

which expanded as they undertook errands for others, and offered accommodation for passengers. Pubs and village shops could readily serve as points where a carrier's customers could leave goods for onward transit and collect their orders. Three Banbury carriers in 1851, 15 in 1861, 19 in 1871, eight in 1881, 13 in 1891, 11 in 1901 were landlords of public houses. Ten village grocery shops were carriers' bases in 1851, 11 in 1861, 15 in 1871, five in 1881, 10 in 1891 and 15 in 1901. Other carriers were butchers, bakers, maltsters, bootmakers and ropemakers, several served as parish clerks, and eight in 1871 also traded as coal dealers.

Most carriers belonged to that class within the rural community which had rather more independence than the wage-dependent farm labourer. Joseph Arch (1826-1919), leader of the farmworkers' trade union, could live without deference to his 'betters' because his hedging and ditching skills enabled him always to find work, and because his grandfather had acquired the freehold of the family home at Barford (Warwickshire).¹⁵ At least 13 of the 189 carriers who visited Banbury in 1851 and eight in 1861 occupied small farms, all but two of them of 12 acres or less. In 1871 ten of the 167 carriers who visited Banbury were farmers, with a median holding size of 25 acres, and two were the sons of farmers. Nevertheless 16 who visited Banbury in 1851, 35 in 1861, 23 in 1871 and 12 in 1881, shared their homes with unmarried sons, bachelor brothers, widowed fathers or fathers-in-law, or lodgers who laboured on the land. The Hanwell carrier Joseph Hazlewood in 1881 had two sons who were agricultural labourers, while the occupation of the 18-year-old son of John Watts, the other Hanwell carrier, was recorded as 'Assists with carrying and at odd times an agricultural labourer'. Some families were carriers over many decades but for others the occupation was precarious. Thomas Barber and William Haynes of King's Sutton, listed as carriers in 1871, were recorded as agricultural labourers ten years later. Nevertheless carriers seem to have avoided pauperdom, although in 1871 Joseph Curtis of Marston St Lawrence, a carrier, who had been temporarily crippled by a fall, was living with his pauper brother.

Rusher listed Thomas Padbury of Enoch's Colony as a carrier from Sibford between 1855 and 1865. He was recorded as a carrier in the

¹⁵ J Arch, *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch* (ed. J.G.O'Leary, Macgibbon & Kee, 1966), pp.20-21.