



# Kemsley Present and Past

## KEMSLEY TODAY

The village of Kemsley is less than 100 years old. According to Wikipedia, at the end of the 19th century, the site on which the village sits, was simply a row of cottages beside a brick works.

But in 1924, with expansion impossible at the old Sittingbourne Paper Mills, the owner Edward Lloyd, built the new Kemsley Paper Mill, which served by a creek, allowed the direct importation of raw materials to the site. At the same time he built a garden village to house his employees, the core of which comprises the modern day Kemsley village. Kemsley today, is but a suburb of the rapidly expanding Sittingbourne.

The village also has a derelict pub 'The Kemsley Arms' (which was under threat of being developed into flats) but which has become the first building in Swale to be listed as an "asset of community value" under new legislation.

## **THE SITTINGBOURNE AND KEMSLEY LIGHT RAILWAY**

**HISTORY** -The line was developed as an industrial railway by paper maker Frank Lloyd in 1904, to transport pulp materials and finished products between Ridham Dock, on the Swale, and the company's paper mill at Sittingbourne, and from the mid-1920s to a second mill at Kemsley. In the late 1960s, the railway faced closure by its then owners Bowater, but the Locomotive Club of Great Britain accepted an offer to operate the railway from 1970. However, the section of line from Kemsley Down to Ridham Dock was abandoned for the redevelopment of the paper mills. Since then the railway has endured a turbulent history with the closure of the paper mills in Sittingbourne and the subsequent redevelopment of the site to become part of the Morrisons chain. The railway however, survived.

## **THE SITTINGBOURNE AND KEMSLEY LIGHT RAILWAY TODAY**

This 2 mile 2 ft 6 in (762 mm) narrow gauge heritage railway operates today regularly from Sittingbourne to the banks of The Swale. It is now a tourist attraction and part of the newly developed Milton Creek Country Park.



Kemsley and Sittingbourne Light Railway

Courtesy of Paul Best

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