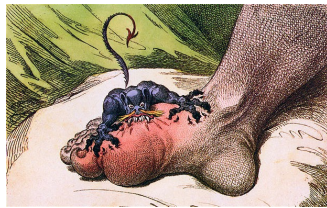


## John Schorne, Pilgrims and the Holy Well

John Schorne came to North Marston in 1282 to become the rector at the church. He was an Augustinian Canon who had been sent by Dunstable Priory, North Marston being one of many churches under the Priory's care. One summer, when the village was suffering a great drought, Schorne struck the ground with his staff and a spring of water gushed out, thus saving the village.



It was believed the water was holy and could cure gout, a painful disease of the joints that typically starts in the foot. In the middle ages, this pain was described as the devil in the boot, and the holy water's curative powers were likened to taking the devil out of the boot, which is how Schorne was shown in images following his death in 1314.

The spring became a holy well, and by the 1400s pilgrimages to North Marston were the third most popular in England. Pilgrims brought great wealth to the church. In today's values, the annual income rose to over two and a half million pounds.



Pilgrims visiting the shrine wore special badges like this one showing Schorne with the devil being drawn from a boot.

Schorne's bones were moved to St George's Chapel, Windsor in 1478 but the Holy Well continued to attract pilgrims into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, even King Henry VIII came here twice to seek a cure for his gout.



Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church swept aside the cult of pilgrimages and Schorne's fame came to an end leaving the Holy Well and our richly decorated church as a reminder of this humble man.