

Locomotives at Sittingbourne Paper Mills

By H. C. CASSERLEY



[Photo]

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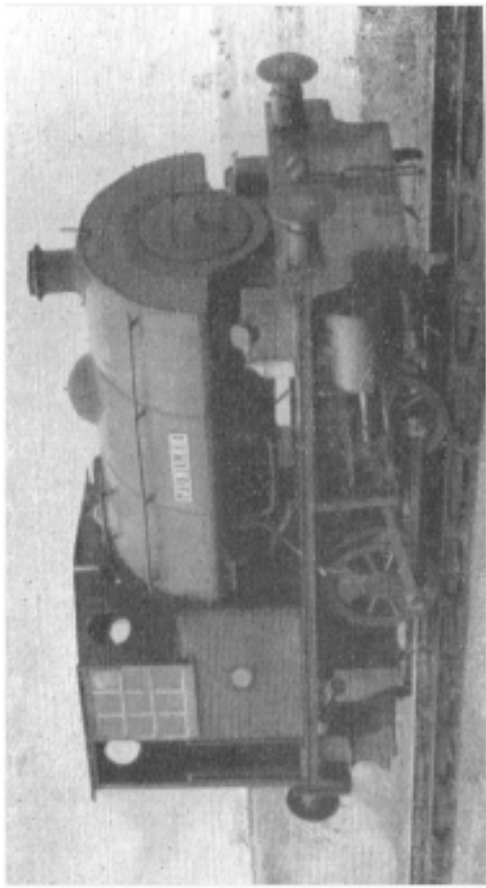
The most recent locomotive, 0-4-4-0 tank "Monarch," built in 1953

AMONG the many industrial concerns which operate railway systems of their own, is Bowater's Lloyd Pulp & Paper Mills Limited, of Sittingbourne, Kent, one of the largest paper manufacturers in the country. The mills are situated at Kemsley, which lies two miles north of Sittingbourne amid the flat marshy country bordering on the Swale, the narrow channel which divides the mainland from the Isle of Sheppey. The western end of this waterway, known as the Long Reach, is navigable to Ridham, where there is a large dock for the import of raw pulp for the mills.

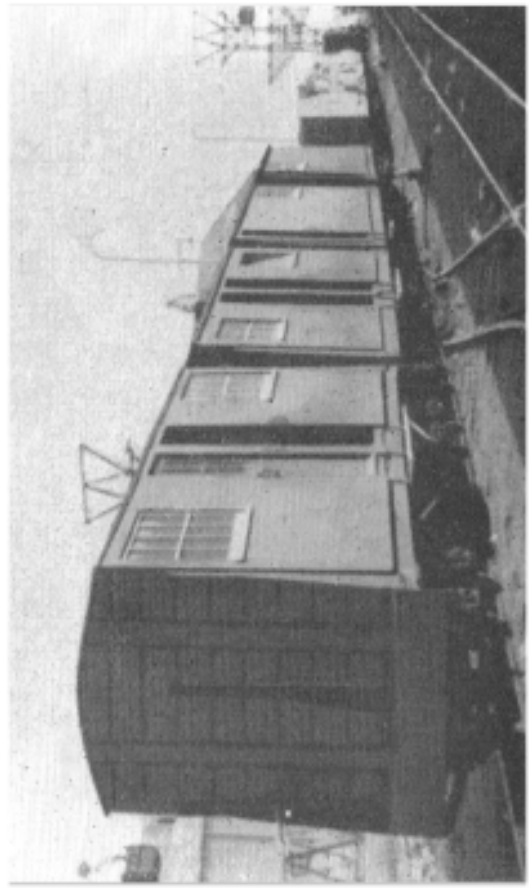
For the conveyance of materials between the dock, Kemsley, and the headquarters of the firm at Sittingbourne, there is an extensive railway system constructed to the 2 ft.-6 in. gauge. In addition to $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of "main line" between Sittingbourne and Ridham Dock, there are some 18 miles of sidings. There is also a $2\frac{1}{2}$ -mile length of standard-gauge track connecting the dock with the Sheerness branch of British Railways near Kings Ferry Bridge, the Isle of Sheppey's link with the mainland. The line is practically level throughout; the only earthworks are for a shallow cutting in the neighbourhood of Kemsley.

The railway was at first worked by horses. Steam traction was introduced in 1904, since when the stock has been gradually increased, and there are now 14 steam engines, and also a battery electric and a small diesel locomotive. The first were three 0-4-2 saddle-tanks—*Premier*, *Leader*, and *Excelsior*—and a similar engine, *Melior*, was obtained at a considerably later date. The latter is understood to have been purchased second-hand, but if this is so its original owners are not known. *Melior* differs from the other three in being fitted with Hackworth's link motion, an unusual type of valve gear. A larger locomotive, *Superior*, was supplied in 1920; this was a 0-6-2 tank, and it was followed by another of the same wheel arrangement, *Conqueror*, in 1922. This engine also has a distinctive valve gear, of Bagnall design.

Three further 0-6-2 tanks, similar to *Superior*, followed in 1932, 1934 and 1940. They were named *Alpha*, *Triumph*, and *Superb*. One more, *Chevallier* formerly owned by the nearby Chattenham & Upnor Light Railway, was purchased from Chatham Dockyard in 1950. Another second-hand engine was a Bagnall 0-4-0 saddle-tank, *Rattler*, works number 1973, which was purchased from

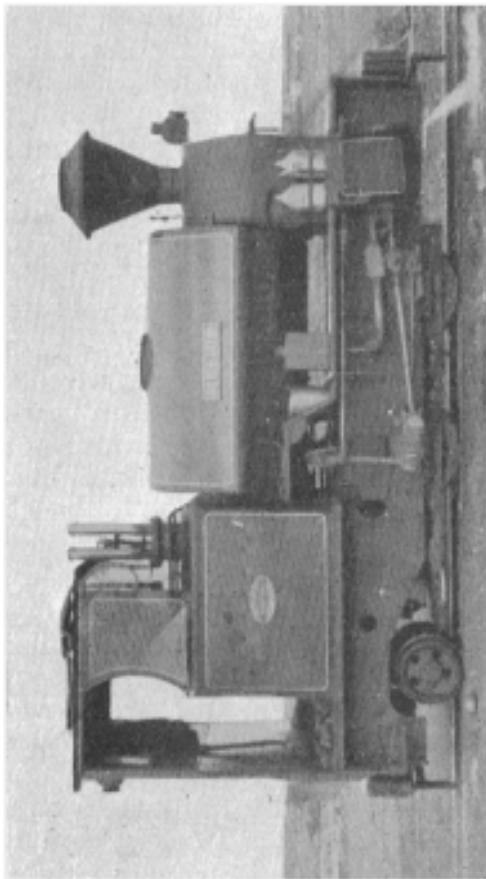


"Jubilee," the only standard-gauge locomotive

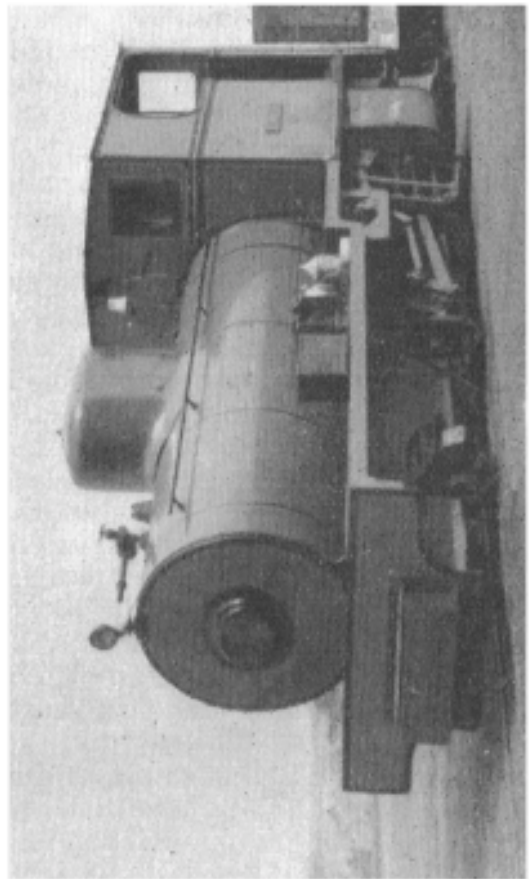


Passenger vehicles at Ridham Dock

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The 0-4-2 saddle-tank "Melior"



Fireless 2-4-0 engine "Unique"

Photos]

The Cape Copper Company Limited, of Jersey Marine, Swansea. It was scrapped in 1953. A fireless locomotive of the 2-4-0 wheel arrangement and named *Unique* was obtained in 1924, with cylinders of no less than 18½ in. diameter by 18 in. stroke; this is the second most powerful engine on the line. A similar but much smaller engine, a 0-4-0 named *Victor*, was built in 1929. These two locomotives are particularly useful for working into the mills at Kemsley, where there would be considerable fire danger from a normal engine. All the others, with the exception of *Superior* and

engine is, therefore, a cross between the two. Since its arrival some minor troubles have been experienced, notably with the firebars, but it is understood that these have now been overcome, and *Monarch* should prove a useful addition to the locomotive stock. It is intended for "main-line" duties, along with the 0-6-2 tanks, and by virtue of its flexible wheelbase will be able to negotiate the sharpest curves in the sidings.

Finally, for the short length of standard-gauge track there were two 0-4-0 saddle tanks, *Pioneer* and *Jubilee*. *Pioneer* was scrapped in 1953, and consequently when

PRINCIPAL PARTICULARS OF LOCOMOTIVES.

Name	Type	Date built	Makers' No.*	Driving wheels	Cylinders	Working pressure	Weight in working order	Tractive effort (at 85 p.c.)	
								lb.	tons
2 ft. 6. in. gauge									
<i>Premier</i>	0-4-2ST	1904	886	2 6	9 x 15	160	14½	5,508	5,508
<i>Leader</i>	"	1906	926	2 6	9 x 15	160	14½	5,508	5,508
<i>Excelsior</i>	"	1908	1049	2 6	9 x 15	160	14½	5,508	5,508
<i>Melior</i>	"	1924	4219	2 6	9 x 15	160	13½	5,508	5,508
<i>Superior</i>	0-6-2T	1920	4034	2 3	10 x 15	160	17½	7,554	7,554
<i>Alpha</i>	"	1932	2472	2 3	10 x 15	160	19½	7,554	7,554
<i>Triumph</i>	"	1934	2511	2 3	10 x 15	160	19½	7,554	7,554
<i>Superb</i>	"	1940	2624	2 3	10 x 15	160	19½	7,554	7,554
<i>Conqueror</i>	"	1922	2192	2 9½	13 x 18	160	27	12,442	12,442
<i>Chevalier</i>	"	1915	1877	2 6	12 x 15	160	27	9,792	9,792
<i>Unique</i>	2-4-0 fireless	1924	2216	2 9½	18½ x 18	80	26	12,600	12,600
<i>Victor</i>	0-4-0 fireless	1929	2366	2 3½	9 x 14	80	17½	2,804	2,804
<i>Monarch</i>	0-4-4-0T	1953	3024	2 0	(4) 9 x 12	185	24	12,737	12,737
	Battery Diesel	1921	515				10½		
		1953	4182				8		
Standard gauge									
<i>Jubilee</i>	0-4-0ST	1936	2542	3 0½	12 x 18	160	21½	9,658	9,658

*The 0-4-2 saddle tanks and *Superior* built by Kerr, Stuart & Co. Ltd.; *Chevalier* by Manning, Wardle & Company; battery locomotive by English Electric Co. Ltd.; diesel locomotive by Hunslet Engine Co. Ltd.; remainder by W. G. Bagnall Limited

Chevalier, are fitted with large spark arrestors to the chimneys.

The most recent addition to the narrow-gauge stock of the railway is the most interesting of all. This is *Monarch*, built by W. G. Bagnall Limited, of Stafford, in 1953, an articulated 0-4-4-0 tank of a type which has been used fairly extensively abroad, but is the only example to be found in this country. It runs on two separate independently-powered bogies, and might be described as a single-bogied "Fairlie," similar in some respects to the famous Spooner engines constructed for the Festiniog Railway; the main difference is that the true "Fairlie" double-enders had twin boilers, and the "single Fairlies" on that line had one power unit only, plus a trailing bogie. The new Sittingbourne

Jubilee is laid up for repairs an engine has to be borrowed from British Railways to take its place. This is usually an ex-S.E.C.R. Wainwright "P" class 0-6-0 tank; No. 31178 was loaned for a time recently. The engines are all painted bright green, and maintained in beautiful condition both externally and internally, which is particularly praiseworthy in view of the intensive use to which they are put, working almost continuously for six days a week. They are a great credit to Mr. F. G. Ashdown, the Locomotive Engineer, who takes a great pride in their upkeep.

On the main line of the railway there are scheduled 12 trains each way daily, including a number for conveying workmen employed at Ridham Dock to and

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from their homes in Sittingbourne. The passenger stock consists of somewhat austere bogie vehicles with wooden longitudinal seats, and few windows, but they are quite adequate for the purpose. There are no continuous brakes.

It is indeed refreshing in these days to find such a flourishing little railway system still vigorously worked almost

entirely by steam traction. It appears, moreover, that there is no early intention of considering any alternative method, as the present one is entirely satisfactory.

In conclusion, I must express my thanks for information included in this article to Mr. P. Mattocks, the Transport Manager, and Mr. F. G. Ashdown, the Locomotive Engineer, both of whom provided generous facilities for a recent visit of the Stephenson Locomotive Society to the railway.