



History

Here's a brief overview of the history of Bradford Mela ...



Melas originate from the Indian sub-continent (the word 'Mela' means 'to meet' in Sanskrit, the ancient Indian language), where they are traditionally a gathering of people celebrating their community, much like village fairs in Britain.

The first Bradford Mela is where it all began in the UK, way back in September 1988. It was a small scale event by today's standards, held on playing fields above the University, but proved a resounding success, attracting over 10,000 visitors.

In the following years the Mela moved to a bigger venues to accommodate audience numbers which have grown to over 100,000 people, moving firstly to Lister Park and then to Peel Park, which is its current home.


Bradford Mela retains the family friendly mix of food, quality stage entertainment, street theatre, market stalls, children's activities, funfair rides and community information that made the first event so special.


Bradford Mela is well-known throughout the UK, attracting people from across the country, with roughly a quarter of visitors coming from outside the district in 2008.

Bradford Mela established the blueprint for other British Melas, with teams from Edinburgh, Manchester and London visiting Bradford and taking ideas back to develop their own events.


Bradford Mela organisers continue to lead the way - they have helped set up the European Mela Network, which gives guidance and advice on shaping Mela events across the continent, and last year members of this group visited events in India to pick up tips and contacts to help shape the development of the artform in the UK.


The Bradford Mela Mascots


 1988
The first event of its kind in Britain.


 1989
The move to Lister Park.


 1990
Festival Finale.


 1991
The Lord Mayor's Parade.

 1992
Move to July.

 1993
Return of the Stage on the Lake.


 1994
Temporary move to Bowling Park


 1995
Return to Lister Park.

 1996
The year of the Egyptians.





 1997
Bradford's Centenary Year.


 1998
The move to Peel Park.

 1999
The second year at Peel Park.

 2000
'The World In A City'

 2001
A peaceful event in difficult times.


 2002
Under new management.


 2003
Big name acts top the bill.


 2004
Bradford Council's first mela.


 2005
A sizzling hot mela.

 2006
Bradford's Big Summer.

 2007
The mela that never was!

 2008
Destination Bradford Mela

 2009
The 21st Anniversary

 2010
Bollywood Flash Mob