

West Lancashire Dry Docks

About the Docks

West Lancashire Dry Docks Initiative

The West Lancs Dry Dock Restoration Initiative was driven by the local communities of Parbold and Burscough in the form of Parbold Heritage Group and Burscough Heritage Group in conjunction with the Canal & River Trust and Parbold Parish Council.

The Lathom site is a Grade 2 listed structure but the Parbold Site, despite its historical significance, has not been listed as yet.

The main aims of this project are to clean up both docks and immediate surrounding areas by removing overgrown vegetation, later non original additions, upgrading footpaths where necessary and providing historical and heritage information about the docks and the impact of the canal in the growth and development of these villages.

It is hoped that some external funding may be gained to restore the docks.

Lathom Dry Dock

The Lathom dock is approximately half a mile east of Burscough village and Parbold another 3 miles along the towpath and there are plans in place to improve the condition of the towpath for both cycling and walking . Once this project is completed this will link both villages with a walk worth making, bringing more visitors into both villages and improving the environment for the local and greater communities.

The Dry Dock at Lathom is purpose built and connects to the top of the Rufford Branch, it was probably in use from the late 18th Century when the canal links were completed. The basin can be isolated from the canal using stop planks then drained via a sluice and channel back into the Rufford Branch at a lower level down the lock flight, the basin is refilled by closing the sluice and removing the top stop planks then the rest once the water levels had equalised allowing the entry and exit of boats into the dock. The Lathom Dock is a Grade 2 listed structure and was in use up until around 1980.

The Dock has not been used in recent times - the original boatbuilders hut has been demolished and houses around the basin have been extended - it is understood that the dock fell out of use due to leakage through the walls damaging the basements of the surrounding cottages.



OS Map 1845 showing the Dry Dock Identified as a Graving Dock by the Top Locks on the Rufford Branch.



Dock at Lathom in operation in early 1900's



The drydock at Top Locks in the late-1970s, with the Juno under repair. Formerly one of the coal boats belonging to John Parkes & Sons, at this time it usually provided accommodation alongside the sports field at Parbold.



Dock at Lathom in April 2017
