

Archibald Frank Tester (1882-1925)

Character in the Sherborne Pageant:

Pipe, Episode 7.

Episode 7:

Maid Marian appears, in a gown of russet and Lincoln green, her nut-brown hair adrift in the breeze. Led by her and Robin Hood, a merry troop of damsels with their swains now combine in the gayest of Morris dances. The men with ashen staves, the damsels with wreathes of ivy and flowers, intertwine in a charming dance: while a rustic musician, perched on a barrel, keeps time with pipe and tabor to the old English melody sung by a Dramatic Chorus in Lincoln green; a diminutive jester plies his impudent bladder; a benevolent Dragon stalks solemnly and ludicrously around; and Friar Tuck, Little John, and two other outlaws, curvet and prance as grotesque hobby-horses, bowing acknowledgments to the rapturous applause that greets this delightful interlude. Robin Hood and his company quit the scene, only to be recalled by the persistent demands of the spectators, who will brook no refusal, for a repetition of their dance, which is accordingly renewed with variations.



Archibald Frank Tester was born in 1882 at Tunbridge Wells, Kent, the only child of John Tester, a draper, and Mary Jane Tester. He was baptised in Tunbridge Wells on 28 May 1882.

He attended the Royal Academy of Music where he was a Silver Medalist both for piano and organ, and was awarded the diploma of A.R.C.O.

1901-1903, organist at Mayfield Parish Church, Sussex.

1903-1915, organist and instructor in piano at Sherborne School, assistant to C.H. Hodgson, Director of Music. He was also in charge of the choral work at the Sherborne School for Girls.

A. F. Tester composed the score for the Sherborne Pageant jointly with Francis Clive Savill Carey, known as Clive Carey (1883-1968), a former pupil of the School who later became famous as an opera producer and folk song collector, with the words by the poet James Rhoades (1841–1923) who had taught at Sherborne School from 1880 to 1892. The Master of Music for the Pageant was the School's Director of Music, Charles Herbert Hodgson (1857-1922).

1915-1919, absent on military service (2nd Lieutenant in the Royal West Kent Regiment; attached to the General Staff, India, where he contracted the illness that led to his complete paralysis and death in 1925).

1919-1922, Director of School Music at Sherborne School.

For three years he lived completely paralysed. He died 4 October 1925, aged 43.