

The Ulverscroft Foundation

Registered Charity no. 264873



Serving the Needs of the Visually Impaired



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Dr. F.A. Thorpe OBE

Frederick A Thorpe OBE 1914-1999

Frederick A. Thorpe Founder of Ulverscroft Large Print Books and the Ulverscroft Foundation received the Order of the British Empire in January 1969 and was made an Honorary Doctor of Law by The University of Leicester in 1979, in recognition of the outstanding work he did to assist the visually impaired. He also received many other national and international awards.

How You Can Help the Ulverscroft Foundation

- You can make a bequest or a legacy in your Will.
- You can make a donation direct to us, or via the Charities Aid Foundation.
- You can give via a banker's order, to spread your payments over a period.
- You can use Gift Aid to make a donation. Then, if you are a taxpayer, we can reclaim the tax paid on your donation at no extra cost to the donor.

The Ulverscroft Foundation is very grateful for any legacy or donation, no matter how small. The money we receive helps to fund:

- Research into eye diseases and their treatment
- Eye treatment departments in hospitals
- Eye clinics
- Eye operating theatres
- Ophthalmic diagnostic equipment
- Improved library services for the visually impaired and the housebound
- Reading equipment for the visually impaired
- Improvements in the quality of life for the visually impaired

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to read this brochure.

For further information on the work of the Ulverscroft Foundation, or to make a donation please contact:

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The Ulverscroft Foundation Arms

The name Ulverscroft was adopted by Frederick Thorpe in recognition of Saer de Quency, a Knight Templar and an early patron or benefactor of the nearby Ulverscroft Priory. He was born in 1155, created Earl of Winchester on 13th March 1207 and died at Acre on 3rd November, 1219.



The Ulverscroft Foundation

Today there are more people in our community with impaired vision than ever before. Paradoxically, the rise in the number of cases has been due to modern advances in ophthalmology. Many people who would otherwise be totally blind, have had their conditions arrested and so retained partial sight. Also, as more people live to greater ages than previously, the number of those with age-related eye diseases has increased.

The Ulverscroft Foundation needs your support for its work to help those suffering from visual impairments, which range from partial sight to total blindness.

The Objectives of the Ulverscroft Foundation

The Ulverscroft Foundation was formed to:

- Relieve and assist, and provide treatment and education for sick or handicapped persons and in particular persons suffering from defective eyesight.
- Support medical research and provide and assist in the provision of facilities for the treatment or alleviation of sick or visually handicapped persons.

How The Ulverscroft Foundation Began

For a long time it had been recognised that there were many hundreds of thousands of people who, due to failing eyesight, were unable to read books in normal-sized print. Thus people who had been avid readers for most of their lives, were being denied the pleasure of reading. For the elderly that deprivation was particularly cruel, for their failing eyesight came just when they had more leisure time to occupy.

Early in the 1960s Frederick A. Thorpe, a newly retired printer and publisher, was asked to address the problem of producing books with a print face twice the normal size, that could be read by the visually impaired. The task was not as simple as it might seem. If the text was unabridged and normal paper was used, the large print edition of a book would need a much larger page size, or many more pages, than the normal edition. That would make the large print edition much heavier and less easily portable than the normal edition.

With his specialised knowledge of the printing industry, Frederick Thorpe saw there were ways around the various problems. By using thinner but higher quality paper, it was possible to produce a large-print book with many more pages that was little larger or heavier than its normal-print counterpart. To assist readability he also chose a type of paper that gave minimum glare, and used high density black ink to produce the clearest possible print face.

In 1964 Frederick Thorpe formed Ulverscroft Large Print Books Limited to republish books in large print, mainly for sale to public libraries. The move has been a great success, and in the decades to follow Ulverscroft large print books have been distributed throughout the world and have restored the pleasure of reading to many millions of people.



A mobile library funded by Ulverscroft



A visually impaired reader enjoying talking books

Over the years, Ulverscroft has refined its product. Its latest books are similar in size and weight to their standard print editions. Usually the covers are identical, because many people do not want to reveal that they have a difficulty in reading standard-sized print. Ulverscroft large-print books are made to be more durable than their standard-print counterparts. This is important, because library surveys have shown that on average each large print book is borrowed significantly more often than equivalent standard-print editions. Thus from the librarian's point of view the large print books represent good value for money, if measured in terms of expenditure per book loan.

Organisations Which Help the Visually Impaired

As mentioned earlier, the number of people with visual impairments is increasing as people live longer and develop age-related eye diseases. The Ulverscroft Foundation donates funds to organisations which aim to improve the quality of life for the visually impaired and their families. These include arts and education centres, schools, social and gardening clubs, carers' organisations and groups providing holidays and activities for the visually impaired. Hundreds of thousands of visually impaired people have benefited from the many projects, large and small, supported by the Foundation.



Above pictures: Activity holidays for visually impaired children



Books on wheels service to housebound readers



Sgt. Alfred Kalwasinski, The Library, Royal Hospital, Chelsea

To meet that perceived need, Frederick Thorpe generously decided that the profits from the sale of Ulverscroft's products should go to help those suffering from visual impairments. In 1973 the directors of Ulverscroft Large Print Books formed the Ulverscroft Foundation, a registered charity to assist the visually impaired.

The Ulverscroft Group continues to support the work of the Ulverscroft Foundation. In addition, grateful readers of large print books have made donations to the Foundation and some have left legacies. Over the years the Ulverscroft Foundation has provided several million pounds to projects to help the visually impaired. The Ulverscroft Foundation receives almost daily requests for assistance, and their number is growing.



Left: a young patient awaiting eye treatment



Right: an eye examination in progress

Ophthalmic Research at Universities

Several years ago, when the Ulverscroft Foundation began supporting ophthalmic research, this was carried out in only a few University medical schools in the United Kingdom. It became clear that if more research centres could be funded, each with its specialised areas of expertise, more eye conditions could be studied and suitable treatments devised.

The Ulverscroft Foundation has provided funds for the Departments of Ophthalmology at several universities conducting teaching and research. This research has led to some groundbreaking advances in the treatment of eye diseases, and these techniques and treatments are now used throughout the world.

Medical Facilities and Equipment

The Ulverscroft Foundation provides money to improve eye-treatment clinics. A recent recipient of this help was the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children in London. The Foundation paid for the establishment there of the Ulverscroft Children's Eye Unit, which provides a range of modern treatment facilities. The Unit also includes attractive waiting and play areas, so that children's visits to the hospital can be as pleasant and stress-free as possible for them and their carers.



Above: The waiting area of the Ulverscroft Children's Eye Unit
Right: Playtime in the Eye Unit



The Ulverscroft Foundation has provided funds to assist ophthalmologists from the United Kingdom who wished to work in developing countries. By practising alongside the local medical staff, they have been able to demonstrate new techniques for the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases.



Eye examinations in developing countries



Public Libraries

Many public libraries have received financial support from the Ulverscroft Foundation for projects to assist the visually impaired. One example of this help has been the provision of computerised reading machines for use by visually impaired people. These invaluable machines read aloud the text on a paper or book inserted into them, thus giving people the ability to "read" printed documents and even their own private correspondence. The Ulverscroft Foundation also funds the purchase of reading aids. In cases where a library's funding has been inadequate, the Foundation has sometimes provided both large print and talking books free of charge.

The Ulverscroft Foundation concerns itself with the needs of visually impaired people who are housebound. It has funded mobile libraries to deliver large print books and audio tapes to people in their homes. These services also play an important role in providing the housebound with a social link with the rest of the community.



Left: Stockport Libraries Books on Wheels Service. Right: Doreen Marshall receives the Ulverscroft Certificate of Merit for her services to housebound and visually impaired people. Below: mobility aids demonstrated for library users



Above left: The latest in large print books and audio (talking) books from the Ulverscroft Group



Ulverscroft has found that many of its large print titles are bought by people who had first borrowed them from the library, and wanted a copy of their own or for a friend.

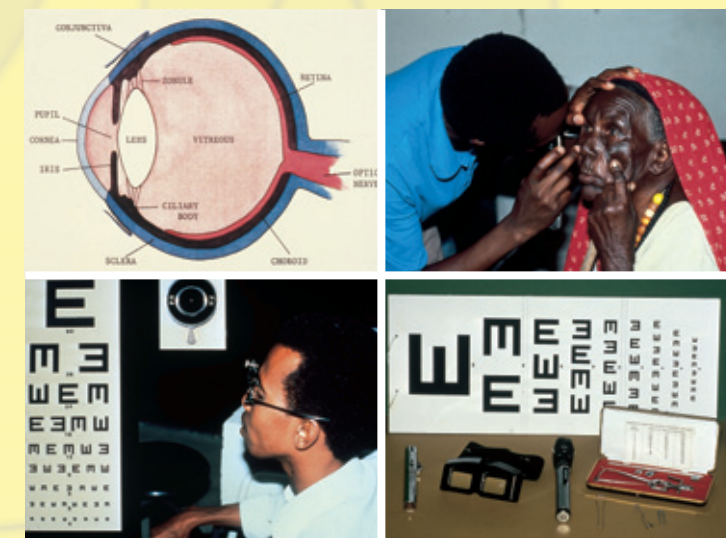
More recently, Ulverscroft has expanded its activities to include the production, sale and distribution of talking books – audio cassettes and compact disc versions of books, both abridged and unabridged. These talking books find a ready market not only among the visually impaired, but also among fully sighted people requiring a distraction perhaps from some boring aspect of their work.

Eye Diseases: Solving the Problems



Above: a line of African blind patients being led into the operatingroom

Having established Ulverscroft as a commercial company, Frederick Thorpe realised there was much more he could do to help the visually impaired. Although his large-print books were well received, they did not of course resolve people's medical problems. When he investigated further, he found that many eye clinics in the United Kingdom were short of funds. They often functioned with inadequate facilities, and were unable to purchase the specialised equipment necessary to examine patients and diagnose and treat their eye diseases.



Above: examples of slides used to teach ophthalmic students