

# The Church and Chapels



St Mary's church was greatly enlarged and ornamented in the 15<sup>th</sup> century using money gifted to the church by pilgrims visiting the shrine of John Schorne. At that time, the church was in the care of Dunstable Priory and, like all the other churches in the country, it was a catholic church.

St Mary's Church is the oldest building in the village with parts dating back to the 1100s. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of the Methodist movement, two chapels were built in the village: the Wesleyan Chapel in Schorne Lane (pictured right before renovation) and the Primitive Chapel in Quainton Road (below) which is now a private house.



By the early 1800s, non-conformism was sweeping the country and a church census in 1851 showed that three times as many people in North Marston attended the two village Methodist Churches than attended St Mary's parish church. This picture shows some of the congregation at the Primitive Methodist Chapel which closed for services in the late 1940s.

The Methodist Sunday Schools played a huge role in the lives of hundreds of village children. This picture shows the Wesleyan Sunday School in the early 1900s.



Churches have also been central to many social events over the years, not least of which has been the annual Church Fete. This picture was taken at a Church Fete in the early 1950s.

In the 1990s it was becoming apparent that village congregations could no longer support two churches. In 2004 the Wesleyan Church closed for services and an Ecumenical Partnership was established. All services then took place at St Mary's Church.

