

carrier. It had a recess in the wall open to the street about 10 ft across and 5 ft deep, with the floor of a bedroom above. To the left was the door of the cottage; to the right the stable door, and between the two the entrance into a hay and corn store.

The carrier's vehicle was traditionally a two-wheeled cart, but in the early days of carrying to Banbury some employed four-wheeled wagons. The 39 carriers in 1800 used 25 carts and three wagons, while vehicles used by the other 11 were unrecorded. The equivalent figures in 1805 were 52 carts and 4 waggons. The assurance in the UBD listing of carriers from Barton-on-Humber that 'All the carts and wagons have a covering so that goods or passengers may be conveyed very dry', suggests that the covered cart was a novelty in the 1790s. Between 1836 and 1839 Rusher changed the heading of his list of carriers from '*Waggon, Carts &c*' to '*Carriers, Carts, Vans etc*'. Two-wheeled carts were made by local wheelwrights (by *cartwrights* in northern England). A directory of 1854 listed 462 master wheelwrights in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Northamptonshire. Tyrrell recalled that the Eydon cart had a light semi-circular roof, covered with tarpaulin to keep goods dry, but when weather was good a carter could, like Cripps on a summer day, take out the hoops and travel without cover. In the weeks before Christmas poultry might be carried in punts slung beneath the cart, or suspended from rods mounted on the top or sides. A carrier's equipment included oak wedges to secure his vehicle if he stopped on a steep gradient, such as Cripps used on Headington Hill. For the descent of hills the cart might be fitted with a drag to stop the vehicle running away, such as that lowered by Hardy's carrier as he prepared to descend Yelbury Hill to the accompaniment of the Casterbridge bells.

Some vans were made by coachmakers, 14 of whom traded in Banbury between 1832 and 1865. Coachmakers could buy axles from the Mason brothers' forge at Deddington, and steel springs and iron fittings from suppliers in the Black Country. Roofs might be made from paper board. The bodywork of the van from Wardington preserved in Banbury Museum is of commonplace softwood, and is perhaps the work of a wheelwright rather than a coachmaker. Vans were especially favoured by carriers from small towns who travelled to other towns, such as John Mace of Chipping Norton or William Edmonds of Bicester. Photographs of the late nineteenth century show both two-wheeled carts and four-wheeled vans in Banbury, some inscribed with the names and routes of their owners, 'Levi West, Byfield, Carrier to Banbury,