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ABOUT BELGRAVE MELA

Community Carnival

In 1982, the local authority was keen to organise a one-off festival to help bring the people and communities together. As part of their community cohesion strategy, in partnership with Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, they decided to stage the 'Belgrave Carnival' – a fete celebrating cultures and communities.

Organised with the help of Steve Boud, who at the time was the community coordinator for Belgrave, the event was a huge success and, as a result, it continued to take place annually for the next seventeen years in Cossington Park.



The 'Mela' milestone

As word of the festival began to spread, the crowds grew and in 1987 the festival was renamed the 'Belgrave Mela' to reflect the predominantly South Asian community and honor the way in which the festival brought the people of the community together, just like traditional Mela festivals in India.



Leicester's Mela

By 1999, the festival's reputation had spread not just across Leicester, but across the region and even the UK and it wasn't long before it was renamed the 'Leicester Belgrave Mela' in recognition of its national status. The South Asian arts and Indian culture festival set the benchmark for dozens of similar summer festivals which began to take place in other major cities across the country. The festival soon outgrew its native home of Cossington Park and from 2000 to 2004 the Leicester Belgrave Mela was held a mile further down Leicester's famous 'Golden Mile', Belgrave Road, in Abbey Park.



In the heart of the city

In 2006, the celebrations moved once again, this time to Leicester City Centre. As the first Mela in the country to explore a city centre location it was an opportunity to open the festival to the wider communities of Leicester and beyond.

