

Friar Tuck

Friar Tuck was born Bartholomew Tuck in 1154 in the Meadows in Nottingham. Not a particularly religious child – he would often be found wandering along the embankment singing or tending to the flora and fauna. His father Bartholomew Tuck the Elder was a servant to Lord Fitzwalter, Maid Marian's father, and the family later moved to a small holding in Bilborough near to what is now Oakfield School.

As a boy, he was sent to live at the monastic school at Lenton Priory where he learned Latin and the bible, but again spent more time in the nearby deer park at Wollaton and tending to the bees that were kept in hives in the park's orchards. After leaving the priory school, Tuck was posted to the Church of St John in Bulwell, where he gained a taste for beer and for playing football (often quite aggressively with the locals). Tuck famously helped the brewers of Leen Side in New Basford create their special 'Old October' - a dark-brown ale made with the special waters of the river between New Basford and Whitemoor. This strong beer would put even Little John on his back if he overdid it! Tuck was at the Golden Arrow competition on what is now the Forest Rec, selling Old October, when he first heard of Robin's good deeds – sharing his winnings from the archery tournament with those in need in Hyson Green.

Tuck first met Robin after he had been outlawed in St Ann's, where Tuck was the controller of the clean water supply – St Ann's Well. Robin tried to outsmart Tuck to access the well to get water for him and his horse without paying the small tithe that allowed the water to remain clean. Tuck knew Robin was trying to swindle him so knocked him out and tied him up – when Robin came round and Tuck realised who Robin was, Tuck himself paid Robin's tax from his own pocket in thanks to all he done for the needy in Nottingham.

From this point, Tuck became one of Robin's key informants, spies and (most importantly) distractions – the loud and attention grabbing Friar could distract the Sherriff and his supporters, while Robin and his companions would take from the treasury and give it back to the people of Nottingham. If that failed, Tuck could always be trusted to set his loyal bees on the Sherriff's bailiffs until they returned, covered in stings, to the Castle.

In 1216, with the help of Camellia Proudshears, a Sherwood botanist who grew herbs near what is now Woodthorpe Park, it was Tuck who snuck into Newark Castle and poisoned the wicked King John. The evil John died the next night, clutching his stomach!

After Robin's death and subsequent pardon of all of Robin's companions after King John's death, John continued to live, work and brew beer in Nottingham, later moving to St Mary's Clifton, near what is now NTU, where he kept bees and died in 1223.