

Every circus that visited the town had a procession round the street at one o'clock before the afternoon performance. A children's favourite grandstand to view this from was the wall of St Mary's churchyard, then much higher than it is now. All the performers, clowns, elephants and so on followed one after the other and finally two very high decorated vans, the last bearing a lady representing Britannia, complete with a live lion lying at her feet. After a rather alarming episode when one of these big carriages with lady and lion became stuck outside Potts' Guardian Office and was released with difficulty these exciting processions were discontinued.

Notices of lost property and announcements of coming events were often advertised by the Town Cryer. The last one I remember was Mr George Hutchings. He would stop at intervals and ring a large bell and then shout the announcement as loudly as he could. There were no amplifiers then, yet what he said could be distinctly heard which tells how much less noise was made by the traffic. Yet when there was serious illness in a house the road outside was covered with straw to deaden the noise from traffic and horses' hooves.

The roads were dusty and in dry warm weather a "water cart" went round the streets from the back of which pipes sprayed showers of water to lay the dust. I remember watching from my grandfather's windows in North Bar the first horseless carriage I had seen go by in the road. He doubted whether they would ever come into public use and watched it with some disfavour. That would have been in 1894 or '95.

On Market days from all the villages round came carriers' carts carrying passengers and goods. There were covered carts with seats along the sides and crossways on which villagers sat packed close together. I once came back from a short holiday at Edge Hill in one. We stopped at cross roads, some wayside houses, and gates leading to farm-houses, to pick up passengers. All the passengers knew and greeted each other as they clambered or were pushed up with their babies, [f.10] bags and baskets. Family news was discussed as they went along. It was stifling and very smelly but no one seemed to mind or notice. All these carrier carts were left for the day outside the inns and public houses each keeping to a particular one. The horses were stabled inside.

The town itself was the centre of the market before the Midland Marts was opened. Cows were driven from the farmers around by men called drovers using shorts sticks. The poor beasts were tied to rails and posts which extended down both sides of Bridge Street, more often then called