

bookselling and publishing, as well as selling hats and keeping the town's Stamp Office. He published an almanac which he developed in 1795 into a short *Banbury List*, distributed free of charge. The following year he included a table of the carriers visiting the town, and brought out similar publications in subsequent years. His son John Golby Rusher (1784-1877) returned to Banbury after an apprenticeship with an Oxford printer and subsequently published the annual lists. In 1832 he appended to the *List* a classified trade directory, and the joint *List and Directory* was published annually, except in 1836, 1838 and 1840. In May 1875 Rusher presented his friend Henry Stone with a bound volume including most issues of the *List* from 1813, including that for 1841 on which survive his handwritten emendations to the text prior to the printing of the 1842 edition, an indication of the accuracy and topicality of the publication. In 1877 Jane Eliza Rusher (1822-1903) became publisher of the *List and Directory* but in 1896 she sold the title to the newspaper proprietor and historian William Potts, who produced it until 1906.⁵ The *Lists* provide a uniquely accurate chart of the rise, fluctuations and initial decline of the trade of country carrying. Data from the lists has been aligned in this study with material from county directories, census enumerators' returns and parish registers and intertwined with that from national sources.

Country carrying and trade directories prospered at the same time, and were interdependent. Directories can be tiresomely inconsistent and most were published at random frequencies. Nevertheless they are the best source for the study of country carriers. Most directories published before 1840 provide information only about towns but from the 1840s the county directories of William White, Samuel Bagshaw and Isaac Slater, and from the 1850s the Post Office Directories and those of Kelly & Co provide broader pictures. This study portrays carriers not just as visitors to towns but as members of rural communities. Carriers have been identified in the village entries of county directories and in census enumerators' returns, which reveal their by-employments and their family relationships. Most directories referred to carriers by their

⁵ L J De Freitas, *The Banbury Chapbooks* (Banbury Historical Society, 2004), pp.43-60; P Renold, 'William Rusher: a sketch of his life', *C&CH*, vol 11 (1991). Files of Rusher's *Lists and Directories* are held at the Centre for Banburyshire Studies; our Society expects to publish an alphabetical digest and CD of the *Directory, 1832-1906*, shortly. I am grateful to Jeremy Gibson for a loan of the bound volume presented in 1875 to his ancestor Henry Stone.