

## SEED MILL:

The seed mill stood just north of Birchington railway Station, roughly where the flats known as Rossetti Court now stand.

In **1757**, The Seed Mill burnt down, 'consuming much clover and Trefoin seed; damage £300', as the report in the local paper stated. It was obviously rebuilt because in **1796** it was used 'to separate clover and hop medic seeds from the husks and prepare them for sale' and was considered an unusual curiosity at the time.

Beach Avenue, which now runs down to the sea on the west of the site, did not exist then. Instead, there was a trackway that led down the east side of the building (what is now Rossetti Road) towards the sea. It then swung north-west to reach the gap in the cliffs at the end of Green Road, as the Beresford Gap had not yet been cut at this date.

On the **1840** Tithe Map, the plot numbered '350' is listed as the 'Windmill', owned by Lady Isabella Brydges and worked by Edward Neame. It occupied just over a quarter of an acre of land. The mill is shown on a map of 1837 as a windmill. Unfortunately the map does not state who its surveyor was, but he has accurately placed the mill in its position.

In a directory for **1847**, Edward Neame is listed as 'Seedsman and Maltster in Birchington' and in the **1861** census, the road is named 'Seed Mill Road'. This equates to what are now Lyell and Grenham Roads. The house that is now called 'Semaphore Cottage', 4 Grenham Road, was already built, but there must have been several other small cottages along this part as well. The census reads:

1. Seed Mill Road : Thomas Steed - Carter
  2. Seed Mill Road : - Agr. Lab.
- The Cottage : Seed Mill Road - Shepherd  
+ a number of other cottagers.

On the **1872** Ordinance Survey map, there is a 'Seed mill' drawn on the site of Rossetti Court flats, but by this time it is listed as 'unused'. This situation may have been reversed, as there is a suggestion that it was eventually converted into a steam driven mill for the last few years of its life.

In his book '**Dusty Miller**', (1947) W. P. Hudson states on p. 22:

There was another windmill at Birchington besides ours, in my earliest recollections. This was situated at the rear of the railway station on land now occupied by the Bungalow Hotel. (This is slightly inaccurate, because the Bungalow Hotel was built on its site in about 1880, and we know that the seed mill was still in existence at that time.) It was known as the oil mill, as I presumed it was used for crushing and extracting oil from linseed, grown in the neighbourhood. What was the end of this old mill, I do not know.'