of home teaching societies set up from the mid-1850s to go into people’s homes and teach blind people to read using a device known as the ‘moon alphabet’.

Over the coming months the project will:

- Tell the stories of notable society members including James Clydesdale who became the first blind Mayor of Newcastle in 1945 and EJ Sillett, a blind poet who published three books of poetry in the 1930s
- Capture the personal experiences of society members about life as visually impaired people in Newcastle today
- Investigate the effects of war – including the impact on those who were blinded during conflict and the change in employment status for some visually impaired people during the Second World War
- Create a new website, complete with digital archive, and use social media to spread the word about issues facing visually impaired people
- Celebrate the 150th anniversary of the NSBP with a series of events and workshops

Can you help the NSBP discover more? If you have a memory, story or artefact to share, visit the NSBP website to find out how to get in touch.



A Sense of the Past: a Social History of Blindness in Northern Ireland