






## Leicester Rowing Club Chronology

This account has been culled from a few secondary sources, particularly the researches of Mike Dawkins.

1882	Founded at Belgrave on the North side of Leicester apparently from an amalgamation of three smaller clubs, themselves founded in the 1870s, with the stated aim of representing the City in Regatta competitions. The Club initially used the canal stretch at Belgrave. The first Captain was Mr. WG Linnell.
1885	First competition at Loughborough and District Regatta. The boats were transported on a specially adapted horse drawn dray.
1885	First Leicester Regatta held on a river course ending in Abbey Park. The regatta was part of the Abbey Park Flower Show. A reporter for the Leicester Advertiser noted that he "... <i>never expected to see such excellent boating as [I] had done that day. I was not aware that there were any men in Leicester who could row as had been seen that afternoon.</i> "
1887	Leicester sprint regatta over 500 yards established. The races were for pewter tankards (pots) which were retained and silver trophies which were held for a year. The trophies were " <i>...filled with champagne to wet them..</i> "
	
1888	The club outgrew its first site and moved to a boathouse at Hawley's Dye works. This was still on the north side of the city but on Frog island. However the rowing water was limited and for the next twenty years or so the Club's energies were focused on raising funds for a new purpose built boathouse. Sometime in the next few years the club may have moved again to an allotment garden site near Abbey Gate.
	
1906	<p>Construction of a 100ft x 50ft wooden boat house at the bottom of Filbert Street, opposite the Bede Island Meadows baths. The boathouse housed 6 fours, 4 pairs, 3 whiffs and 8 tubs on the ground floor and a committee room, dressing room and showers upstairs. The opening ceremony was performed by Lady Faire "... <i>in the presence of a large and fashionable gathering.</i>" The boathouse was funded with the help of local business which contributed to the £250 building costs and the £100 club debt. Sir Samuel Faire, responding on behalf of the supporters that day said "...<i>some people in other towns were surprised that Leicester folk should be able to do anything in the way of rowing, but from what I can hear I think the Leicester Club can show the lead to many other clubs... Boating was a fine sport and those Gentlemen who had so successfully kept it alive in the town deserved to be warmly commended for their efforts in this direction.</i>"</p> <p>Rowing now takes place on the Mile Straight to the south-east of the city centre. The mile straight was widened for flood protection in 1891, eliminating several bends and locks. This reconstruction made the best stretch of rowing water in Leicestershire. Although only 1800m from lock to lock it was wide enough to take two boats side by side and had a metalled towpath over its full length - invaluable for coaching. The sunken</p>

	water level also meant that the river was shielded from the wind in almost all directions, allowing rowers to venture out in the strongest winds with barely a ripple on the water. To this day Leicester Rowers are notorious for being over sensitive to wind and waves when they travel to less favoured waters
1920	Club reforms after the Great War
1940	The construction of a new power station forces the club to move across the river to present site on the southern tip of Bede Island. Old <a href="#">swimming lido</a> buildings formed the clubhouse and changing rooms with various temporary buildings housing the boats. The accommodation was noted to be "cribbed cabined and confined". During the War, Leicester City Council records were kept at the Clubhouse, an annexe being built to accommodate a night watchman.
	
1945	During the second world war a concrete footbridge was built over the regatta course in Abbey Park. The bridge had two piers which effectively made the river too narrow for racing. Since then all regattas have been held on the Mile Straight. This photo shows the finish of the new course with the power station and the old Leicester City West Stand in the background.
	
1949	First Leicester Quarts Regatta held in autumn. Autumn regattas had a problem; due to weed growth during the summer the channel was often too narrow for racing and the club had to rely on the weed being cut in order to hold the event. The weed is still a problem in late summer even today. After the war the Club was represented at Regattas all over the midlands. At distant regattas crews would race in "Committee Boats" provided by the organising club and traveled to events on the train carrying their 13 foot long oars with them
1952	Messrs. Edgars Raibacis, Bickley, Jones, Akots and Marshall with their amassed silverware for the season of 1952.
	
1962	A new larger boathouse was constructed, mostly thanks to Mr. Pete Barnacle, which lasted until the current boathouse was built in 1996.
1970	Club becomes mixed, first women's crew to represent LRC at open regattas.
1972	The power station across the river from the club closes down. The good news was that the outflow from the cooling water no longer caused a thick fog in winter or pushed the boats across the river when in full flow, the bad news was that the river now froze over occasionally in winter.



1995 Club is awarded grants from Sports Council Lottery fund and Foundation for Sports and Arts towards the cost of a new boathouse with changing rooms, committee room and bar above. The total cost is around £465,000.



1996 New clubhouse opened on November 23rd 1996 by Mr. Peter Haining.

