

System and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

MAY
2026

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

I hope those of who went to hear the talk by Seven Trent enjoyed it as much as I did. It was very enlightening and full of information about how to cut our water consumption.

Fast approaching is our AGM where there are a few vacancies we would like to fill. I hope you have all received your email or letter detailing how to apply for a vacancy.

Clive

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I have been producing the newsletter for some time now, with publication scheduled for the beginning of each month. However, I have now become involved with some new activities that happen to fall around the end of the month and beginning of the next. So, the schedule will change with effect from the June edition onwards. Requests for items will go out around 30th of the month, for publication around 10th of the next month. However, I would remind you that you can send articles to me at any time, you don't need to wait for that message.

As I don't send out the newsletter related emails myself, the precise date they go out may vary depending on the availability of those who can do this for me.

This month, IT issues delayed the invitation for copy going out. Whether this is the reason for the lack of group news is unclear, but it's disappointing that the only such news this month relates to one group other than my own.

I appreciate that some groups are not involved with activities that readily generate newsworthy items, and groups that do, won't have such news every month. But I can only include what you send to me. Group news doesn't have to come from the group organiser; it can come from anyone in a group – just check with the organiser to avoid duplication.

We have some new members as a result of the Open Day; the Newsletter is one way they can find out what our groups do. Even if your group is currently full, that can quickly change. So please let me have more items for the June edition.

If you didn't see the email inviting items for the May newsletter, I would remind you that it contained this notice - It has come to the attention of the Executive Committee that not everyone realises that our website is NOT a member only site. Whilst the membership database cannot be seen by the public, nor can details of who belongs to which groups, everything else can. That includes the Newsletters. If you supply your email address or telephone number in connection with newsletter items, you do so on the understanding that you accept they will be visible to anyone who accesses the website.

I would add that very few people have had their email addresses or phone numbers published. It has usually been in connection with Declutter Den, or a group.

I'm always open to suggestions for subjects you'd like to see covered – just contact me email: sadu3aed@gmail.com

WE WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW

THE AGM IS COMING

The AGM will be held at the start of the June General Meeting on Wednesday June 10th. Those who have attended before will know that it isn't usually a lengthy affair.

There will be some elections this year as we have vacancies on the Executive Committee, and we have people who have been co-opted onto it during the last year, who need to be endorsed to carry on in post next year.

Full details are sent out by email, or by post to those members who are not on email. The first of these may have arrived by the time you read this.

NB - YOU MAY NEED TO CHECK YOUR SPAM/JUNK MAIL FOR THE AGM MESSAGES

We have no control of what gets delivered by your email provider and whether it goes into your main inbox and what gets diverted to spam/junk mail.

If you can't find the initial AGM message, you can contact our membership secretary email: saduzamembers@gmail.com

HAVE A QUERY? WANT TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE?

Occasionally, some members (or potential members) may prefer to speak to someone about an aspect of our u3a, rather than locating an email address or looking on our website.

So, we now have a contact number for Syston & District u3a, which is:



0300 102 1381

At the moment, this number goes through to Steve Kenney's (Webmaster) mobile phone, and if he is unable to answer the query, then he can advise who to contact.

OPEN DAY 2026

Well, it had been 3 years since our last Open Day, so the time had come to sort out the materials and get organising!

The event took place on 16th April in the lounge of the Grosvenor Snooker Club. The aim of the day was to promote Syston and District u3a, showcasing the wide variety of groups, talks and activities available to anyone not in full-time employment. As a bonus, anyone joining for the first time between April and August could do so for a reduced fee of £10.00.



26 group leaders were available to demonstrate or discuss what their groups were about. There was also information regarding possible future groups and events (just waiting for members to come forward and offer a little of their time - please!!), and details of speakers for the next few monthly meetings.

Of all the non-members attending, approximately 35% joined on the day or online afterwards. 56 people expressed an interest in joining a group. If you didn't come along, details of all groups, events and future speakers will be available at the next monthly meeting or on the website.

Thanks to Jill Kempton-Hayes for helping to set up on the night before, to all group leaders attending and to the Grosvenor Staff for their hospitality.

Lyn & Dave Palmer

Thanks to you both for organising this - Ed

GROUP NEWS



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Potential New Group Wind and String

Do you have a guitar you used to play?
Do you have a clarinet you used to play
or any other wind instrument?
Do you fancy getting together to make
beautiful music?

We have a member who is keen to start a new
group where everyone can play together for
their enjoyment.

Please email me at the below address and I
will pass on your details

sadu3agroups@gmail.com

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Our session this month did not go as planned. 6 of 9 PCs were out of action. The library made a small room available to us free of charge to save the day. We ended up sharing stories and looking at options for people to take their family history research forward.

We currently have 4 members who are beginners. Over the next few months, the plan is to go over the basics for part of our session. Some of our more seasoned members have said they would like to use these as a refresher. If you have been thinking about starting to

research your family, now may be the time to learn how to do this. If we get additional interest, we will consider having some separate sessions for "newbies".

Please email juliedjohnson@yahoo.com for more information, or if you would like to join us.

LITTER PICKING GROUP



Syston and District U3A litter pickers, litter picking around East Goscote this morning. 10 bags collected, 2 mats, cardboard and a gas canister, all reported for collection using 'Love clean streets' app.

Next month meeting Thursday May 21st, 10am Thurmaston village, outside of The Harrow pub.

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

We met for a presentation on the story of Auster Aircraft, which used several sites in the area during WW2. I'm hoping that other members may be able to help pinpoint where some of those sites actually were. Even where street names are given, the exact locations in Syston are not.

En-Tous-Cas - various

Rice's Shoe Factory, St Peter's St – Main Assembly Shop

Wadd's Garage – Tube Store

Factory Brookside – Experimental Shop

Ward's Works Broad Street - Woodworking

If you know where any of these were please contact me – email:

juliedjohnson@yahoo.com

This Auster Magazine clipping tells a tale about the shoe factory

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“ IN THE rush of wartime to fulfil the first Auster contract for the RAF, the former Taylor-craft Aircraft Company, at Rearsby, took over a boot and shoe factory, in Broad Street, Syston.

About four weeks after production had started, there was a complaint from a woman next door that the chickens in her backyard had turned green. Upon investigation, it was found her whole garden was green.

Someone had forgotten to find out what was the other side of the wall when paint spray extractor fans were fitted.

NEW GROUP IDEAS

If you have any ideas for a new group, please contact Barbara Sargeant our groups co-ordinator sadu3agroups@gmail.com or speak to her at one of our monthly general meetings.

Alternatively contact her assistant Angie Baker email sadu3agroupsasst@gmail.com

Acting as a group organiser doesn't have to be onerous, it doesn't have to be down to just one person, and it doesn't mean you have to organise everything the group does.

You can find more information on our groups via this link [Groups | Syston & District](#)



IDEAS - One Off Events

1. Chocolate making
2. Spring hanging basket/Christmas table decoration making
3. Dry or wet felting
4. Quilting
5. Curry night
6. Sedgeway riding
7. Disco night
8. Cruise on the Rutland Belle
9. Archery
10. Air rifle shooting
11. Go Karting
12. Quad biking
13. Foraging experience - Charnwood Foraging
14. Trips out - eg Birmingham Jewellery Quarter
15. Willow weaving
16. Alpaca walking
17. Cross bow shooting
18. Kayaking

Please contact me Angie Baker
at the the below email address
If you are interested in any of
these suggestions or you have any other
ideas and are willing to organise
the event with my help
sadu3aevents@gmail.com



One Off Event

Needle Felting Workshop

An introduction to the basics, a chance to make something and to have fun. All equipment is provided.



An example of what can be made but if you fancy something different that is OK!!

**Date to be Confirmed with
enough People Interested**

8 people maximum - **Price approx £10
with an additional cost of £3 to make two items**

email Angie Baker - sadu3aevents@gmail.com



One Off Event
New to the U3A
A Canal Boat Trip
on the River Soar



Date Tuesday June 2nd

12 people maximum - Price approx £15

email Angie Baker - sadu3aevents@gmail.com

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One Off Event



Do You Fancy **another**

Free Swim

at The Charnwood Leisure

Centre



One for the Diary!!

Date Tuesday 7th July

30 people maximum, 9.30am until 10.30am

email Angie Baker - sadu3aevents@gmail.com

WHAT'S ON NEXT

GENERAL MEETINGS

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks usually start 10.30am
Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am

Wed, May 13 at 10:30 AM

MAY - HEARTLINK, Children Charity



Wed, Jun 10 at 10:30 AM

JUNE - VAL - Voluntary Action Leicestershire

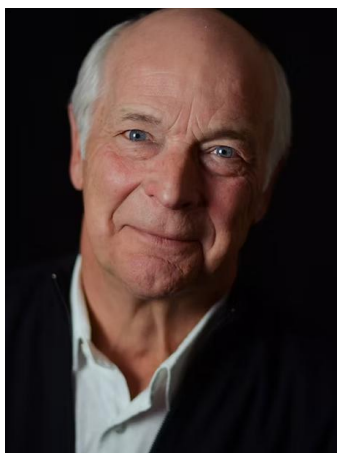
Syston Community Centre



Helping people change
their lives for the better

My Extra Life – Mike Newbold

Wednesday 8 Jul @ 10.30 AM
Syston Community Centre



Whether it's a television studio or film location, "on set" is an exciting place to be.

Being a supporting artist (the official name for an extra) is an interesting life, with no two days being the same.

They can be long days with lots of waiting around, sometimes in tough conditions on location.

It provides a modest income, some great adventures and some wonderful stories.

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

u3a TALKS



The Call of the Wild: Stories from the Frontiers of Exploration

Join polar explorer and expedition leader Alex McNeil for an illustrated talk drawn from nearly two decades across the Arctic & Antarctica.

Tuesday 12 May at 2pm.

Free – online via Zoom



AI news: May

How can AI help us to maintain our independence?

Explore how AI can help you stay independent as you age, with practical tools, future insights, and guidance from the u3a AI team.

Friday 22 May at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom



Flight inspirations aviation meeting: June

The advent of the heavy bomber: inception to the late 1930s

From fragile early aircraft to powerful WWII bombers, explore how aerial warfare—and the bombs themselves—evolved in just three decades.

Tuesday 2 June at 10am

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

More talks can be found [here](#)

u3a members visit the House of Lords

The u3a movement took a step in raising its profile in Westminster last week, as u3a members from across the UK attended a special invitation visit to the House of Lords. The event formed part of the Third Age Trust's ongoing work to ensure that u3a expertise, particularly around positive ageing, is heard by policymakers in both Houses.

Each region and nation of the UK was allocated two places for the visit, so that a wide spread of the movement was represented.

We began the day with a guided tour of the Palace of Westminster, a truly magnificent part of our architectural heritage that represents the four nations of the UK.

After the tour, we gathered in the Attlee Room for a Q&A session with four members of the House of Lords. Representing a mix of political parties, the members all had an interest in lifelong learning, education and housing.

One continues to work part-time in a London state school. They wanted everyone to be encouraged to develop their full potential no matter their age.



u3a members listening to members of the House of Lords

During this session, we gained a deeper understanding of the role of the House of Lords and its 800 members. We learnt that the second chamber is needed to give proposed parliamentary bills proper scrutiny. Many peers play substantial roles on committees and support research teams. It was really interesting to hear how political change comes about through individuals coming together to act.

u3a Chair, Allan Walmsley, speaking at the u3a and House of Lords panel event

Over a sandwich lunch, we had more opportunities to talk to Lords, Baronesses, and the HoL Comms Team. Peers showed strong awareness of lifelong learning and enthusiasm for the work of u3a.

We then watched members of the House of Lords ask questions to the Government. It was a very civilised affair covering a range of interesting topics.



Next steps

During the day, a number of next steps were discussed. One proposal was the possibility of a House member becoming an ambassador for u3a in Westminster. This would enable u3a to contribute expertise in a range of ways on topics relating to positive ageing, nonformal learning, social isolation and other relevant policy areas.

It was a very positive, productive day, but shouldn't be seen as a standalone event. Instead, it's the beginning of a deeper relationship between u3a and Parliament. Strengthening this connection could help ensure the voices and experiences of older adults are better represented in national policy discussions.

The event certainly raised the profile of the u3a. Thanks to Harriet Radermacher and the u3a Policy Team for their work in supporting the event, and to the HoL Comms Team for their welcome and organisation.

For all of us who attended, the day was a classic example of learning and living and well worth the early start!

For me, it was a great privilege to share with others what the u3a movement is about and what it means to me and to others.

Interest Groups Online Groups

Interest Groups Online offers a variety of peer led, online learning opportunities for its subscribers.

As part of the u3a movement, members generously volunteer their time and share their knowledge, skills and experience with the members in their groups. Some groups are more interactive than others, with an expectation that all members take it in turns to present their knowledge. If in doubt, give it a go. The more groups you try, the more likely you'll find the one you love.

To join a group, you must first be a paid member of Interest Groups Online. Annual membership is £12, covering the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

I have just joined the IGO for its new year and signed up for several groups. I've had to go on the waiting list for some – although I came off one of them in a matter of a few days. It's early days yet, but I consider £12 good value. There are a wide variety of groups, from Latin to Classic Prog Rock, Egyptology to Opera Appreciation and everything in between. *Ed*

You can find out more [here](#)

A local study you might be interested in getting involved with -



Participants Needed for NHS Study

We are seeking volunteers over the age of 55 years old to take part in a research study, looking at visual function and eye health.

The purpose of the research is to develop visual assessments that monitor changes in eye health associated with age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

What's involved?

Testing will take place at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Testing involves one 40-minute testing session, which includes:

- An optical coherence tomography (OCT) scan of the retina in one eye.
- Completing four visual assessments.

Optional: You can volunteer to complete one 15-minute visual assessment, on a separate date, completed online and from home.

Who can take part?

- Adults over the age of 55 years old
- with no history of eye disease (e.g., AMD, cataract, glaucoma)

Compensation

You will be compensated for your time and any travel costs you may incur.

Contact

If interested, please contact [Michael Hisaund](mailto:mh486@le.ac.uk) at mh486@le.ac.uk or [0116 252 5855](tel:01162525855) for more information or to sign up.

Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Thank you for supporting clinical vision research!

SPONSOR REFERENCE: 1076

Visual assessments for the enhanced monitoring of macular disease

Recruitment Text_v1.1_22/07/2025

IRAS: 352853

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NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



Just click on an image to take you to the website (if there is one) with more information and links to book a place.



EMERGENCY SERVICES DAY

17th May

Abbey Pumping Station Museum, Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX

[Book now](#)



HIDDEN HISTORIES: EDWARDIAN LEICESTER

24th May

Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, 53 New Walk, Leicester, LE1 7EA

[Book now](#)

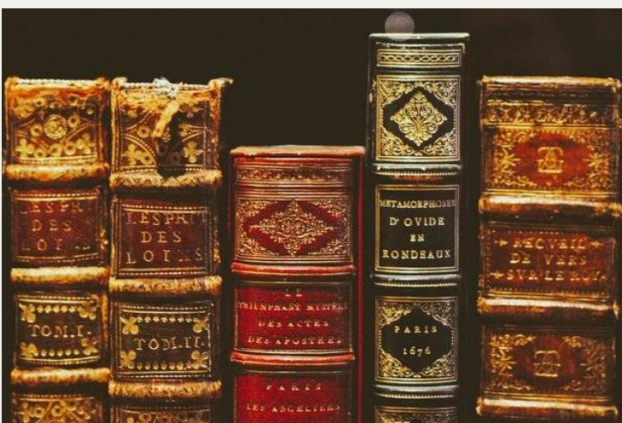


1645 - THE SIEGE OF LEICESTER BY MATHEW MORRIS.

26th May

The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ

[Book now](#)



KNIGHTS IN BATTLE

30th May - 31st May

Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Ambion Lane, Sutton Cheney,
Nuneaton, CV13 0AD

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Sir John de Woodford, my 20× great-grandfather, lived at a time when knighthood still meant horses, armour, and real military obligation. As I pieced together his life, I found myself wondering how that world turned into the one where knighthood is an honour rather than a profession. That question led directly to the wider history of knighthood explored in the next article.

From Warhorse to Honour Roll: How Knighthood Shifted from Battlefield Service to Civilian Distinction

When we picture a medieval knight, most of us imagine a mounted warrior in armour, sworn to defend his lord and uphold the chivalric code. That image is rooted in historical reality: for several centuries, knighthood was not an honour but a profession. Yet today, knighthood is awarded to actors, scientists, charity leaders, sportspeople, and community volunteers. The journey from one to the other is a long and fascinating story of social change.

Knighthood in the Early Medieval World

In the early Middle Ages, a knight was simply a mounted warrior. The Latin *miles* or French *chevalier* described a man who fought on horseback, usually in the service of a local lord. There was no central authority deciding who could call himself a knight.

In this early period:

- A lord or military commander might recognise a man as a knight by equipping him or granting him a horse.
- Some men effectively made themselves knights by acquiring the necessary equipment and entering a lord's service.
- There was no formal ceremony — knighthood was a practical role, not a title of honour.

This is the world in which many early knightly ancestors lived: a world where status came from function, not ritual.

The Rise of the Dubbing Ceremony

By the 11th and 12th centuries, knighthood began to take on a more formal shape. The ceremony of “dubbing” emerged — originally a simple act of girding a man with a sword, later developing into a more elaborate rite.

At this stage, several people could legitimately create a knight:

- A noble lord, who knighted his own squires
- A king, whose dubbings carried special prestige
- Any knight, because it was accepted that a knight could make another knight

This flexibility is important. Knighthood was not yet a royal monopoly. On the eve of battle, a respected knight or commander might dub a promising young warrior on the spot, recognising bravery or readiness

for combat. These battlefield knighthoods were often quick and practical, without the full ceremonial trappings.

The Decline of the Military Knight

From the 14th century onwards, the world that had created the knight began to change dramatically.

- **New weapons** such as the longbow, pike, and later gunpowder reduced the dominance of armoured cavalry.
- **Professional standing armies** replaced feudal levies.
- **Feudalism weakened**, and landholding became less tied to military service.
- **Social mobility increased**, allowing wealthier commoners to rise without needing a knightly title.

As the military role declined, so did the need for large numbers of battlefield knights.

Monarchs Tighten Control

By the late medieval period, kings increasingly sought to control the prestige of knighthood. The title became more closely associated with noble birth, courtly behaviour, and royal favour.

- Casual knighting by lesser knights was discouraged.
- Royal ceremonies became more elaborate.
- Orders of chivalry, such as the **Order of the Garter** (1348), became exclusive circles of honour.

Knighthood was shifting from a **military qualification** to a **symbol of status and loyalty**.

Knighthood in the Modern Era

By the 18th and 19th centuries, knighthood had become entirely ceremonial. The British honours system developed into the form we recognise today, with awards given for:

- Public and community service
- Achievements in the arts and sciences
- Charitable work
- Contributions to national life

The ceremony still includes the traditional sword-tapping on the shoulder — a deliberate echo of medieval dubbing — but the meaning has changed completely. Modern knights and dames are honoured for service, not summoned for battle.

What Has Changed — and What Hasn't

Although the role has transformed, a few threads of continuity remain:

- The ritual survives, even if the duties do not.
- The title still carries a sense of prestige and public recognition.
- Knighthood remains one of the most visible links between Britain's medieval past and its modern honours system.

At the same time, today's honours are far more inclusive. Women may be appointed as Dames, and foreign nationals can receive honorary knighthoods.

A Link Back to the Past

This broader history provides the backdrop to the story of one of my own medieval ancestors — a knight who lived in a world where the title meant armour, horses, and real military obligation. His story appears in the next article, offering a glimpse into the life of a man for whom knighthood was not an honour bestowed, but a duty lived.

Sir John de Woodford: A Knight's Journey from Wiltshire to Leicestershire

Historical tradition paints Sir John de Woodford as a young knight from Wiltshire who arrived in Leicestershire, bought the manor¹ of Brentingby in 1317/18, and married Alice Prest, daughter of a wealthy Melton wool merchant. Some versions go further and claim that Alice's father, Walter Prest, actually financed Sir John's purchase of Brentingby. It is a neat story — but the dates and the social realities don't quite fit. When we look more closely at the records, a more interesting and more believable picture emerges.

The Prest Puzzle

The traditional version assumes an early marriage and a very generous father-in-law bankrolling an obscure newcomer. The records suggest otherwise.

Walter Prest the younger appears at the height of his business activity in the 1340s, while his own father is still active in 1338. If Alice had married as early as 1316, she would have needed to be born around 1295–1300 — which would push both Walters back into improbably early birth dates. It would also make Walter the younger a man in his sixties during the busiest decade of his career. Medieval wool merchants operated in a fast-moving, high-risk world; they were not usually elderly men.

Alice's death in the 1330s, after producing only two known children, also suggests a later marriage than the traditional story allows.

Then there is the question of money and status. Walter Prest was, in modern terms, a multimillionaire. His other daughter, Lettice, married into the powerful Beler family. It is hard to imagine him marrying his elder daughter to an unknown, newly arrived knight and then paying for that knight to buy a manor. Wealthy merchants were careful about alliances; they married their daughters into families who could protect their interests, not into speculative ventures.

All this makes it very unlikely that Walter Prest financed Sir John's purchase of Brentingby. So, if the Prest marriage did not bring Sir John to Leicestershire, what did?

A Knight on the Move

The answer lies with two great families: the **Mowbrays** and the **Zouches**. Both held land in Leicestershire and also in Wiltshire, near Salisbury — exactly where Sir John is said to have come from. Both families had strong military traditions and regularly recruited young men from across their estates to serve in their retinues.

It is entirely plausible that John de Woodford, a younger son of a Wiltshire gentleman, entered the service of one of these families as a trainee knight. By the 1310s he would likely have been fighting in the Scottish campaigns, gaining experience, reputation, and eventually knighthood. When he appears in the Brentingby purchase record in 1317/18, he is already styled **Sir**.

How Did He Afford a Manor?

Buying Brentingby required a hundred marks — a substantial sum. Military service offered opportunities beyond wages. Knights could earn money through ransom, booty, in addition to regular pay during campaigns. A capable knight could accumulate significant funds.

But money alone was not enough. A man could not simply arrive in a new county and buy a manor. He needed acceptance — and that meant the approval of the local power structure.

Brentingby was held from the Mowbrays by the Zouches. A young knight acting on his own could not have purchased it without their consent, nor could he have held it for decades without remaining in their good graces. Sir John's successful establishment in Leicestershire strongly suggests that he was already part of the group of fighting men who served the Mowbrays or the Zouches.

Marriage, Family, and Local Standing

Sir John married Alice Prest at some point in the 1320s. Their younger son, William, was born in 1328, so their elder son Walter must have been born earlier. Alice died in the 1330s, leaving Sir John with two sons and a valuable connection to the Prest family.

Sir John continued to play an active role in local feudal life. In 1352 he performed homage to Sir William Zouche, confirming that he still held Brentingby personally and continued to fulfil the duties expected of a landholder under Zouche–Mowbray lordship.

In 1357, Walter — Sir John's elder son — received property in Melton Mowbray that had belonged to his maternal grandfather, Walter Prest. The grant was carefully arranged to pass to William if Walter died without heirs. This document shows Walter alive and unmarried in 1357, and it hints at something more: William had already married a local heiress, Joan Brabazon, while Walter had not. This may suggest that Walter was not expected to inherit — perhaps due to injury or ill health, possibly from military service.

War Stories and Family Tradition

Later tradition credits Sir John with fighting at Crécy, the siege of Calais, and Poitiers — the three major battles of the Hundred Years War. His name does not appear in surviving muster rolls, but as a long-serving knight in the Mowbray or Zouche military following, such service is entirely possible. These stories may reflect a remembered military reputation rather than documented fact.

A Second Marriage and Securing the Line

After Alice's death, Sir John remarried. His second wife, Agnes, appears only in a 1362 lawsuit in which she claimed her dower — proof that she was his lawful widow. No children are known from this marriage.

Between 1357 and 1362, Walter died unmarried and without heirs. This left William as the sole surviving son. The sudden narrowing of the male line created a moment of vulnerability. The 14th century was a cutthroat world, inheritance could be challenged on the flimsiest of grounds. In 1362, Sir John acted decisively by transferring his estates to William while he was still alive. He likely died not long afterwards.

A Life of Service and Strategy

Sir John de Woodford's story is not one of sudden fortune or a rich father-in-law buying him a manor. It is the story of a younger son who made his own way: first through military service, then through the trust of powerful lords, and finally through the careful establishment of a family foothold in a new county. He arrived in Leicestershire as an outsider, but he left it as the founder of a local gentry line that endured long after his death.

His life shows how a determined man could rise in the turbulent world of the fourteenth century — not by luck, but by skill, loyalty, and the ability to seize opportunities when they appeared.

Note

¹In medieval terms, a manor wasn't just a house. It was the whole estate: the farmland, the people who lived and worked on it, and the rights and responsibilities that went with running the place. Owning a manor meant you were part of the local governing structure, not just a landowner.

POETRY CORNER

The Old Knight — Charles Kingsley

***When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away!
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.***

***When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young***

***When all the world is new, lad,
And all the leaves are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away!
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day***



The Knight's Tomb By Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?
Where may the grave of that good man be?—
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
Is gone,—and the birch in its stead is grown.—
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust;—
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

The Song of the Sword — Leigh Hunt

***The sword sings on the warrior's thigh,
And flashes in the sun;
It tells of deeds that cannot die,
Of battles lost and won.
It speaks of honour, stern and high,
Of loyalty and fame;
Of hearts that would not stoop to fly,
And lives without a stain.***

***Oh, bright the sword, and true the sword,
That knightly hearts have borne;
And dear the cause, and high the word,
That keeps its edge unshorn.***

On the next page are extracts from a quite long and amusing poem of a knight's thwarted attempts to seduce a young lady

The Baffled Knight, or Lady's Policy

The knight was riding another day,
With cloak and hat and feather:
He met again with that lady gay,
Who was angling in the river.

"Now, lady faire, I've met with you,
You shall no more escape me;
Remember, how not long agoe
You falsely did intrap me."

The lady blushed scarlet red,
And trembled at the stranger:
"How shall I guard my maidenhead
From this approaching danger?"

He from his saddle down did light,
In all his rich attyer;
And cryed, "As I am a noble knight,
I do thy charms admyer."

He took the lady by the hand,
Who seemingly consented;
And would no more disputing stand:
She had a plot invented.

"Looke yonder, good sir knight, I pray,
Methinks I now discover
A riding upon his dapple gray,
My former constant lover."

On tip-toe peering stood the knight,
Fast by the rivers brink-a;
The lady pusht with all her might:
"Sir knight, now swim or sink-a."

O'er head and ears he plunged in,
The bottom faire he sounded;
Then rising up he cried amain,
"Help, helpe, or else I'm drownded"

"Now, fare-you-well, sir knight, adieu!
You see what comes of fooling:
That is the fittest place for you;
Your courage wanted cooling."

He rode unto her father's house,
Which every side was moated
The lady heard his furious vows,
And all his vengeance noted.

Thought shee, "Sir Knight, to quench your rage,
Once more I will endeavour:
This water shall your fury 'swage,
Or else it shall burn for ever."

Then faining penitence and feare,
She did invite a parley:
"Sir knight, if you'll forgive me heare,
Henceforth I'll love you dearly.

"My father he is now from home,
And I am all alone, sir:
Therefore a-cross the water come;
And I am all your own, sir."

"False maid, thou canst no more deceive;
I scorn the treacherous bait-a:
If thou would'st have me thee believe,
Now open me the gate a."

"The bridge is drawn, the gate is bared,
My father he has the keys, sir;
But I have for my love prepar'd
A shorter way and easier.

"Over the moate I've laid a plank
Full seventeen feet in measure:
Then step a-cross to the other bank,
And there we'll take our pleasure."

These words she had no sooner spoke,
But strait he came tripping over:
The plank was saw'd, it snapping broke;
And sous'd the unhappy love