

Maid Marian

Maid Marian Fitzwalter was born in 1173 at the old Bilborough Hall, which is now Harvey Hadden Leisure Centre. It was Marian's family who had commissioned the building of St Martins church in Bilborough, near where they lived, to be built – a project which Little John had worked on a site labourer.

Marian was a free spirit. Rejecting her family's status and wealth, she spent more time with the regular folk in Bilborough or in the nearby deer park at Wollaton than with the landed aristocracy. It is during this time she met a young Robin, who was living in the area. They remained friends whilst Robin was away during the Crusades. It is during this time that Marian was promised to be married to Eustachius de Moreton, Lord of Wollaton and Algarthorpe (in modern day Basford). Marian was not happy with the match and broke off the engagement, waiting for Robin to return. Eustachius, unhappy that Marian had broken it off, challenged her to a horse race from Algarthorpe to Woodthorpe, the finish line now where the house in Woodthorpe Park stands. Marian won easily and the chided Eustachius returned to Basford.

When Robin returned, the two fell in love and she quickly became an important ally in the fight against the evil Sherriff. She was an able spy and lockpick who would help Robin and his outlaw companions whilst still appearing to be a lady of the court. She could pass through Nottingham and its Castle as she pleased, gleaning useful information.

Marian received many the scornful look as she cheered on the disguised Robin during the Golden Arrow competition on what is now the Forest Recreation ground and remained to see Robin and his companions share the spoils of his win with the people of Hyson Green.

Marian was the person who warned Will that the Sheriff was coming to Clifton to steal the winter stores and it was Marian that Robin had come to try and meet when he was captured at St Mary's church in the Lace Market. Marian was also the "inside man" on his escape after this capture – unlocking the postern gate for Will, Mia and Little John to enter by.

Marian had to disguise herself so she could marry Robin in secret. With the help of Will Scarlett, they hid-out in a cottage in Top Valley opposite what is now Southglade Park before riding up to Edwinstowe to be wed!

After Robin's death and subsequent pardon of all of Robin's companions after King John's death, it was Marian who granted Little John the land in the Meadows to grow his crocuses – the land had been left to her by her father. Marian moved to London, then to France not long after the death of King John as an envoy and ambassador for the new king, Henry.

She died in 1238 and is buried in the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Little Dunmow, Essex.