

an assessor of taxes. He is notable for the extraordinary number of destinations that he claimed to serve from his Saturday afternoon departure from Oxford.

John Rouse, born about 1824, began carrying to Banbury from Oxhill in the early 1860s and by 1864 was the only carrier from the village. He was succeeded before 1900 by his son, Willoughby Ernest Rouse, born in 1872, who in 1901 was living on the main street of the village with his two brothers, a builder and a schoolmaster. He went to the *Catherine Wheel*, Banbury on Thursdays, to Stratford on Fridays, and also traded as a coal merchant. He was still carrying to the *Dog and Gun* at Banbury in 1939 and 1950, and the family's bus still left Bridge Street for Oxhill every Thursday afternoon in the mid-1950s.

The fourth group of carriers travelled to Banbury from communities between 12 and 20 miles away, from an area of more than 1200 square miles. Carriers were not deterred by physical barriers. Few of those visiting Shrewsbury crossed Wenlock Edge,<sup>23</sup> but Banbury carriers ascended the Jurassic Ridge at Tysoe Hill, Sunrising, Knowle End and Warmington, although they may have asked their passengers to dismount on the hills. The hinterland stretched almost to the Fosse Way in the west, Watling Street in the east and Akeman Street to the south. It extended into parishes like Kidlington and Wolvercote that are now suburbs of Oxford and into Tachbrook and Whitnash now overtaken by the urban sprawl of Leamington. Most such carriers travelled to Banbury only for the Thursday markets, and went to other towns, Oxford, Northampton, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Leamington, Coventry or Rugby, on other days of the week. The villages from which carriers travelled more than 12 miles to Banbury are detailed in Table 3 (pages 242-243).

Carriers maintained constant services to Banbury from several large villages in Warwickshire. The first record of carrying over the 13 miles from the ironstone farmsteads of Priors Marston is in 1821, and in most years for the rest of the century three carriers journeyed weekly to Banbury. The link with nearby Priors Hardwick was similarly first listed in 1821 and continued throughout the century. Carrying to Banbury from the notorious open village of Harbury began in 1825 and continued into

---

<sup>23</sup> C Evason & P Marsh, 'Shrewsbury's Country Carriers', B Trinder, ed, *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town* (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Libraries, 1984), p.52.