

The Carriers

Poem Dedicated to Carrier, Mrs Macey as Recalled by Philip Symes

*Why don't you leave my wife alone
She's so drunk she can't get home
We'll get old Macey's horse and cart
And bring her home when it's dark*

In the early part of the 1900s the villagers relied on the local carriers with their horse or pony drawn wagons to transport goods to and from town. A small charge was made for deliveries and collections. The carriers picked up items the villagers wanted delivered and were given lists of items to be collected from the town. In the 1927 Kelley's Directory there were four carriers listed for the village: Sidney Ellis, J Macey & Son, Stephen Crabb, and Ernest Watts. All visited Bridport daily. Stephen Crabb also travelled to Weymouth on Fridays. Ernest John Watts, is also listed as a Motor car proprietor. J Macey & Son was operated by Mrs Macey. She worked for over 40 years often travelling alone over the roads of west Dorset in a horse drawn canvas covered van collecting and delivering parcels daily to Bridport and nearby villages. Up to within three weeks of her death she carried twine nets from village braiders to the Bridport factories. After a busy day's work she often returned home as late as midnight.

These three enlarged extracts from postcards show carriers delivering to Uploders and Lower Lodgers in the early 1900s.



(Above) Carrier Mr Ellis outside of 3 Box Cottages, Uploders where he lived. His sign can be seen over the window.



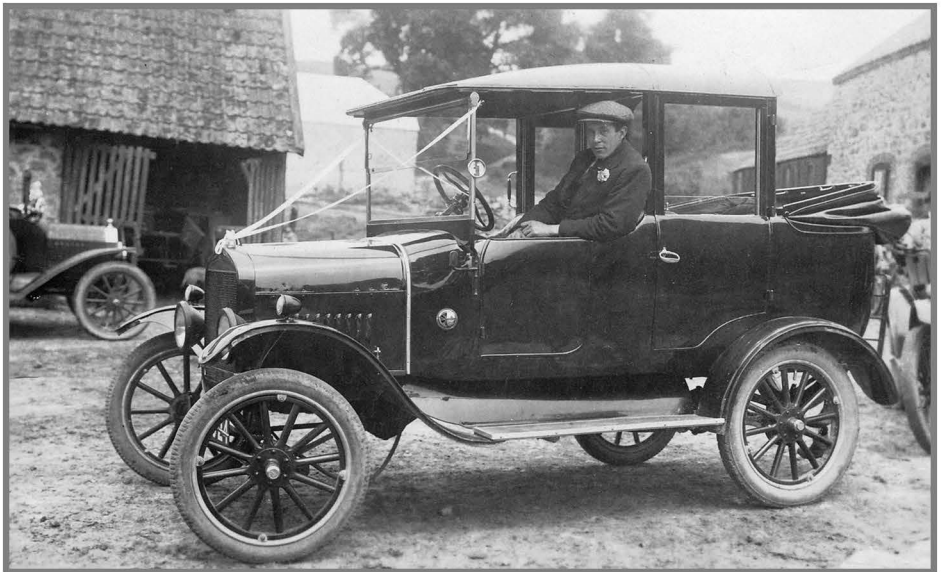
Delivering to the Lodgers Arms (above) and two wagons near the Farmers Arms and outside Mr Budden's shop (right).



The Carriers and their Motor Vehicles



Steven Crabb's bus outside Brook Barton in Uploders where he lived and ran his business. Mr Crabb began with a horse and wagon and later acquired a bus. The destination on the front is 'Askerswell' which was on the end of his Bridport to Loders to Askerswell route which would have included a stop at Bridport Station. He also made butter and cheese on the premises. The little girl is thought to be his daughter Mabel Alice Crabb.



Ernest Watts's taxi business was based at Church Farm, Loders. His taxi service gave the locals much better and quicker journeys to town and connections to the railway station. In this picture he is about to set out for a local wedding. It was taken in March 1924; no publisher details given.

Deliveries

Up to the Second World War the village had its own tradesmen, small shops, carriers and farms to provide produce and services. Most of the workers were employed in the village, or nearby.



The Baker, Fred Marsh, at Hembury Mill, Askerswell where the corn was milled and the bread baked. It was delivered to Askerswell, Shipton Gorge and Uploders. There was no baker in Loders. In the late 1900s the last descendant of the Marsh family at Hembury Mill passed away. The mill has now been restored and remains a monument to times gone by.

In the 1920s and before, milk from the farms was sold direct to the villagers. It was either collected from the farms or delivered.

(Right) Annie Foot carries milk around the village in two pails hung from a yolk. The milk was ladled into jugs and containers at her customers' houses.



Deliveries from The Grocery Man

As well as the fetching and carrying provided by the carriers some grocery shops in Bridport delivered to customers in and around the town.



One of the grocery firms that delivered to Loders was Elliott's. This picture, taken c1930, shows Elliott's shop when it was located next to the hotel, The King of the Belgians, previously The King of Prussia and now The Lord Nelson. Elliott's later moved next door to the Bull Hotel, the premises now occupied by Bridget's, the fruit and vegetable shop.

Also in the picture are Elliott's delivery van and the staff who are, from left to right, Harry Sprake, Jack Tuck, Len Read, Joe Jeanes, Mr Norris, George Elliott (the owner), Marjorie Hawkins and Mr Symes.

Joe Jeanes drove the van and was responsible for taking the customers' orders and delivering their groceries. He had regular rounds so would call on his customers the same day each week with his notebook and pencil to take the order for that week. He delivered the order a day or two later.

In a way it was not unlike the internet ordering of today. But it was a personal service provided by local firms employing local people to people they knew.

Braiding

It was unusual for women to return to work after starting a family. Many in and around Bridport were employed as outworkers by the local net factories. The work was sometimes heavy, often dusty and the pay poor. But it was an opportunity to earn extra money. The braiders provided the needles and laces needed to make the nets. These were usually home-made and branded with the braider's own particular mark.



Mrs Martha Crabb braiding nets at the table in Rose Cottage, Uploders. She lived in the cottage next to Loders School. This picture was used for the calendar for W Edwards & Son (Bridport) Ltd: net, line and twine manufacturers.

Tables used for braiding became worn with deep grooves from the continuous rubbing of the nets against the table top and legs.

Mrs Crabb was a great favourite with the school children next door. She chatted over her garden wall and returned any wayward balls with a smile.

(Right) Mrs Ellis, the wife of the carrier, on the steps of 3 Box Cottages, Uploders.

In the summer months the women often worked outside. They had the benefit of the fresh air and no dust from the twine in their houses.

Two tools were needed; a needle to hold the twine and a lace to create the mesh. The lace was circular in section and about 6 inches long. It had to be of the exact diameter for the mesh size. Each braider had a selection of needles and laces for every type of net they might encounter.



Braiding for the War Effort - War-time pictures



Twine delivered to Hilda Greening by delivery-man Fred Symes. He called on fixed days, usually once or twice a week depending on the urgency of the work. He booked-out the twine, collected the finished nets and made payment in cash.



Sylvia Hyde, Martha Crabb, Adelaide Hyde, Lizzie Crabb and Sis Gale braiding large mesh nets probably camouflage nets, outside Box Cottages in Uploders.



Rose Cottage 1941: The Crabb and Symes children who were cousins supporting the war effort and their mothers by filling needles ready for braiding camouflage nets. They are, from the left, Ernest Crabb, Rodney Symes, Ann Crabb, Mrs Emily Symes, Philip Symes, Wilfred Crabb and Oscar Symes. Just to the right of Mrs Symes is the 'Swift'. This held the twine and rotated as the needles were filled.



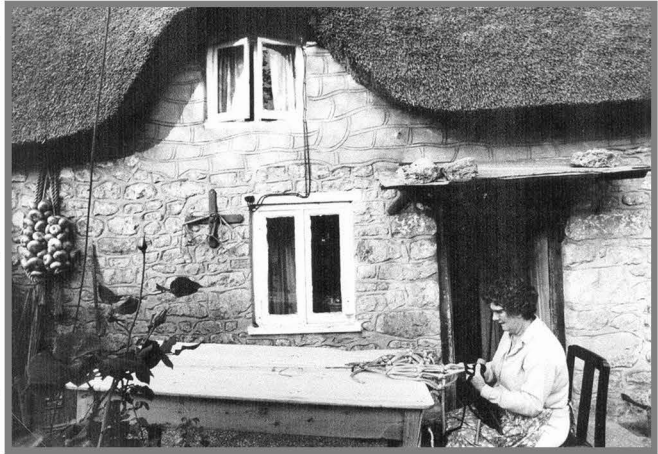
Needles, laces and twine used by my grandmother and mother. The owner's mark, usually a letter, was burnt on using a hot iron. Small needles were used for small mesh nets and the very large ones for cargo nets on aircraft. Needles and laces were all handmade, usually by the man of the house. Synthetic twine replaced the natural fibres in the 1960s. It was smoother and less dusty but not so good for gardening purposes. The villagers were never short of twine!

Braiding - National Coverage

Just occasionally the local people were the subject of national interest. On 7 November 1971 an article appeared in the Sunday Times about nets and netmaking in the Bridport area featuring Elizabeth (Lizzie) Crabb who lived in Rose Cottage, a lovely thatched house in Uploders. Mrs Crabb was one of many of the women in and around Bridport whose earnings supplemented those of her working husband.

Lizzie braiding at her spotless scrubbed table which had been moved outside on a warm summer day. The onions hanging on the wall to dry were, no doubt, from the garden and grown and tended by husband Harry.

(Below) Lizzie in Rose Cottage working on heavy aircraft cargo nets. Although these were heavy, the thick nylon cord was clean and fairly easy to handle. In small cottages the large nets were cumbersome and conspicuous. However, the rate of pay was much better than for light small mesh nets.



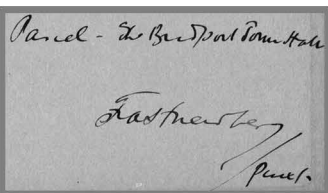
Braiding in Loders by Fra. H Newbery



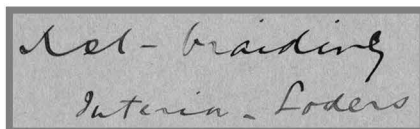
This print of Braiding in Loders by Fra Newbery is based on one of the four panel murals in Bridport Town Hall. According to Newbery's notes it's Myrtle Cottage, Loders, the home of Alice Bagg. There is a Myrtle Cottage in Uploders but when Newbery painted this picture, that was known as Temperance Cottage. On the Electoral Registers throughout the 1920s Mr and Mrs Macey (of Macey's corner fame) are shown as living in Myrtle Cottage. This identifies the property visited by Newbery as the house known as Raikes. The view of the Church through the doorway must be artistic licence but is totally acceptable.

Fra Newbery, was Director of the Glasgow School of Art between 1885 and 1918. It was Newbery who commissioned Rennie Mackintosh to redesign the Campus. Fra Newbery remains an important name in the art world and is well known in Bridport where his career began. He retired to Corfe Castle in 1918. During his retirement he painted several pictures depicting Bridport's history and trade. In 1925 the Town Hall was redecorated to his design, including the four-panelled mural, one panel of which shows this picture.

Fra Newbery's daughter married into the Nesbitt family of Philadelphia. His grand-daughter died in about 2005 in the US and it seems that her daughter, Newbery's great-granddaughter, attached little importance to any old papers, prints and photographs that originated from him. Luckily a dealer in the USA did and rescued some of the material and sold what he could on eBay. The prints included copies of the murals in the Town Hall. The prints were produced by Newbery. On the fronts he signed them and gave the locations (see below). On the backs he wrote, "To his Brother Tom from the



Artist. Corfe Castle, Dorset, Sept/29".



Hygiene and Beauty



(Above) Emily Symes washing the hair of two of her children, Phyllis and Mabel at the communal pump which provided water for 1, 2 and 3 Box Cottages and Garden Cottage. Tom Bartlett, retired blacksmith, watches the fun from his back door.

(Right) There was no barber's shop in the village. Instead the part-time travelling barber Fred Collier, visited his customers. Here he is giving Oscar Gale a trim outside the back door of Rose Cottage.

Fred travelled around the village on a bicycle with a box over the back wheel to carry his gear. In his later years he was rarely seen riding his bicycle. He just walked beside it.

