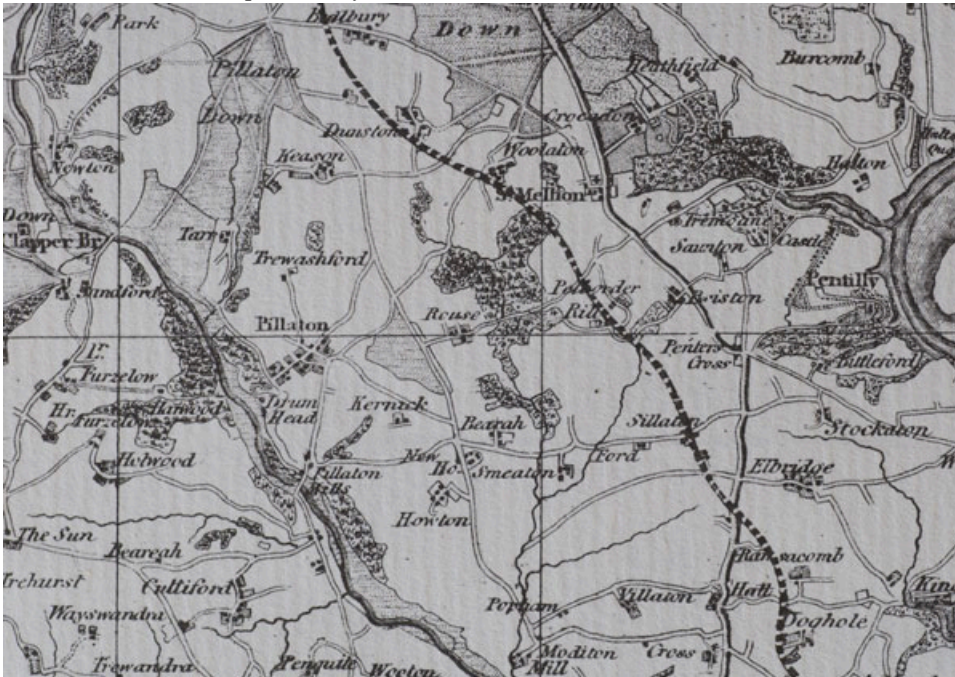


Pillaton Parish and Surroundings ca 1868

Below is a section of a map presented with the Three Towns Almanack for 1868 that shows Plymouth and the lower Tamar Valley area (the three towns being Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport before they merged under the name of Plymouth). Although much is still the same today, there are some differences:

- A number of place name spellings vary. For instance, Penter's Cross is now Paynter's Cross, Pentilly is now Pentillie and Tarr has become Tor, etc.
- The place at the SW corner of Pillaton village is shown as Drum Head. On the latest maps this is Washingplace although the building there is now derelict.
- There is no sign of what is now the main access road to the village, from the junction with the lane to Rowse (Rowse). This appears on a later map from 1894.
- What is now Pillaton Mill is shown as Pillaton Mills. Was there more than one mill there then?
- Leigh Farm and the section of road that runs east from the T-junction with the Howton to Popham road is missing. The road through to Elbridge only starts at the stream. Both the farm and road are shown on other maps before and after 1868 so presumably it is an unintentional omission.



The Railway that Might Have Been

The most obvious feature on the map though is the dotted line snaking its way up from the bottom right towards the top left indicating the proposed Saltash & Callington Railway, authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1865. Whether the line on the map shows the actual intended path, or is an indication of the likely route, is unclear.

The plan was for a branch from the main line at Saltash to run up to Callington and then join up with the Tamar, Kit Hill & Callington Railway which would go round the north of Kit Hill and down to Calstock. In the event, only the Kit Hill section was built (becoming the East Cornwall Mineral Railway). The financial depression following the 1866 crash of the Overend, Gurney and Company Bank meant that funding for the Saltash & Callington Railway was not forthcoming so plans were abandoned.

This was not the only attempt to run a line up from Saltash to Callington. About 30 years later, in 1895, a meeting was convened with the intention of building a new line. This time it would go further west to Notter before heading north to St Mellion and St Dominick and then skirting round the east of Callington to enter from the north. Permission to build was granted in 1900 but no construction took place and eventually all options lapsed in 1909, by which time there was a bus service in place between the two towns.

(NB: A considerably more detailed update to the above by Robin Dwane can now be found in the July 2023 edition of the Village News)