

St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield

MARSTON TIMES

April 2026 stnicholasmarston.org.uk Delivered quarterly Donations welcome

How good are we at celebrating?

After a long period of waiting, do we manage to give as much care and attention to our celebrating as we did to the waiting itself? The discipline of waiting is something with which the Church is very familiar. We practise it regularly, often more intentionally than we realise.

Each December we count down slowly, window by window, chocolate by chocolate, through Advent. For



a maximum of twenty-eight days we wait: waiting to open presents, waiting to gather with family and friends, waiting to finally taste that long-anticipated Christmas dinner and to participate in the annual ritual of declaring, "Oh yes, Brussels sprouts are actually rather lovely." When Christmas Day finally arrives, the Church does not simply rush on. Instead, it sets aside at least twelve

days – and some traditions would say as many as forty – for feasting and celebration. After the long wait, we are encouraged to rejoice and be glad.

The wait for Easter, however, is mightier still. Lent stretches over an impressive forty-six days (six weeks, with Sundays mercifully excluded), marked by fasting, penitence, prayer and self-examination. It is meant to be challenging. The Sundays of Lent offer brief moments of relief, small reminders of joy amid the discipline. Lent begins starkly on Ash Wednesday with those sobering words:

"Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." Good Friday and Holy Saturday are especially bleak, inviting us to sit with loss, silence,



and the apparent hopelessness of death itself. And then—Easter morning dawns. Light breaks in. Candles are lit. Songs of joy replace silence. We celebrate our belief that even death cannot extinguish the light of life. Easter does not last for a single day, or even a single weekend. It unfolds over fifty glorious

days, offering ample time to rejoice and feast after such a long and demanding wait. Yet the question remains: do our celebrations truly reflect the length and depth of our waiting? Do we sustain our joy with the same commitment with which we sustained our discipline?

This pattern reaches far beyond the Church calendar. Much of life is shaped by waiting: waiting for a wedding day, the birth of a child, exam results, healing, or the long-awaited reunion with a dear friend. These periods of anticipation can stretch on for weeks or months, quietly occupying our thoughts and emotions. We know how to wait. It is woven into the rhythms of our lives.



But do we know how to celebrate when the waiting ends?

In a world filled with uncertainty, delay and longing, perhaps Easter invites us to rediscover the discipline of celebration. Not fleeting happiness, but sustained joy. Not a moment, but a season. As we wait, so may we also learn to rejoice—fully, faithfully and for longer than we think we should. So let me offer these words of encouragement: let us get into the habit of celebrating



with enthusiasm, to rejoice and to make all that waiting worth it.

Sam

BENEFICE OF MARSTON & ELSFIELD



Further details can be found on our website - stnicholasmarston.org.uk
Or call the office on 01865 580354.

On Wednesdays 9:30am we have Holy Communion & during on Thursdays 5pm Evening Prayer

A Church For Everyone

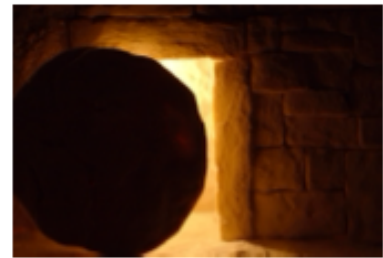


Sunday 5th - EASTER DAY

6am **SUNRISE** Service outside St Nicholas Church.
Followed by Breakfast in the Hall.

10am **Celebration** Holy Communion at St Nicholas Church.
The 10am service is LIVE streamed.

12noon **BCP Holy Communion** at St Thomas in Elsfeld



Sunday 12th April - Second Sunday of Lent

6am Green Church: Spring Bird Walk. Meet at St Nicholas church, followed by Breakfast in the Hall.

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church *with Energy** (Sunday School).
Live Streamed.

Sunday 19th April - Third Sunday of Lent

am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church.

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Messy Church in the Hall.

Sunday 26th April - Fourth Sunday of Lent

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church *with Energy** (Sunday School).
Live Streamed.

Followed by St Nicholas' APCM in the hall. (Sandwiches will be served)

6pm - **Choral Evensong** with the Choir, at St Nicholas' Church

* Contact Helen for information about Energy - familyminister@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Vicar: Skye Denno: 01865 202988
Administrator: Debbie Bailey: 01865 58035
Churchwardens: Judith Piggott: 01865 764693

Justine McCool: 07426 463119
James Plunkett: 07507 885169
Jan Lawrie: 01865 250862

What to quote in April?

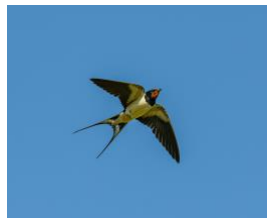
General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales

by Geoffrey Chaucer (a modernised version)

When April's gentle rains have pierced the drought
Of March right to the root, and bathed each sprout
Through every vein with liquid of such power
It brings forth the engendering of the flower;
When Zephyrus too with his sweet breath has blown
Through every field and forest, urging on
The tender shoots, and there's a youthful sun,
His second half course through the Ram now run,
And little birds are making melody
And sleep all night, eyes open as can be
(So Nature pricks them in each little heart),
On pilgrimage then folks desire to start.
The palmers long to travel foreign strands
To distant shrines renowned in sundry lands;
And specially, from every shire's end
In England, folks to Canterbury wend:
To seek the blissful martyr is their will,
The one who gave such help when they were ill.

Nature notes: What to see and hear in April?

April is a busy time of year for garden birds with territories being claimed and nests built. Keep putting out high quality bird food - this is the hungry gap for birds - and fresh water too. Watch out for the first



swallows, arriving after their long journey from sub-Saharan Africa. Why not set your alarm and join us for a spring bird walk on Sunday 12 April, starting at St Nicholas Church at 6 am and

finishing with breakfast in the Church Hall? Look out for the orange-tip butterfly, one of the first of the species to emerge which has spent the winter in its chrysalis.

What to cook in April?

Hot Cross Bun Bread and Butter pudding

Ingredients

3 large free-range eggs
150ml whole milk
150ml double cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
75g golden caster sugar
60g unsalted softened butter, plus extra for greasing
6 hot cross buns (450g) - stale ones work well
100g frozen chocolate chips
30g raspberry jam

Method

Heat oven to 180C/350F/gas4.
Mix together eggs, milk, cream, vanilla extract with 2 tbsps sugar. Whisk until smooth. Grease a 24cm (or thereabouts) ovenproof dish. Slice each bun into 3 horizontal circles. Butter one side of each circle and



place a layer of the bottom circles into the dish, blob on half the jam and pour over one third of the custard mix. Sprinkle with one third of the chocolate chips. Repeat with the middle layer bun circles.

Tear up the buns to fit snugly. Dip the bun tops into the custard mix and place them on the top. Sprinkle on the remaining chocolate chips and any remaining custard. Leave to soak for at least half an hour. (Overnight in the fridge if you like). Sprinkle over the remaining sugar and bake for 25 minutes until set.

Marston WI

Marston Women's Institute meets every second Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm in St Nicholas' Church Hall, Elsfield Road, Old Marston OX3 0PR. Every month we have a different speaker or activity followed by refreshments. We also meet once per month for lunch at a local pub. Other activities include Knit and Natter and outings to local places of interest. New members are always welcome and your first visit is free; there will be a small charge for the next two if you attend as a visitor.

See our website: marstonwi.org



Coffee Pot

Our next Coffee Pot will be on Mon 20 April from 10.30am to 12 noon in the Church Hall. We welcome all who have been bereaved and others who would like to meet more people. For more details please contact Eileen Palayiwa on 01865 725423.

Lunch Club

Lunch Club will be on Friday 24 April. On the menu will be cottage pie and vegetables, icecream, fruit and meringue. Ring Debbie (01865 580354) to book your place.

Donations to St Nicholas church

If you enjoy reading this magazine...if any information it gives proves useful to you...please consider making a financial donation. If you have an attachment to St Nicholas - the ancient centre of our parish - help towards its upkeep would be very much appreciated. We can claim Gift Aid of 25% on any donation up to £30 when you use this QR code.



Beginner Morris Dancers needed for May Day!

Andrew Adams is offering to teach 3 or 4 dances from one village tradition: a couple of sessions lasting 1½ hours. If you'd like to know more, drop Isobel a line and she'll put you in touch.

isobel.mconnan@gmail.com

Benefice of Marston & Elsfield
stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Holy Week & Easter

HOLY MONDAY - 30th March

6:30pm Stations of the Cross at St Nicholas Church
(The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man)

MAUNDY THURSDAY - 2nd April

6:30pm Agape Fish 'n' Chips Supper
at St Thomas Church in Elsfield.
Booking essential (james@checkemian.com)

GOOD FRIDAY - 3rd April

10am Good Friday Liturgy at St Nicholas Church
followed by Hotcross Buns

11:30am Walk of Witness with the Cross
starting at St Nicholas Church

2-3pm Last Hour at the Cross
at St Thomas Church in Elsfield.
(Quiet & contemplative)

EASTER DAY - 4th April

6am Sunrise Service followed
by Breakfast in St Nicholas
Church Hall

10am Celebration Communion
at St Nicholas Church


12noon BCP Holy Communion
at St Thomas Church

St. Nicholas
Marston

'Stations of the Cross'

Holy Monday
30th March 6:30pm
At St Nicholas Church

Traditional & Reflective
The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as human



BENEFICE OF MARSTON & ELSFIELD


APRIL 2 **Maundy Thursday**

6:30PM START
FISH & CHIP SUPPER
& AGAPE COMMUNION
AT ST THOMAS

- Advance booking please
- james@checkemian.com
- & 07507 885169
- Fish and chips £12.50
- Veggie pie and chips £7.50
- Sausage and chips £5.50



St. Nicholas
Marston

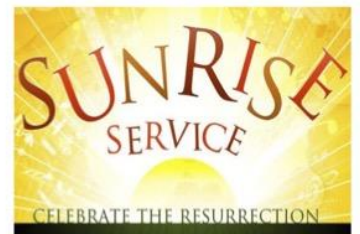


Good Friday Liturgy
10am - 3rd April
Short Service including the Proclamation of the Cross
Followed by Hot Cross buns & Coffee
Leave St Nicholas church at 11:30 For Churches Together Procession of the Cross



5th April
EASTER SUNDAY 2026

6am
Sunrise Service



Starts outside St Nicholas Church
Followed by Breakfast in the Church Hall

10am Family Communion
at St Nicholas Church, Marston

12noon BCP Communion

at St Thomas Church, Elsfield



St. Nicholas
Marston

GREEN CHURCH
Programme for 2026
stnicholasmarston.org.uk

- Sunday 12th April 6am – Spring Bird Walk followed by breakfast
- Sunday 3rd May 10am – Short Celtic Service followed by a Wildlife Walk
- Sunday 12th July 6pm – Pause for Thought Gardening for Wildlife, by Wild Oxfordshire
- Sunday 30th August 10am – Short Celtic Service followed by Weeding the Churchyard
- Saturday 18th October 3pm – Spring Bulb Planting followed by tea and cake in the Church Hall

Outdoor activities are weather permitting. Short Celtic gatherings will be held in the memorial garden with chairs provided.

MARSTON ART DAY

Saturday 16 May 2026
10:00 – 13:00

Mortimer Hall
Oxford Road
Old Marston, OX3 0PH

Come along to Marston Art Day and discover the creativity in our local community.

FREE ENTRY • EVERYONE WELCOME

You'll find: original artwork
 ● prints ● handmade cards ● stars ●
 ● crafts ● family-friendly art activities

More information: marstonmarket.com/art-day

Are you a local artist?
 We're looking for artists to:
 ● display their work
 ● sell art, prints, cards or crafts
 ● run short creative activities or demonstrations



Scan to learn more about the event and how to take part

Supported by Old Marston Parish Council

Poster by Mira Khanna
@PepperAndHue

you are invited to our

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING


Our APCM for



Sunday 26th April

11:45 in the Parish Hall

Sandwiches & refreshments



ALL WELCOME



St Nicholas' Primary and Nursery School

We can offer.....

- Breakfast and Afterschool Club
- Holiday Camps
- We take rising 3s
- Family Support

Nursery & Reception Places Available

CONTACT US TODAY

Phone: 01865 242838
 Email: admin.2352@stnicholasprimarieschool.org.uk
 Website: www.stnicholasprimarieschool.org.uk

MORTIMER HALL

Oxford Road, Old Marston FOR HIRE!

A modern village hall in the centre of Marston, available to hire at weekends. Reasonable rates, and ideal for children's parties, meetings, and community events.

We offer a large hall with a sprung floor (with tables and chairs available for up to 80), a generous reception area, and kitchen facilities (with equipment available on request). It is a fully accessible building, with a small amount of visitor parking and a bus stop immediately outside the hall. We are close to a recreational ground and the Red Lion pub.

For more details about availability, cost, facilities, and contact details, please visit the Mortimer Hall website www.mortimerhall.co.uk where you will also find lots of photographs of the hall.

Mortimer Hall Management Committee are an Oxford Living Wage employer.



MORE THAN JUST A COFFEE MORNING

Join us for a relaxed and friendly Stay & Play session designed especially for parents, carers, and children under 5.



Whether you're popping in for a chat or staying to play, you're very welcome to attend. No need to book just turn up!

EVERY WEDNESDAY
(TERM TIME ONLY)
9am - 10.30am


- Connect with other grown-ups over a cuppa
- Let the little ones explore, play and learn
- Enjoy a safe and supportive space for everyone

St Nicholas' Primary & Nursery School
 T: 01865 242838
 E: admin.2352@stnicholasprimarieschool.org.uk

Please read this!

Old Marston Parish Council elections are on 7 May. If you want to make a difference to our community, have your say about what affects Old Marston and work alongside our local organisations, then consider becoming a parish councillor! No qualification needed: if you are over 18 and live or work in the parish or within 3 miles of it, then you are eligible. For more information contact Tim, our clerk, on 07341 758889 or email clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk or visit our website: www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk


MASTERWORKS OF THE RENAISSANCE



European choral music 1400–1600


*Motets, masses, madrigals and chansons by:
 Dufay, Ockeghem, Victoria, Lobo, Wert, Gabrieli, Passereau, Janequin and others*

OXFORD PRO MUSICA SINGERS



Conductor | Mark Jordan

Exeter College Chapel
 Saturday 18 April 2026 | 7.30 pm
£18 (£8 Students & u18)
 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/oxfordpromusica or on the door



Bellringers' report

Members of the St Nicholas' ringers made up the band for a quarter peal at St Mary the Virgin in North Aston, which is an interesting tower in that it stands within touching distance of North Aston Hall – there is literally a metre between buildings. Ringing was followed by refreshments at nearby Nicholson's nursery.

1 February saw a plethora of methods included in the quarter peal with such names as Candlemas, Olympics, Twilight, Shepherd's Pie and Old Growler. Some of the quirky fun of ringing is seeing the names of what we ring. With February came St Valentine and an opportunity to enjoy flower methods in the form of Snowdrop and Primrose. In between all of our own ringing, we have further enjoyed ringing at other towers including in Long Wittenham, Iffley, Charlton-on-Otmoor and Launton. Longer days make travelling to other towers for ringing very enjoyable.

Finally, our tower AGM was held at the end of February highlighting all of our achievements this year and what we are looking forward to this year. We played host to the local Branch's AGM and Practice at the beginning of March too, helping to further put Marston on the map. We have been pleased to welcome a new young ringer to the group completing a D of E award with us. Maybe you know a young person who would enjoy learning a new skill. Do get in touch.

A view from Elsfield

At last, it seems, we have come through the length of winter – the gloomy mornings, dusk and darkness swallowing the afternoons and the relentless seven weeks of January. We have reached early March and with it erratic changes of weather: occasional clear, sunlit days enlivening the landscape, punctuated by drear, damp days with a cruel westerly to remind us that winter is not quite done.

The aconites on the bank by the church, then the snowdrops in early January suggested that things were moving. Grey, wet February had us daily looking across the valley towards Woodeaton, tracing the line of the Cherwell and wondering how many acres were under water. The old boys didn't call it February fill-dyke for nothing.

Now in March the light makes us to look up and around, follow those weaving flocks of starlings, marvelling at all that energy, catching and reflecting such light as there is. And it's now that everything seems to accelerate, the length of Mondays is suddenly Thursday evening and the weekend is approaching. Suddenly the hedgerows are alive with buds where only yesterday there was nothing. The magnolias are opening and now there is growth, colour and across the lane an early morning thrush sings.

Old Marston Parish Council Report - March

OCC has advised the PC that planning applications from 39 Salford Road and 61 Cherwell Drive have been approved. The PC will be meeting to review options for speed awareness signs.

A committee of local residents has formed a working group to help turn the field in Mill Lane into a community recreational ground. Please contact the clerk to find out more.

The PC is doing work in the Orchard Triangle to improve the grounds. If you have any ideas for this space, then please do contact us.

There are concerns about cars parking along Elsfield Road near the exit to Marsh Lane. The clerk has asked County Highways for advice.

Thank you to the large team of volunteers who took part in this year's OxClean and helped make Marston more litter free.

The PC gave a grant of £550 to St Nicholas Church for the Spring Fun Day.

The PC has asked the clerk to raise its concerns regarding the state of the potholes in the parish.

PC elections will be held on 7 May. If you are interested in becoming a parish councillor, then please contact the clerk for more information.

The clerk, Tim Cann, can be contacted by phone (07341 758889) Mon to Wed from 9am until 1pm. Otherwise a message can be left or emailed via: clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk For information, agendas, minutes of meetings etc go to <https://www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk> X, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram or BlueSky.

Thursday evening slot available at Mortimer Hall

A slot at Mortimer Hall has become available for someone interested in running a class on Thursday evenings. Our other regular classes are:

Tuesday - Kick boxing (6.30pm)

Wednesday - Yoga (6.30pm)

Friday - Kick boxing (6.30pm)

If you're looking to run a class, please contact Chris at bookings@mortimerhall.co.uk or telephone 01865 727995 to discuss. mortimerhall.co.uk

Be With Nature in Marston Forest Garden

6.30-7.30pm on Sat 11 April, Tue 19 May, Tue 23 June
Join us in Marston Forest Garden to immerse yourself in the beauty and vibrancy of the Garden in spring and early summer. This one-hour guided session is an opportunity to wander and wonder, relax, breathe and connect with Nature and the life all around. Using simple and widely accessible techniques, sessions, led by Genista Astell, offer the chance for relaxation, restoration, and a re-awakening of innate engagement with Nature. If it's your first time, meet at 18:20 at the main entrance to Court Farm Allotments OX3 0PP
Email isobel.mccannan@gmail.com for more info.

Parish Organisations

Allotments Associations

Court Place Farm, Boults Lane. Chair: Jane Wilson
Sunday mornings 9-10.30am.....shed.cpf-allotments@gmail.com
Mill Lane Chairman: Angie Brown07852 132874
Treasurer Dana Vlad07919 493580
Secretary Alex Hodgkinson-Last.....a_last@hotmail.com

Baby and Toddler Club Weds 9.30-11.30 term time in Parish Hall
Helen Norman.....07852 213974

Bellringers:

Practice Friday 7.15pm Learners welcome
Hugh Deam, Tower Captain 01865 247574
Roy Peach, Secretary.....07788 746157

Choirs and Musicians at St Nicholas

Junior Choir, SATB Choir, Music Group
Practices at various times.
Lewis Morin.....musicdirector@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Coffee Pot

Coffee morning, monthly, Monday
Eileen Palayiwa, 27 Ouseley Close 01865 725423

Rainbow, Brownie, Guide and Ranger Units

Evenings throughout the week. Adult volunteers as well as girls welcomed!
District Commissioner, Lesley Dentry, 07765 418067

Leisure:

OXS RAD Sports and Leisure Centre,
Court Place Farm, Marsh Lane. 01865 741336

Library (next to Mortimer Hall) opening hours

Tuesday 2-5pm; 5.30-7pm
Thursday 2-5pm; 5.30-7pm
Friday 10-12noon; 2-5pm
Saturday 9.30-12.30pm01865 815176

Hedena Health Medical Centre. 01865 597023

Marston Community Gardening

Alistair Morris 01865 724081
Kate Robinson 01865 766620

Marston Saints Football Club

Andy Winchester (Treasurer) www.msfc.org.uk
Mortimer Hall (Village Hall)

Chris Crane, 2 Raymund Road 01865 727995

Oxford City Council (Marston Representatives)

Mary Clarkson, 8 Dunstan Road, Oxford OX3 9BY 01865 751493
Kate Robinson07483 011488

Oxfordshire County Council (Marston Representative)

Mark Lygo 07765 665 726

Oxford Preservation Trust

10 Turn Again Lane, Oxford OX1 1QL.....01865 242918

Parentline

Confidential helpline for parents 01865 726600

Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Tim Cann, 8 Nicholas Avenue.....07341 758889
(Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm)
Chairman: Duncan Hatfield07706998224

Pre-school at Mortimer Hall

open 9 sessions a week 07818 236348

Royal British Legion Club Hall:

Steward 01865 243991

Schools

Friends of St Nicholas School 01865 242838

Scouts — 43rd Oxford (St. Nicholas) Scout Group, Boults Lane

Group Scout Leader, Tim Greaves..... tim.greaves@keble.oxon.org

Beaver Scout Leader, Sue Springett 01865 251515

Cub Scout Leader, Matthew Kennedy.....matthew.kennedy500@gmail.com

Scouts Leader, Linda Phillips 07804 925705

St. Nicholas Church Hall and Committee Room

Debbie Bailey, Parish Office 01865 580354

Women's Institute

Meetings at 7.30 second Tue of each month - new members welcome!

President, Judy Young marstonwi.org

Trade Directory

Architectural services for Planning Permissions/ Building Regulations

Digby Architectural: 4 Broughton Close07979 756918

Building/Builders Services

Colin Simpson: High Class painting, decorating and coving etc:

10 Dent's Close OX3 ONP 01865 742842

Trevor Dines: No job too small - plumbing, complete bathrooms
from fitting a door to building an extension. Free estimates.

8, Raymund Road01865 452851, 07889 263140

Daniel Kelly: Painting and decorating services: 07917 607949

Cleaning Carpets & Upholstery

Grimebusters: Quality carpet, rug & upholstery cleaning at competitive
rates. Free estimates..... 01865 726983

Complementary Medicine

Oxford Therapies: pain relief, stress, management & more

www.oxford-therapies.com.....07913 503257

Oxford Reflexology: relaxation, stress-relief and rebalance

www.oxfordreflexology.co.uk.....07726 312719

Decorating

Kerr-Brown painting/decorating hkbdecorating@gmail.com 07944 605502

Dog grooming service in Old Marston village.....07877 183281

Electricians

Brian Turner: Registered NICEIC domestic installer..... 01865 728729

All work guaranteed 33, Salford Road 07538 382683

..... brian.r.turner@ntlworld.com

Craig Holloway Electrical Ltd: 07868 706392

.....enquiries@craigholloway.co.uk

Footcare

Pedilicious Foot Care: treatment following initial medical consultation,
including foot soak, toe nails trimmed, corns and calluses removed, half leg
and foot massage. Contact Patricia Anson (with years of experience)

..... 07881 366350

Funeral Directors

C S Boswell Independent funeral services.....01865 553737

Homewood Funerals (Family-owned and managed)

14 Cherwell Drive, Marston OX3 4LY01865 570000

Garden & small machinery service/repair.....taylordannyuk@yahoo.co.uk

Danny Taylor, 5 Ouseley Close, Marston OX3 0JS.....07796 573319

Hair and Beauty

Fiona's Hair Salon:

Salford Road, Old Marston OX3 0RX 01865 241632

Monumental Mason

Reeves Memorials: New memorials, removal for burials, added
inscriptions & renovations.

147A Magdalen Rd, Oxford. OX4 1RL 01865 251231

Plumbing, Heating & Gas

Lemarsh Building Services – plumbing and heating

22 Marsh Lane.....07710 390980

S. J. Moore: Installation and servicing for all gas appliances.

Gas Safe Reg. 146337.

76, Arlington Drive.....01865 724037, 07970 470176

Tree Surgery, Fruit Tree Pruning

R. Timms: 80 Oxford Road..... 01865 244608

Window Cleaning - MRF Window Cleaning Services

Mick Fry: 37, Green Hill Oxford OX4 7UD. Fully insured member of the
Federation of Master Window Cleaners.. 01865 777889, 07887 515168

