



# St Anne's Centre

## A brief history



*As often as you did it for one  
of my least brothers, you did  
it for me.*

In 1945 an Order of Catholic nuns, The Poor Servants of the Mother of God, (SMG) acquired a house in Lansdowne Road, Hove and named it St Anne's Convent. Here they ran a children's home, as well as a home for adults with learning difficulties. The children who were in the home have fond memories of St Anne's.

In the early 1980s there was a change in government policy and along with similar institutions, the children's home was closed. The sisters looked for a new direction and discerned that there was little or no provision for the many homeless people on the streets of Brighton and Hove and in so 1983 they founded St Anne's Day Centre.



The sisters, with the help of volunteers, ran the Centre for the next eleven years. It was solely funded by the SMG Order with additional support from members of the laity and local churches. With the number of sisters declining, the vast convent building was sold in 1994 to the Buddhist Community and the sisters moved to a smaller property next door.

Coincidentally, St John the Baptist Primary School on Upper Bedford Street was rehoused to a brand new school on Whitehawk Hill. At the invitation of Father Barry, the parish priest, Sister Joan and Sister Mary were invited to relocate, and after Easter 1994 on St Anne's Day they reopened in the old school building.



In 2000, the sisters, now in their eighties, announced that they would be retiring. With no other sisters available to continue the work, the group called The Friends of St Anne's founded some years earlier by Sister Joan decided that they would take over the running of the Centre. In May 2003 charitable status was achieved and St Anne's Trust was formed. This means that Gift Aid rebates on donations can be claimed.



On 30th April 2007 we faced our most severe crisis – an arson attack closed the Fitzherbert Centre and our future was once more in doubt. We have always believed in God's Providence and it was to be proved once more. St Mary's Anglican Parish, close to the Fitzherbert Centre, offered us temporary accommodation. Everybody seemed happy at St Mary's and after much negotiation and a new extended kitchen we reopened and continue to serve 60-80 homeless or isolated visitors in their church hall each day.