

DRAGLINE HERITAGE WEEKEND: 12 - 13th September

St Aiden's Nature reserve, Great Preston.

Lots of different activities were taking place on this heritage weekend. On Saturday 12th I went along to visit the Dragline on the edge of St Aiden's reservoir and nature reserve. It is situated between Allerton by Water and Great Preston. There is a heritage society which keep this monster of engineering going, which was donated by the Coal Board and of which only two remain. It was used to opencast coal and other minerals throughout the North of England. I remember seeing these huge machines as big as a block of flats on Methley lane, Oulton where Methley Park Hospital now stands. Also on land near to Old Snyderdale as well as St Aiden's in the 1960s - 70s. **(Do you remember them?)** They walked on feet 25ft long X 12ft wide and had a jib 130ft long. Scooping over a ton of materials in each bucket.



The Dragline.



Young boy at the controls



The enormous jib



Boy in a bucket

You are able to walk along the full length of the jib, with willing helpers showing you around and explaining the work these amazing machines did in excavating the landscapes and creating lakes, reservoirs etc.

Well worth a visit to this site on the next open day.

Tony Lucas