

PART ONE

THE DEARNE AND DOVE CANAL

Hoyle Mill to Stairfoot

Due to the increase in volumes of coal and iron workings in the area the Don Navigation Company agreed to build a canal from Swinton to Barnsley. This became known as the Dearne and Dove Canal. In part one of a series of three articles, **Peter Hadfield** looks at the development of the canal and the route it took from the aqueduct carrying the Barnsley canal to Stairfoot.

During the late 18th century, the road system in the West Riding of Yorkshire was in such an appalling state that it consisted mainly of mud tracks.

After opening their waterways to Tinsley in Sheffield, the Don Navigation Company established a trans-shipment depot at Swinton as the road system was totally inadequate

for the movement of goods. The Marquis of Rockingham had tentatively put forward the idea of making the River Dearne navigable to Barnsley as early as 1773, but the proposal came to nothing.

It was not until 1792 that shareholders of the Don Navigation Company agreed to build a canal from Swinton to Barnsley, in order to meet the needs of the increasing volumes

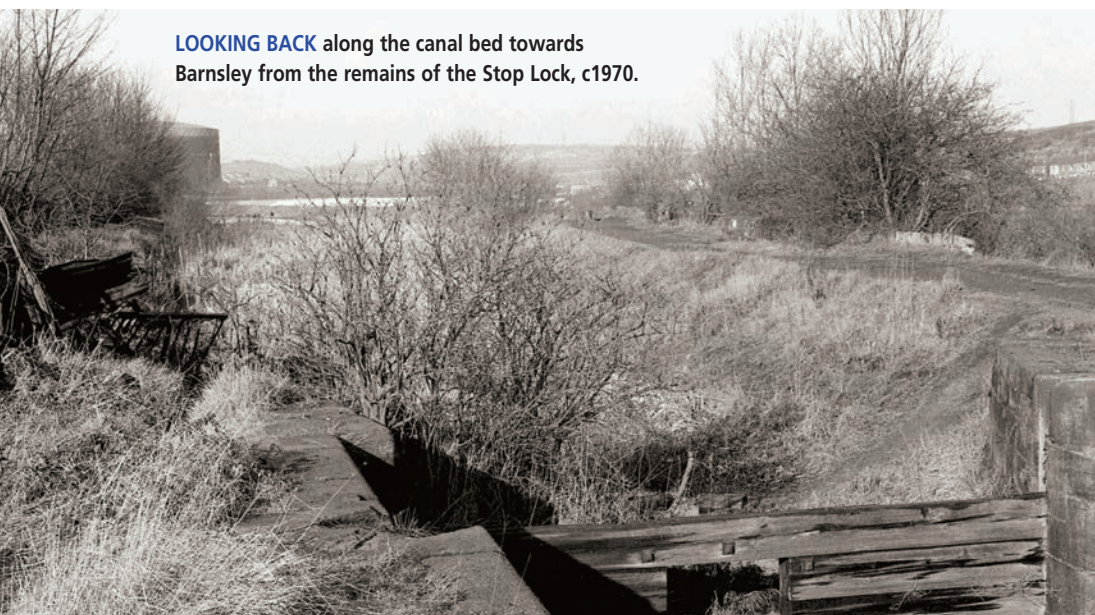
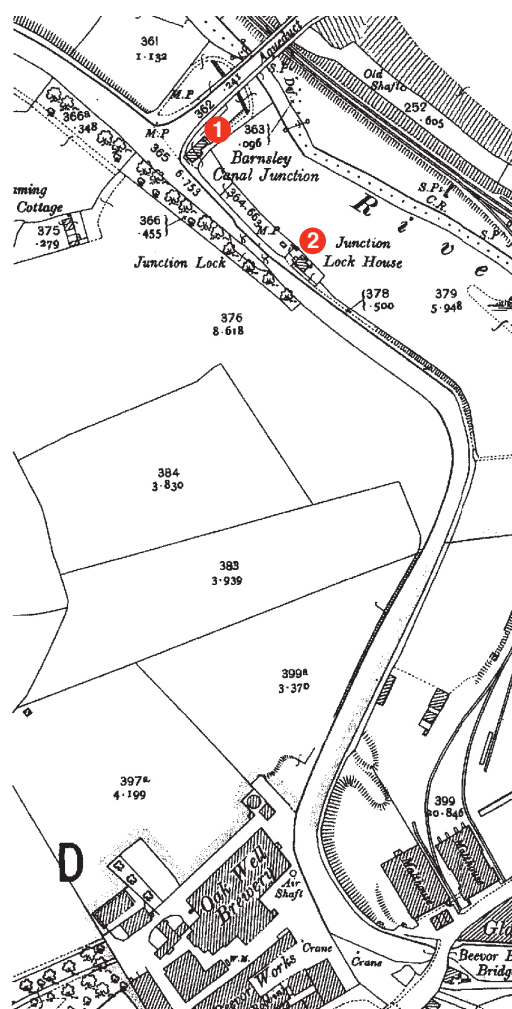
Editor's note

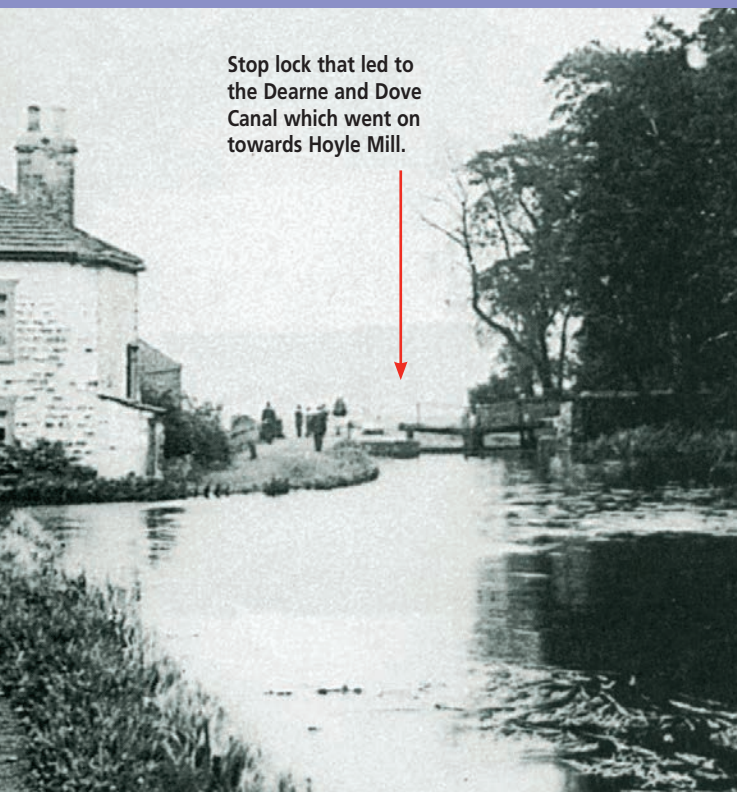
The numbers on the photographs correspond with the numbers on the maps and aerial photographs.

LOOKING BACK along the canal bed towards Barnsley from the remains of the Stop Lock, c1970.

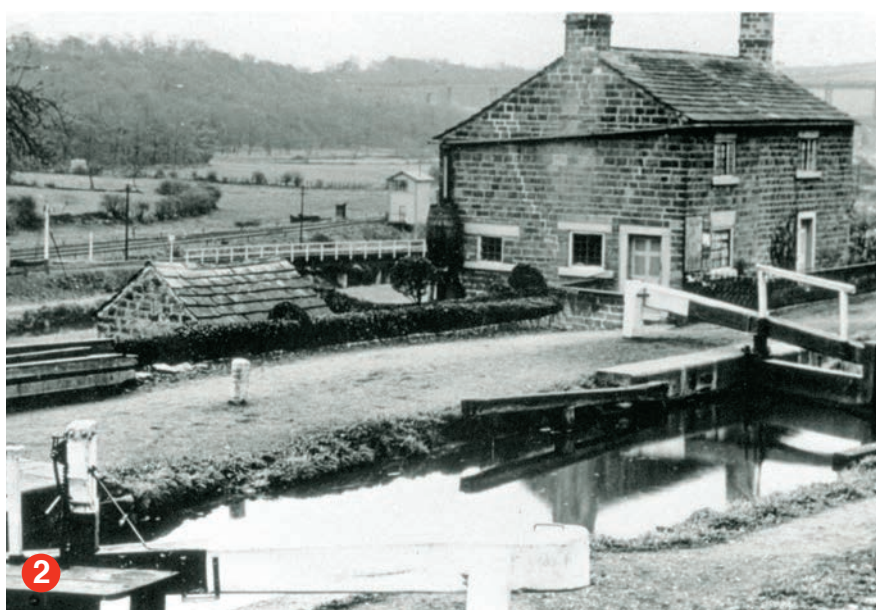


LOOKING FROM the direction of the Old Mill Basin towards Hoyle Mill. The Barnsley Canal goes to the left of the house and then over the aqueduct on its way towards Cundy Cross. The Dearne and Dove Canal was beyond the stop lock and went towards Hoyle Mill.





Stop lock that led to the Dearne and Dove Canal which went on towards Hoyle Mill.



JUNCTION LOCK HOUSE – a little further down from the house in the photograph on the left. This was the junction of the Dearne and Dove Canal as it ran into the Barnsley Canal. The location of the house along with the house in the photograph on the left can be seen in the map below.

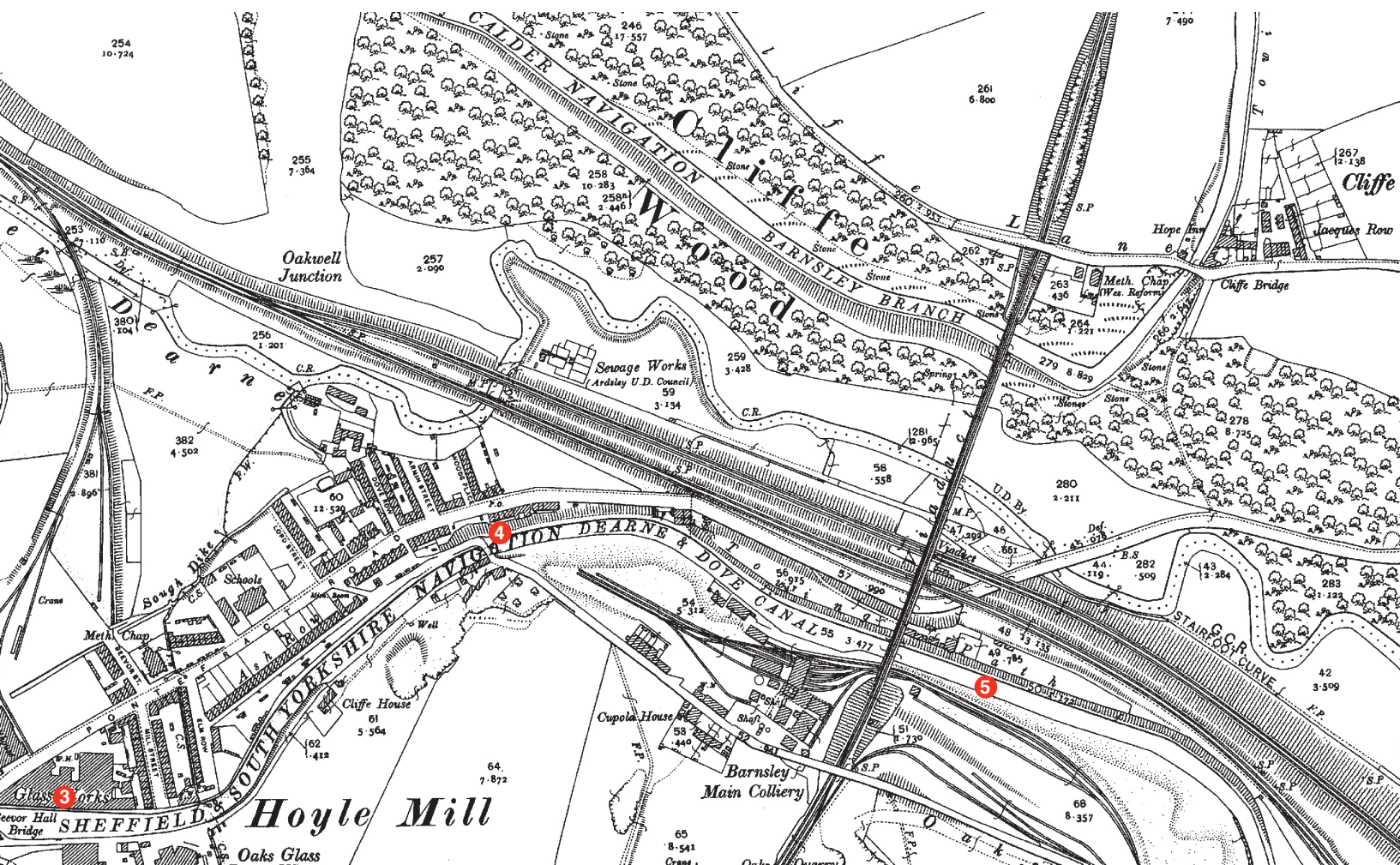
of coal and iron works in the area.

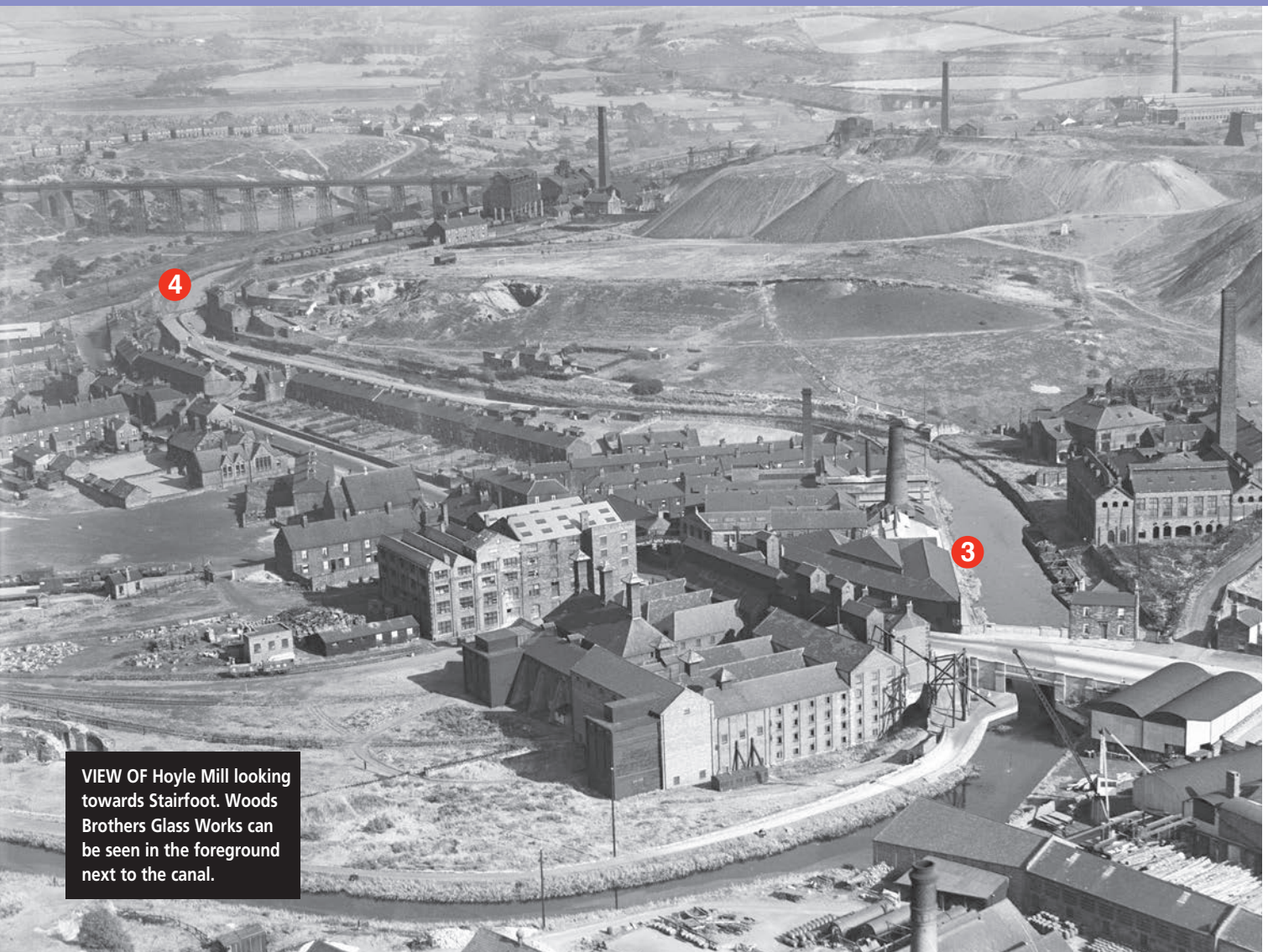
As the Aire and Calder Navigation was already in the survey stages of constructing a canal from Wakefield to

Barnsley (Barnsley Canal), time was of the essence for the Don Navigation Company to act quickly to progress with their £50,000 estimated proposal. Robert Whitworth, senior under

William Jessop's supervision, was engaged to do the survey. Acts of Parliament for both canals were granted in June 1793.

The Dearne and Dove Canal was to run for 9.63 miles through





VIEW OF Hoyle Mill looking towards Stairfoot. Woods Brothers Glass Works can be seen in the foreground next to the canal.

Swinton, Wath, Wombwell and Stairfoot, where it would finally join the Aire and Calder's Barnsley Canal at Hoyle Mill.

Nineteen locks were needed to

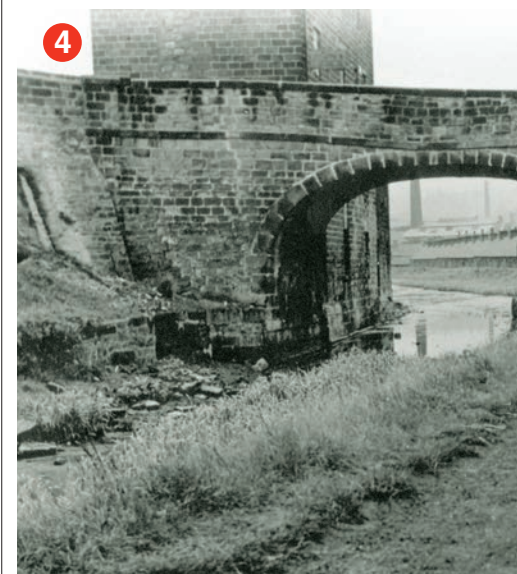
raise the level 127 feet from the River Don. Two branches were to be built, one to Elsecar, where six locks were needed in order to raise the canal 48 feet to the

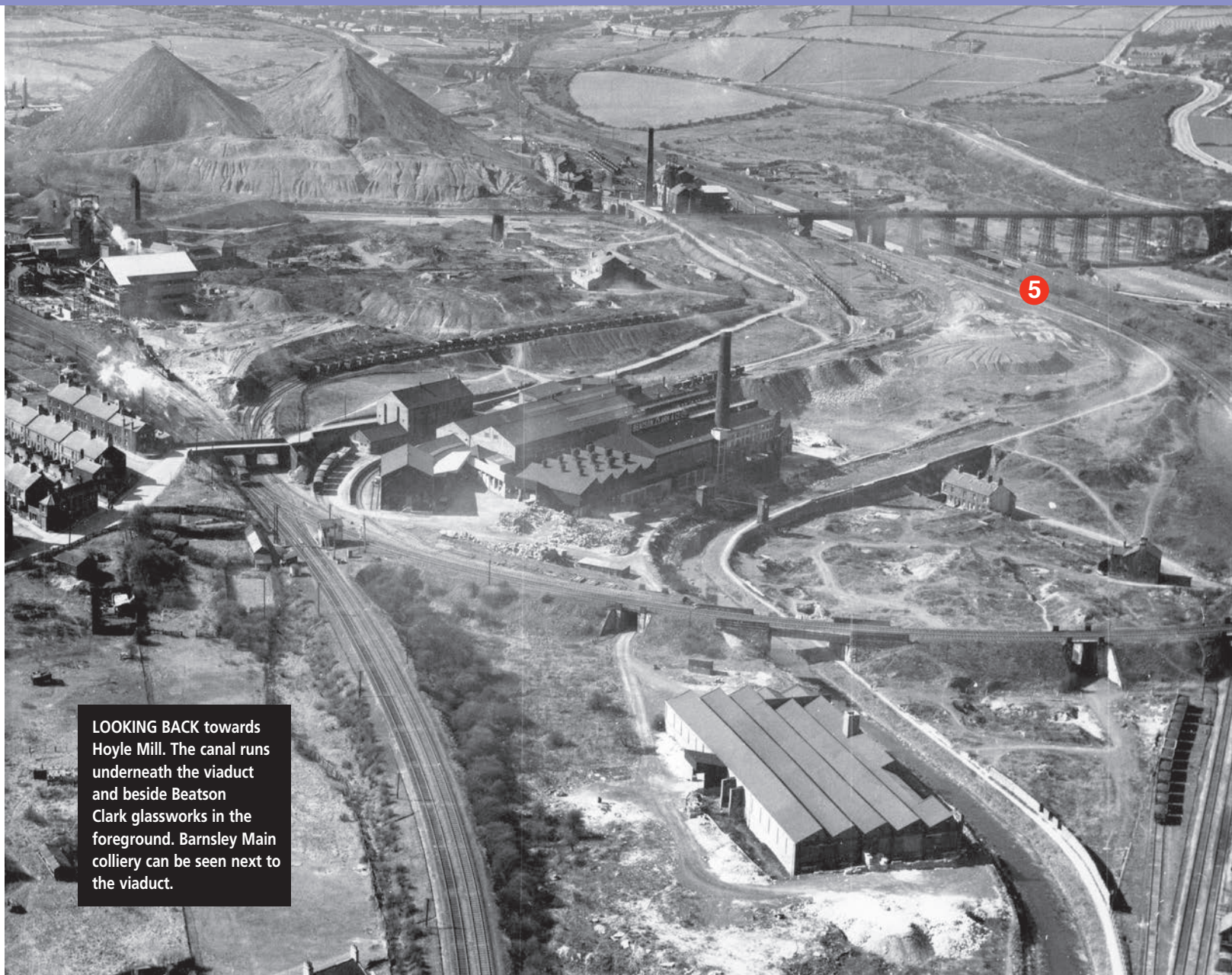
terminus basin, and the other to Worsbrough, which required no locks. The length of each branch was just over 2 miles long and two reservoirs, one at Elsecar and one at Worsbrough, were needed to feed the canal with water.

By December 1798 the canal was open to Elsecar,



THE CANAL at Beevor Hall Bridge. On the right is Woods Brothers Glass Works. The view is looking back towards Barnsley.

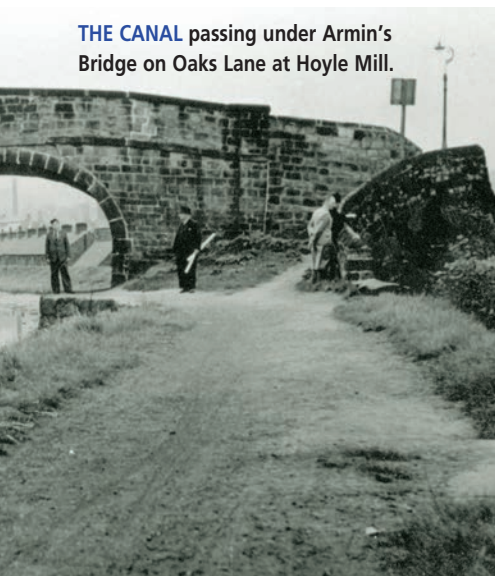




LOOKING BACK towards Hoyle Mill. The canal runs underneath the viaduct and beside Beatson Clark glassworks in the foreground. Barnsley Main colliery can be seen next to the viaduct.

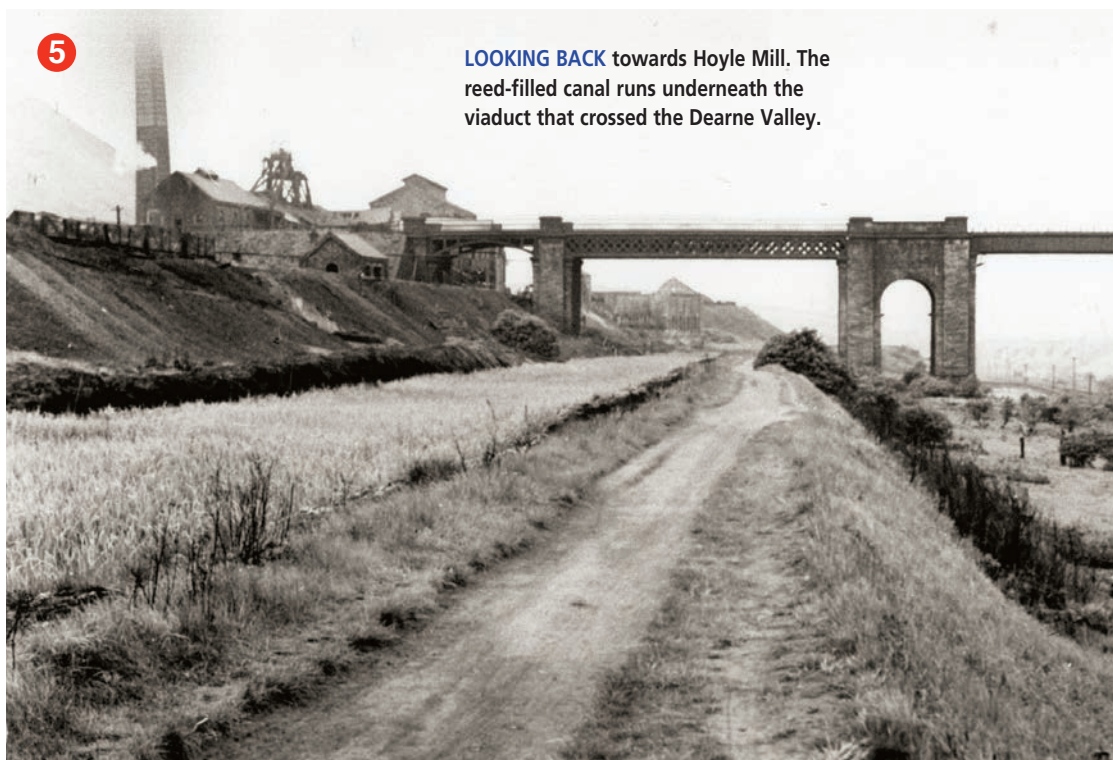
and the transport of coal from the colliery brought welcome revenue, as the construction costs had exceeded the original estimate.

THE CANAL passing under Armin's Bridge on Oaks Lane at Hoyle Mill.



5

LOOKING BACK towards Hoyle Mill. The reed-filled canal runs underneath the viaduct that crossed the Dearne Valley.



VIEW OF THE canal as it passed through Stairfoot and on towards Wombwell. The canal ran by the side of The Keel (number 10), which is still a pub in 2015.



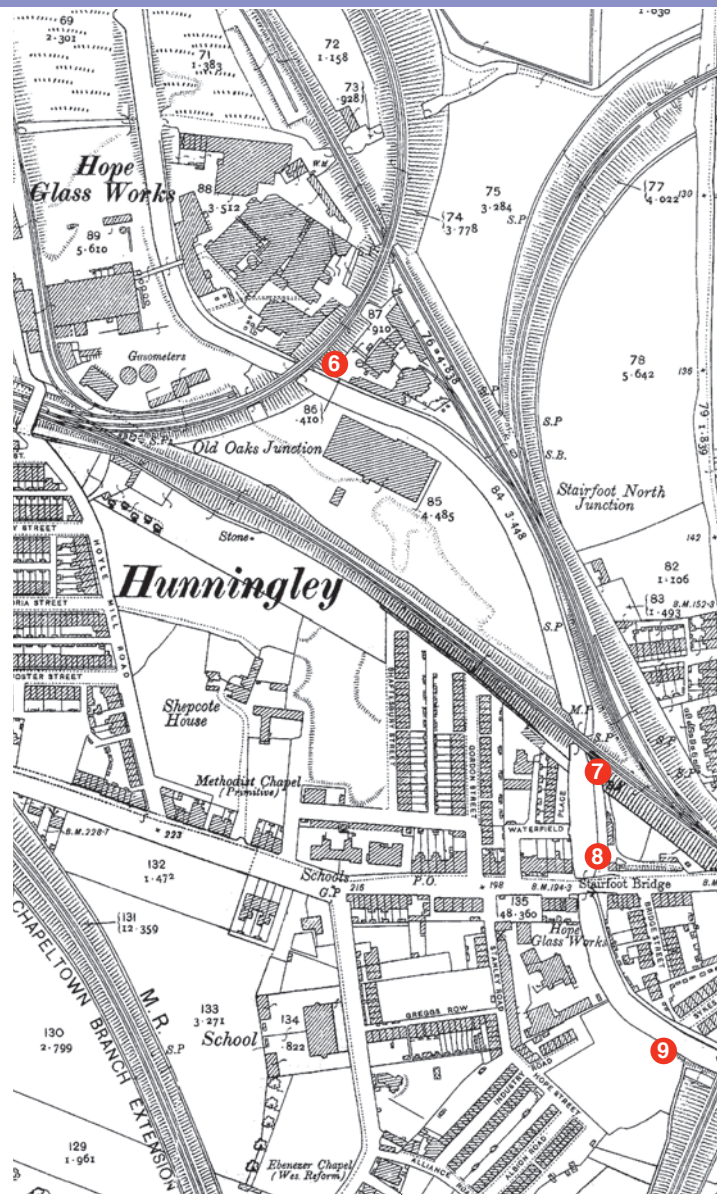


On 12 November, 1804, the stop lock leading to the Barnsley Canal at Hoyle Mill was successfully flooded, therefore, the Dearne and Dove Canal was declared open.

Although the Barnsley Canal had been open for nearly three years, and was experiencing good trade, half the tonnage from the Barnby Basin of the Barnsley Canal used the Dearne and Dove, so the two companies began working together. A shortage of water in the Barnsley Canal resulted in the Worsbrough Reservoir supplying water during December 1804 to February 1805.

Later, in 1805 and 1806, the Dearne and Dove suffered water shortages which brought a stop to canal traffic, resulting in the increase in depth and acreage of Worsbrough Reservoir. Despite this, by 1828 the Dove and Dearne Canal had become rather prosperous in having nearly 150,000 tons of cargo, mainly coal, sent down the canal.

Unfortunately, the canals were affected by the arrival of the North Midland Railway in 1840. The Don Navigation tried to protect its trade by buying both the Barnsley and Dearne and Dove Canals. Whilst the deal for the Barnsley Canal never materialised

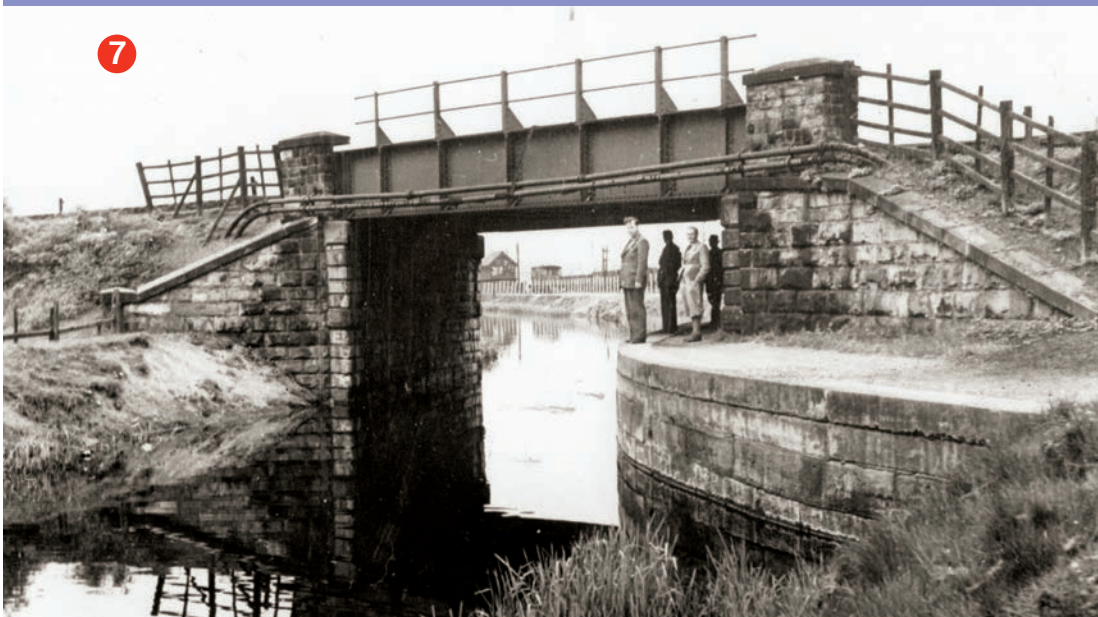


(as it was leased to the Aire and Calder Navigation Company), Don Navigation was successful in taking over the Dearne and Dove Canal on 1 January, 1846.

6 THE RAILWAY BRIDGING the Dearne and Dove Canal encompassing Beatson Clark glass works. The railway gave direct access to the Barnsley Coal railway at Hoyle Mill. Therefore trains from Barnsley could avoid Stairfoot.



7



THE BARNSELY to Doncaster railway bridging the canal at Stairfoot. The view is taken from Stairfoot looking towards Hoyle Mill and Beatson Clark. The photograph to the right of the above picture shows the same bridge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dearne and Dove Canal Trust, www.bddct.org.uk

Jimmy Hamer and Ronnie Neville for assistance in providing information and photographs for this article.

Over the next 40 years, fortunes fluctuated. By an act of Parliament in 1889, the parent company which owned the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway gained control of all South Yorkshire canals, which then adopted the familiar name of The Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Company.

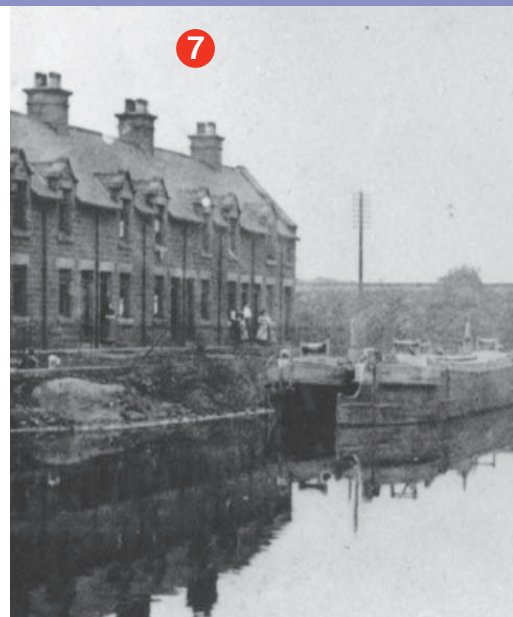
Coal extraction was the cause as it was resulting in too high maintenance costs. What was the reason for its construction, to transport coal, was to become its death knell.

In 1906, the Worsbrough

branch closed followed by the Elsecar branch in 1928. The last boat made passage to Barnsley on the main line in 1934. Maintaining a navigable depth had become increasingly difficult.

All that remained open were canal paths from Barnsley Main Colliery, and Swinton to Manvers Colliery. Sadly, the Barnsley end of the canal closed in 1942 followed by the section to Manvers 10 years later, in 1952. Only half a mile of canal remained open through the first four locks, which served the former Canning Town Glassworks at Swinton. This

7



section is still in water today, and the first two locks now form part of Waddington's boatyard. ■

THE VIEW from Waddington's boatyard which marks the start of the Dearne and Dove Canal at Swinton.



What remains of the canal today?

We begin our journey at the Hoyle Mill section of the canal: there are the remains of the stop lock where the Dearne and Dove joined the Barnsley Canal, and for a further 200 yards or so, the canal bed,



part of the Dearne Valley Park, still exists.

Beavor Bridge has been underpinned, and the canal bed serving the former Woods Brothers Glassworks is

Remains of a turning stone at the junction of the Barnsley Canal. This would have had a metal wheel on the top to guide the rope.



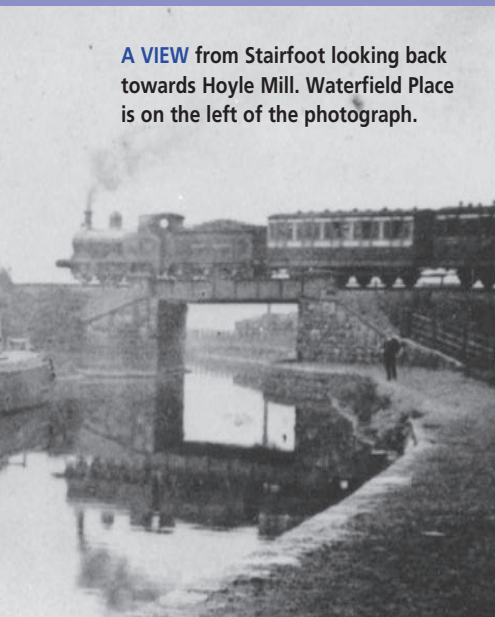
Remains of the stop lock near where the Dearne and Dove joined the Barnsley Canal.



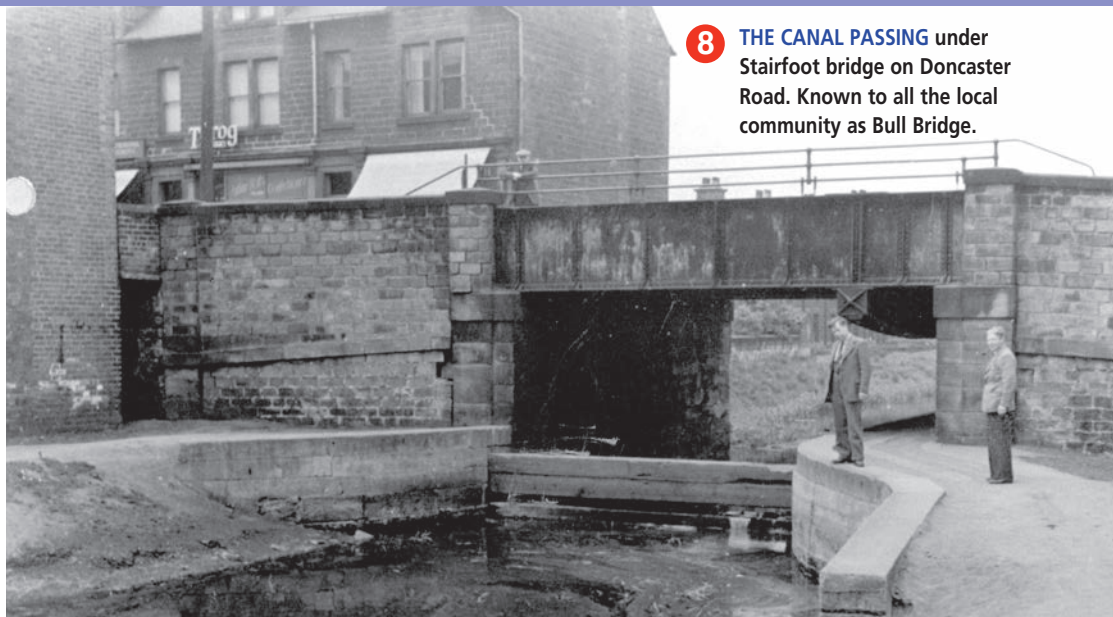
A small section of the canal before the former Stairfoot to Barnsley railway line.

now the car park for the Potter Ballotini works. Construction of the new Tank Row road which leads to Barnsley's main business park and the regrading of the Barnsley Main Colliery spoil heap has left no trace of the canal, along with the demolition of the former Beatson Clark Glassworks and erection of warehousing. A small section of the canal remains before the former Stairfoot to Barnsley railway line, which has now become a cycle path.

A VIEW from Stairfoot looking back towards Hoyle Mill. Waterfield Place is on the left of the photograph.

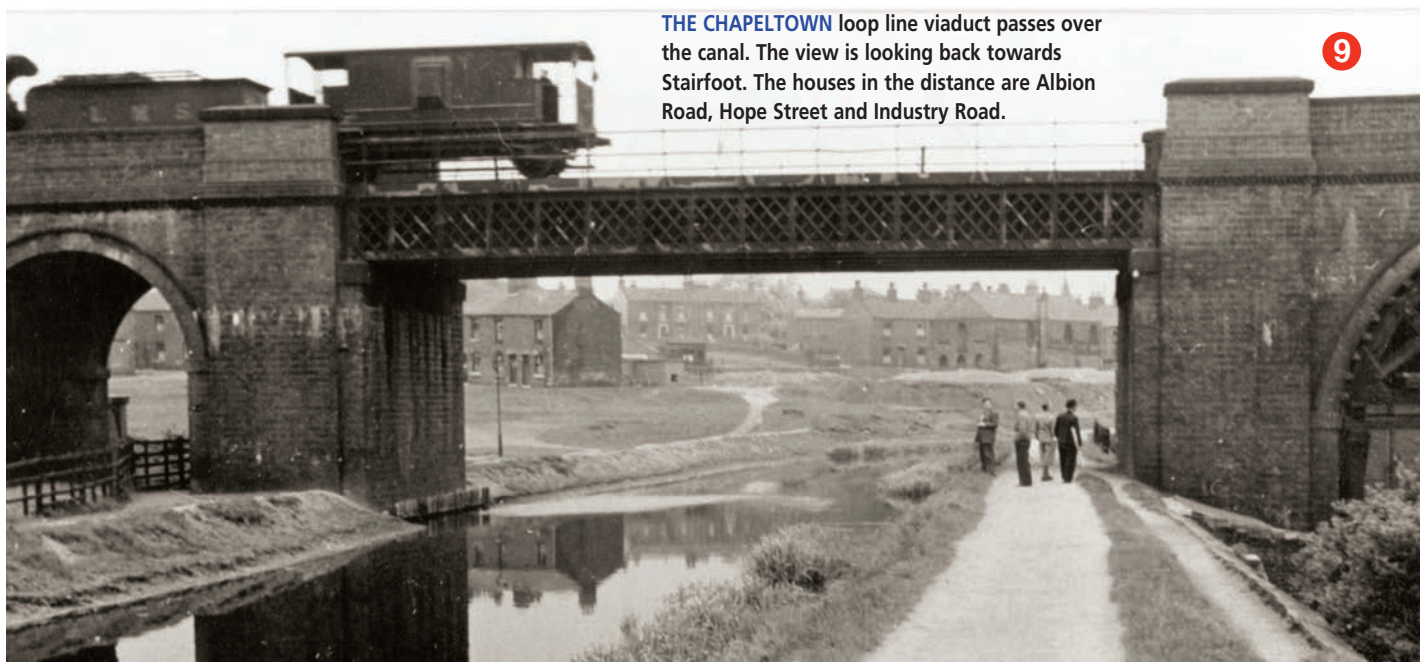


8 THE CANAL PASSING under Stairfoot bridge on Doncaster Road. Known to all the local community as Bull Bridge.



THE CHAPELTOWN loop line viaduct passes over the canal. The view is looking back towards Stairfoot. The houses in the distance are Albion Road, Hope Street and Industry Road.

9



Waterfield Place, Stairfoot. The canal ran in front of these houses.

Waterfield Place houses remain today, but the line of the canal totally disappears from here to *The Keel* pub. The pub's garden and tables now settle upon the former canal and towpath.

After the road leading to the industrial park at Stairfoot, the canal bed remains and passes part of the former Tomlinson Glassworks and continues to the Caulk bridge which has, sadly, been demolished.

At this point the first stage of our journey concludes, the next

10



The Keel at Stairfoot. The canal ran to the left of the building, where the picnic tables are.

section will cover the Stairfoot flight (Aldham eight locks) and Wombwell, the final section covering the Elsecar and Worsbrough branches.