

## ROSSETTI GARDEN

The area where the Rossetti Garden stands is an 'island' surrounded by double yellow lines, but conveniently faces the main railway station and bus terminus nearby. The council-owned land had already consisted of a grassed area, but it was felt it could be enhanced further by the garden project. There had been many planning objections in the past by the Council and Residents, complaining of losing another green space. Therefore the Council were happy to approve the plan for a 'Rossetti Memorial Garden'.

It was not going to be an ordinary garden – Birchington has several street names and buildings associated with famous writers and artists, so naming the garden after Rossetti in the area nearest to where he died, seemed a good idea. Local residents and Council members offered ideas for how the garden might look and as the garden is almost the shape of an artist's pallet, using this idea made sense.

Dr Henry Campbell from the Rossetti Society was approached for his thoughts on the subject and he and his members have donated money towards the feature of a 9 foot obelisk to stand within the garden, together with a plinth.

The Parish Council kindly donated seating and some of the planting. The idea of this garden was to create a cultural and tourist facility to draw people's attention to the presence of this famous man. Rossetti is an internationally famous artist and poet, who has paintings in many galleries including the Tate. He came to Birchington in February 1882 and died here on the 9<sup>th</sup> April that year. He is buried in the centre of the village in All Saints Churchyard, near the main door.

Visitors, who come from as far afield as Japan to see the monument on his grave in the form of an Ancient Irish Celtic Cross. Inside the church is a pair of windows erected in his memory by his mother. The left light contains a copy of his own painting of the Passover, designed by Frederick Shile, who also designed the right light depicting the blind man in Bethsaida.



(Article based on notes from  
Cllr Christine Chapman)