

MR BOB CHERRIL

An article from Grace Chamberlain's "Benson Past & Present", (written in the war years).

Everyone round about Benson knows Mr Bob Cherrill, the local carrier. For sixty years his father drove the carriers cart twice a week to Oxford and for thirty-nine years the sons have driven daily - with the exception of Sunday - from Ewelme and Benson to Wallingford.

Up the road comes the cart and from under the hood Bob's cheery face looks out. With a whistle he jumps down from his seat and leaving his dapple-grey horse to nibble at the grass, walks to the house to find out what is required of him.

His ready quips and smiling jest lightens for a few minutes the labours of more than one home-help in the course of a day. Bob is an excellent shopper and no commission is too small. His "stock" consists of trunks, bicycles and goods from the station to library books and bottles of medicine. Should he on rare occasions forget to deliver a parcel, "Mr Bob" with philosophical smile turns up later with the mislaid article...

So many old local customs are lapsing, that one hopes that "Bob" will continue with his "carrying" for many years.

Our Carrier (Letter to the Benson Bulletin from Doris Chamberlain).



The photo of Bob Cherrill's cart was taken outside Crowmarsh Battle Farm by my younger brother David. Every week the cart took a five- dozen box of eggs that went on the train to Mr Roadnight of Ealing, also big round bushel baskets of apples. A Ewelme lady remembers the Roadnight's shop in Ealing.

A big barn at Ewelme now converted into three houses was always called Cherrill's Barn, even on the Survey maps because his van was kept there, and he started and finished his round there.

He used to cycle up and down as he lived in Littleworth. It was quite usual to see three or four bicycles tied on the back of the cart.

My sister Eileen and others would bicycle to Wallingford Station and go on the train to Reading leaving Bob to bring the cycles back and take them in again on Friday mornings. A wonderful service to the community. Every village had a carrier and they put up at the Feathers Inn (now Kilburn Press Wallingford).

Postscript from Frank West Memoirs

I mention 'our' Mr Cherrill to distinguish him from the other Mr Cherrill, his brother, who was the local carrier. Mr Ted drove his horse pulling a covered van most days on a regular service from Ewelme to Benson and Wallingford and back. He carried all kinds of general goods and undertook small commissions and messages. There was room for two passengers sitting alongside him in the driving seat and he charged four pence for the return journey from Benson to Wallingford. There were rare occasions when I was committed to his care but normally visits to Wallingford which was a distance of three miles meant walking with one of the parents until we were old enough to ride on bicycles. Mr Ted was a great favourite of the village children and I myself never minded being sent to meet him to hand in or collect parcels.