



St Ann's Well Gardens

About St Ann's

'An oasis of peace all year round,' St Ann's Well Gardens is one of the city's most well loved parks. It is home to a wide range of native and exotic trees which give the park its unique character and provide shelter for a wide range of wildlife. Nature conservation has a high profile with designated fenced off areas, a streambed and a well stocked ornamental pond. Each season offers its own highlights from the the fantastic displays of Spring crocus to the rich autumn colours while the friendly grey squirrels are a firm favourite with visitors.

St Ann's is also a regular winner of the coveted national Green Flag Award.

History

St Ann's rose to fame in the 1700's when Dr Richard Russell sent some of his clients to drink the water from the Spring – heralded as one of the finest natural springs in Europe. During the 1880's St Ann's was restored to become a pleasure garden offering a wide range of entertainment from fortune telling to a monkey house.

In 1908, the former Hove Council purchased the gardens from Mr d'Avigdor Goldsmid for £10,000 and they were opened to the public on Empire Day in

1908. St Ann's Well Gardens celebrated its centenary on 24 May 2008, with a community event organised by the Friends Group.

St Ann's also has links with early pioneering film makers. Esme Collings shot the oldest surviving 'blue' movie there in 1896 while George Albert Smith built his own camera and film studio in the gardens and shot several films in the gardens.

The well

Formerly known as The Chalybeate (iron bearing) spring, this ornamental wishing well marks the site of the old spa. Mrs Fitzherbert, 'mistress' to the Prince of Wales, wrote in 1830 how she was 'wonderfully improved' by drinking the spa waters every day. A furnished pump room was built around the spring and in 1882 the Brighton Gazette reported that it was one of the finest springs in Europe. The pump room was demolished in 1935.

The Chalybeate spring is also the starting point of a ley line that continues over the South Downs and beyond.

Enclosed Garden

Once a croquet lawn, the enclosed scented garden was designed to provide a 'sensory experience in a safe environment' for blind and visually impaired visitors, but is equally as popular with people of all ages.

Enter through an archway and explore the touch, feel and smell of a variety of plants. A guide rail leads visitors around the central square.

Children's playground

One of the city's largest playgrounds, St Ann's offers a range of play experiences for children and toddlers, including a huge slide. Dogs are not permitted in the play area.

Garden cafe

The cafe was erected in the 1970's. In 2005 it was completely renovated.

Open all year round, this licensed cafe serves home cooked food including all-day breakfasts, homemade cakes and organic fair trade coffees.

Toilets

The toilets at St Ann's can be found near the cafe and include facilities for men, women and disabled visitors. There are also baby changing facilities.

LGBT Memorial Tree

This weeping cherry tree was planted in January 2007 to remember all the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) people, friends and family lost to or affected by suicide. The planting was a joint initiative between the MindOUT mental health group and Brighton & Hove City Council.

Pond

The well stocked pond is home to spectacular water lilies and huge fish. The pond also has its own biological filter system.

Bowls Pavilion

The pavilion is home to the St Ann's Well Gardens Bowling Club which was formed in 1920. This popular green is also open to the public on a 'pay and play basis.'

Look out for Open Days when the club offers free tuition for potential new members.

Contact information

Cityparks (01273) 292929
email parks@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Information about Park Rangers and Friends of Groups (01273) 292929

Sports bookings (01273) 292704

Police, non-emergency 0845 6070999
or in case of an emergency 999

