

The UBD complimented Banbury's market but named no carriers. Rusher's publication in 1796 listed 16 who made about 34 calls a week, suggesting that that carrying to Banbury was on the point of take-off. Rusher's printing office was in the Market Place near the corner of Cornhill, close to many public houses where carriers lodged their carts. He obviously understood the trade, and the pattern of expansion shown by his publications appears to reflect reality. By 1800, 39 carriers were making approximately 61 journeys per week. In 1805 65 carriers made almost a hundred; 133 carriers made 227 in 1821, and by 1851 189 were making 427 journeys.

The imprecision of some of the information provided in Rusher's early lists and the UBD reinforces the sense that country carrying was only beginning in the 1790s. In Rusher's first list Richard Constable from Bloxham and Edward Tompkins from Cropredy travelled to Banbury '*almost every day*', whilst Stanley's cart from Eynsham went to the town '*most Thursdays*'. In 1808 Humphris from Greatworth travelled on Thursdays and *sometimes* on Mondays. Regular carriers plied to York from Kirby Moorside but the UBD revealed that 'Richard Wrightson *goes occasionally to Malton*'. John Chapman who worked from the *George & Star* at Whittlesey reckoned to do four journeys a week to Ramsey but '*not regularly*'. Pigot's directories published in the 1820s and 30s provide a second national view of country carrying. Comparison with the UBD suggests that by the 1820s significant numbers of carriers were travelling into most English towns, and that the trade had grown at a rate commensurate with that revealed by the Rusher's closely-observed Banbury lists. Directories published in 1828 show substantial numbers of village carriers serving Chesterfield, Derby, Mansfield and Nottingham, and busy carrying activity in industrial Lancashire. In 1830 Reading was linked with 74 rural communities, Newbury with 37, Abingdon with 30 and Wantage with 15. There were services from Bristol to about 160 local or regional destinations, and to 38 from Gloucester, and in 1835 substantial numbers of carriers travelled to Loughborough, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray, Coventry and Warwick.

### **The development of carrying networks.**

The years around 1850 marked the zenith of country carrying in most regions. Country carriers operated ubiquitously across England. They are portrayed in Warwickshire by George Eliot, in Dorset by Hardy, in Norfolk, by Dickens, in Wiltshire by Hudson and in central Oxfordshire by Blackmore. In Cornwall in 1856 nine village carriers made