

The twenty towns with the most intensive carrier services in the 1850s, all with more than 150 journeys per week, are detailed in Table 2. Places served by between 100 and 150 weekly journeys included Newbury with 154, Bath, with 141, Derby with 131, Cambridge and King's Lynn, each with 116, Guildford with 112 and Gloucester with 106. Several of Banbury's near neighbours, including Aylesbury, Buckingham, Daventry, Abingdon and Warwick had between fifty and a hundred, as did Cirencester, Winchester, Lewes, Stamford, Melton Mowbray, Chester and Chichester. Towns with between thirty and fifty included Bicester, Leamington, Towcester, Sleaford, Horncastle, Rugby, Durham, Burton-on-Trent and Lutterworth. Even the smallest market centres had modest carrier networks. Chipping Norton had 24 incoming journeys per week, Witney 21, Nantwich and Beccles each had 18, and Huntingdon had 23. Evidence in Rusher's *Lists* of carriers to Banbury who travelled to other towns on other days of the week suggests that carrying to the smaller market centres was well-established before 1830. The list for 1831 names five carriers who travelled to Woodstock, eight to Chipping Norton, nine to Bicester; and four to Towcester and Shipston-on-Stour.

The carrier's modus operandi.

Carriers delivered country produce, eggs, butter, cheese and vegetables into market towns. Some went to retailers for local sale, some to wholesalers for despatch to distant destinations, and some, as portrayed by Beatrix Potter in *Johnny Town Mouse*, to private customers with regular orders. Carriers provided connections with national freight carriers by road waggon and by water. Their best-remembered work was the conveyance of orders from country people to shopkeepers in the town whose errand boys and girls delivered specified goods to the carrier's calling point to be loaded on to his or her vehicle for the return journey. When visiting Oxford, Blackmore's Zachary Cripps had 'a great host of commissions at very small figures to execute in the Market' with farmers, butchers, poulterers, chandlers and grocers. Sydney Tyrrell recalled that carriers delivered hand tools, boots, ready-made clothing, fabrics for dresses, cough mixtures and pills, and that on Thursdays carts were weighed down by armfuls of *Banbury Guardians* and *Banbury Advertisers*. Dorothy Loveday remembered that in the 1890s the village carrier delivered fish from Banbury to her home at Wardington. Carriers handled varied one-off consignments. Zachary Cripps en route from Oxford to Beckley stopped at the *Black Horse* in St Clements to pick up