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MELA SITES

Cossington Street Recreation Ground (1982 – 1999)

Situated in the heart of Belgrave just next to the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, Cossington Recreation Ground (also affectionately known as 'Rekky Park' and 'Cossy Park') was a hub of activity for the huge Asian population that had migrated to the city and was the natural choice to host the festival.

Surrounded by Cossington sports hall, swimming baths, Belgrave Library and rows of terraced houses, the area was renowned for its busy community feel. From family picnics to games of cricket, because of its ideal location in the middle of the Golden Mile, there was always something going on in the park - a tradition that continues to this day.



Abbey Park (2000 – 2004)

Abbey Park is Leicester's premier park. The River Soar divides this beautiful park into two areas. On the western side of the river are the fascinating Abbey Grounds with the remains of the twelfth century Leicester Abbey, and the ruins of Cavendish House, a seventeenth century mansion. To the east of the river lies the highly decorative Victorian part of the park with its evergreen shrubberies, trees, boating lake, miniature railway, and formally planted flower displays.

It was the East side of the river that became host to the Leicester Belgrave Mela from 2000 to 2004. At its peak, the two-day weekend festival attracted crowds in excess of 120,000 people, not just from the UK but across the world and firmly put Leicester on the map.



City Centre (2006 – Present Day)

As part of the festival's development and to keep up with the ever-changing demands on outdoor events, the festival established a new home in Leicester city centre in 2006. The city centre incorporates most of Leicester's shopping, with the Highcross and the Haymarket Shopping Centres as well as the historic core of Leicester such as Leicester Cathedral and Leicester Market.

The new infrastructure and shape of the festival included the foundation of a nationally recognised Mela Bazaar in the popular market place, the largest and finest market of its type in Europe. The event creates its presence around the city's clock tower, with 2 stages and free-flowing stalls and activities. These festivals attract up to 20,000 people in one day and its central location meant the celebrations and festivities were opened up further to encourage engagement from wider communities.

