

A series of exhibitions will be held in libraries, museums and schools throughout the Tees Valley area and beyond. The theme of the exhibitions will be on the history of blindness since 1945. The underlying objective will be to increase public awareness of blindness and visual impairment with particular emphasis on access.

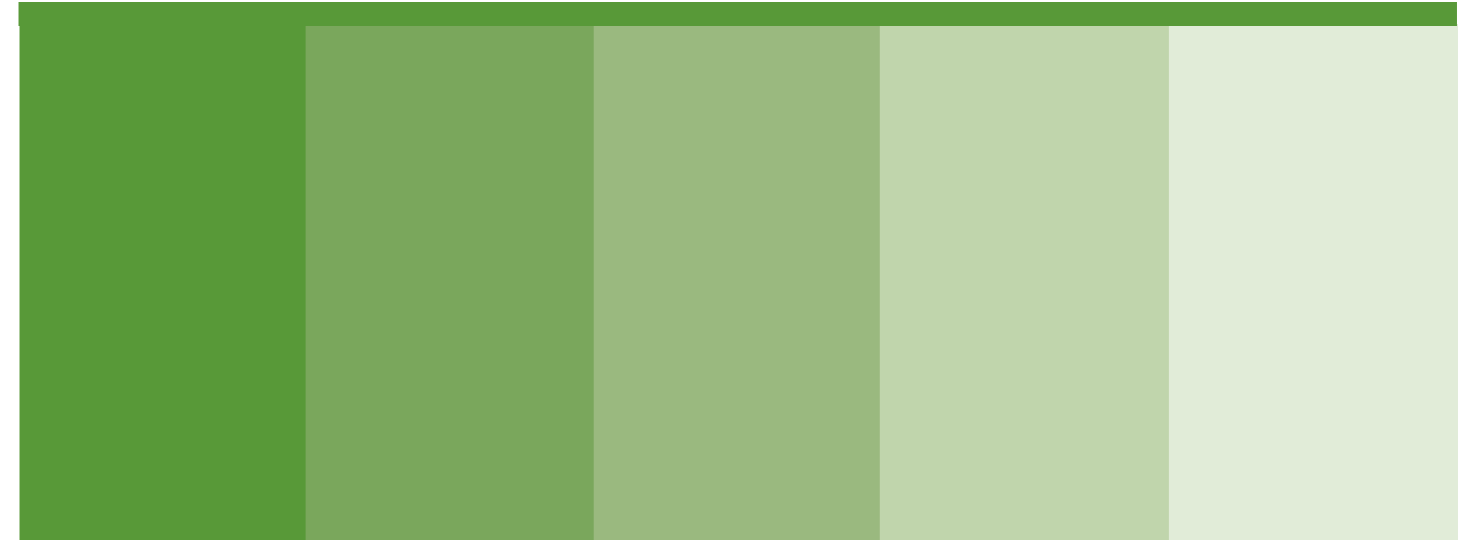
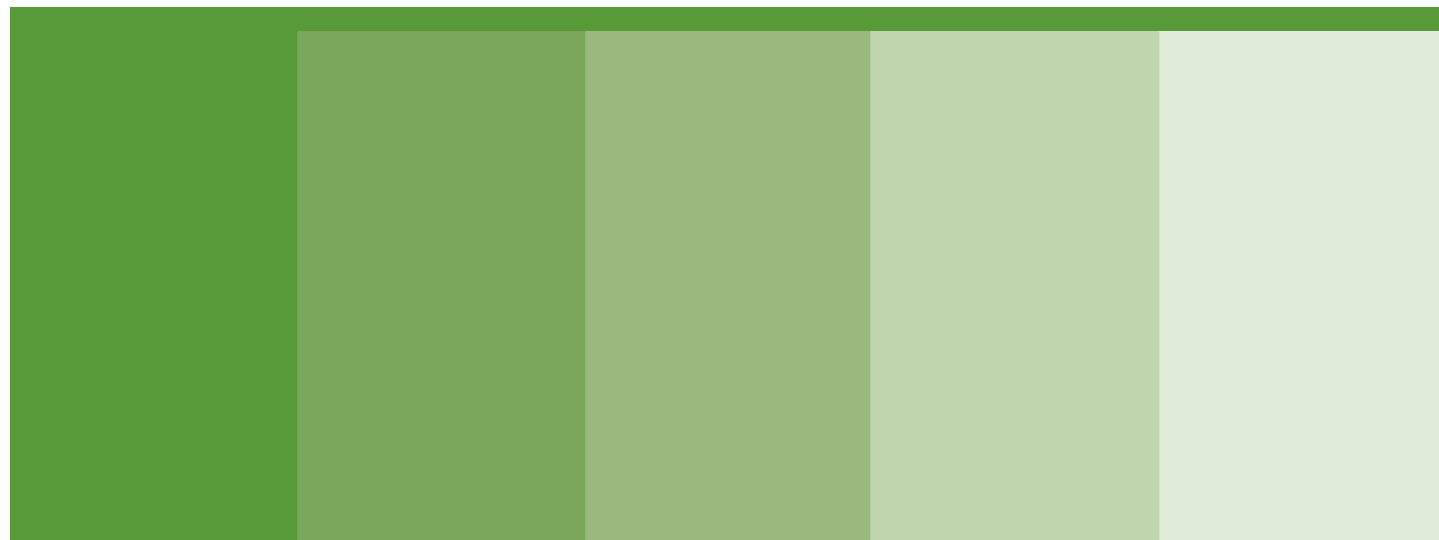
The information produced will be included in all of our training courses so that blind and visually impaired people will get an appreciation and understanding of the progress that has been made in all aspects of their lives since the end of World War 2.

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BlindVoice UK

“Blindness Through the Decades”
The Oral History of Sight Loss in the
Tees Valley from 1945 to date



Themes

Based on extracts from our Chairman, George Glass's autobiography, research into the following aspects of sight loss will be undertaken:

- 1 Hospital treatments: To record the experiences of blind and visually impaired people in hospitals during the period under review.
- 2 Home life: To discover what life at home was like for blind and visually impaired people.
- 3 Employment: To record the history of employment opportunities that were available during the period under review. This will include the operation of the Workshops for the Blind, formerly in Middlesbrough.
- 4 Life and social skills: To discover how blind and visually impaired people learned the necessary coping skills - if indeed they had any opportunity to do this.
- 5 Social life: To discover the social life that was available to blind and visually impaired people and how it changed during this period.
- 6 Education: To record the experiences of blind and visually impaired people in special schools for the blind and compare to the more open education system that exists today.
- 7 Societies for the Blind: To undertake research via constitutions and minutes of meetings to determine the changing role of such societies during the period under review.
- 8 Social Services: To undertake research into the changing role of Social Services during the period under review. This will include structures of departments and resources available.

Processes

Themes 1 – 6

Research will be undertaken by means of recorded interviews. A team of volunteers will be recruited for this purpose. They will be given the necessary visual impairment awareness training and provided with recording equipment. Because of the vulnerability of clients all volunteers will require a CRB check. Blind and visually impaired people throughout the Tees Valley area will be invited to participate in the project. A minimum number of 100 participants will be required. It is important that the full range of visual impairment is included as well as all people of all ages.

Theme 7

Access to historical records will be required and the necessary information will be recorded. The nature of constitutions, the formation of management committees, the role of blind people in the decision making processes, the services that were offered will be the historical aspects of the greatest interest. How things have changed over the years will be particularly relevant. The research into historical records of Societies will be undertaken by Trustees of BlindVoice UK. The volunteers will obtain the views of blind and visually impaired people by interview.

Theme 8

Access to records, achievements and resources from 1945 to date will be required. Interviews with key staff - past and present - will be undertaken. These aspects of the research will be done by Trustees of BlindVoice UK. The views of blind and visually impaired people will be very relevant and will be obtained by the trained volunteers.