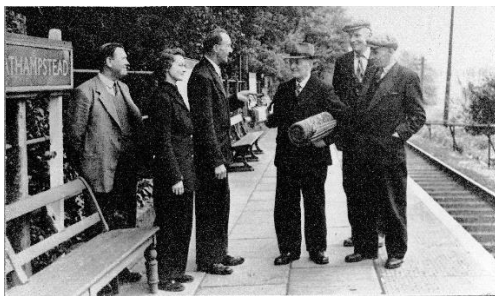




## News and events

- **Next meeting: Wednesday 20 April.** Next month's talk will be given by Elizabeth Eastwood and titled '**The Lost Palaces of Hertfordshire**'. Hertfordshire is home to several lost palaces. This talk recreates the glory of these lost palaces and tells their story. The talk will be preceded by a brief AGM.
- **Subscriptions** for the year 2022/23 (£8 for an individual, £12 for a couple) are due from 1<sup>st</sup> May. Please see the email we sent at the weekend for details.

## Gerald Lee



The information boards at the station platform include this photograph of the retirement in 1957 of Gerald Lee who had been stationmaster since 1934 and was a pillar of the community in Wheathampstead.

Elijah Gerald Lee (known as Gerald) was born on 21 May 1891 in Great Bentley in Essex where his father, also named Elijah Lee, was the stationmaster, having been promoted from the role of railway clerk. In 1901, the family had moved to Hatfield Peverel where Elijah senior was again the stationmaster and young Gerald, aged 9, was at school.

Gerald's first job on the railway was at Hampstead station where, aged 16, he was employed by the LNER in March 1908. Three years later, he was living with his father and sister in Bacton, Suffolk where his father was stationmaster. Gerald was working as a railway clerk, probably at his father's station. He learned to play the organ at this time.

He married Maud Packard, a farmer's daughter who was born in America and came to England aged 2, in Woodbridge, Suffolk in 1918. Their daughter Marian was born in 1920 and he took up his post as stationmaster in Wheathampstead in 1934. The October 1939 LNER '*Return of staff employed*' lists him as 'Station master 4th class' earning £230 per annum and paying rent of 13/3

per week to live at Station House which stood on the corner of Station Road and Codicote Road until it was demolished in the early 1970s.

Gerald Lee was a dedicated Christian and actively involved in St Peter's Church in Gustard Wood and at St Helen's. He was lay reader at both churches and organist and choirmaster at St Helen's. It was reported that he missed a service at St Helen's only once, after he had been knocked down by a car. He founded Wheathampstead Youth Club in 1941 and was Club President and Chairman of the management committee.

He retired from his post as stationmaster in 1957 after 23 years' service, moving from Station House to 6 Offa's Way, and as organist and choirmaster aged 72 in 1963, having been the longest serving organist, 22 years, in the history of the parish.

In February 1968 he sustained serious injuries when struck by a car while crossing Marford Road and died in St Albans City Hospital on 7 March. He was buried at St Helen's on 15 March but there is no record of his grave.

His obituary in the parish magazine describes him as "one who had become an institution and a loved and revered one ... small, grave figure, old-fashioned in manner, sparing in speech ... a railwayman of the old school ... one who loved his church, his music, his young people ...".



Can anyone explain why Mr Lee is holding a parrot in this photo?