

Alderbury and the Railway

At the various fetes, bazaars, etc which the Group has attended over the years some of the photographs which it has exhibited that have created the most interest are those showing the old railway bridge at Whaddon. The questions which they have generated are 1) where was it and 2) was there a railway station in Alderbury?

The answer to the first question is easy to answer as villagers of a certain age can still remember it and indeed may have travelled on the line it carried. It was just below the site of the present Post Office and the line ran via Downton, Breamore, Fordingbridge and Verwood to West Moors and thence to Bournemouth.

The answer to the second question is also easy to answer – no, there wasn't a railway station in Alderbury, there was a halt at the bottom of Junction Road but it was only for the use of railway employees and their families. However, if things had turned out differently there might well have been a station in the village. As early as November 1892 the idea had been put forward and met with favourably. In November 1904 it was reported in the *Salisbury Times* that the promoters of such a scheme believed it would meet a long-felt want and would be of benefit to nearby villages including Pitton and Farley. In September of the following year it was stated that Alderbury Parish Council had warmly supported the idea of a railway station for passengers and goods on the L&SWR line. Nothing further has so far been found regarding this project so quite why it didn't go ahead is unclear.

It has been mentioned that the halt in Junction Road was for the use of railway employees and their families. According to the 1901 Census there were fifty men employed by the railway living in the village. They included porters, signalmen (older residents can still recall the signal box which stood at the bottom of Junction Road), platelayers and fettlers (railway maintenance men) so the halt was probably well used.

With the by-pass having been built so close to the railway line there probably isn't much scope for a station being provided for Alderbury, however desirable it might seem, but how different it could have been.