

surnames only, which makes it difficult to distinguish women carriers. Counting the numbers of places served by carriers listed in directories can be misleading. Those served by carriers to Banbury ranged from nearby villages with populations in excess of a thousand, through deserted parishes such as Clattercote and Prescot with fewer than 20 inhabitants, to places like Costow that were no more than substantial farmsteads.

Lists in directories usually contain duplicate entries, which inflate the apparent numbers of carriers and weekly journeys. Villages may appear under more than one heading, Heyford and Upper Heyford, Earl Shilton and Shilton (Earl) or Long Sutton and Sutton (Long). Some directories listed all the possible connections made by a carrier while 'picking up on the way' (i.e. calling at farms or hamlets along his or her route), and by onward transit on journeys made to different towns on subsequent days. Kelly's directories in the 1890s detail more than a thousand weekly carrier services from Oxford, but in the list of 1895 there are actually only 108 carriers making only 258 weekly departures. Twenty seven advertised services depended on a single journey, that of John Weston of the *Red Lion*, Steeple Aston, who left the *Plough* in Cornmarket Street every Saturday afternoon nominally serving places as distant as Chipping Warden and Great Rollright. Albert Croxford, grocer and carrier of Chinnor, who attended the *Crown* in Cornmarket Street on Wednesdays and Saturdays, was credited with serving 30 different places along his route from the Chilterns to Oxford or accessible through his journeys to Marlow on Mondays, Thame on Tuesdays and High Wycombe on Fridays. The figures quoted in this study have been calculated by identifying each individual carrier and counting his or her actual departures.

Definitions.

A carrier for the purposes of this study was a village-based trader who made his or her living by conveying goods and passengers to and from a market town at least once a week, usually making the return journey in a single working day. In the nineteenth century such people were most commonly called 'country carriers', but Charles Waters of Middleton Cheney in 1851 was called a 'market carrier', men visiting Bicester in 1911 were 'village carriers' and in Berkshire there were 'errand carriers'. In 1851 Jonathan Sorrell of Charlbury was described as a 'stage carrier' and men from Hornton and Priors Hardwick were called 'common carriers'. In census returns the term 'carrier' generally refers