

# THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL

By H. EDGE (Manchester)

MANCHESTER means many different things to different people, but it might have meant but little to those connected with Shipping had it not been for the foresight exercised by its leading citizens many years ago. The City, situated in one of the most highly industrialised and most closely populated parts of Great Britain, owes much of its development to the Ship Canal, which, by establishing direct maritime connections to all parts of the world, has not only assisted the growth of existing industries, but has directly encouraged the establishment of new ones.

In the 80's of the last century, Liverpool Port charges and lack of modern improvements were a grievous burden on the trade of South East Lancashire. Manchester, lying on the River Irwell, received permission in 1714 to lock the River Mersey and the Irwell between Warrington and Manchester to keep them "navigable and passable for boats, barges, lighters and other vessels from Liverpool to Manchester." For a long time this kind of traffic passed over the

Waterway, but in 1825 a real Ship Canal was considered for the first time; subscriptions were raised, and a Bill sent to Parliament. The Scheme was for a "Manchester and Dee Ship Canal," but permission for it to proceed was refused by the House of Commons.

Manchester's hopes of becoming a port seemed to have faded until June, 1882, when Daniel Adamson called a meeting of representatives of Commerce and Municipal Authorities. After many difficulties and a long struggle in passing a Parliamentary Bill, Royal assent was given on August 6, 1885, for the building of a new Ship Canal. It now remained to find the money, and a time limit was fixed by the Bill. After much criticism and opposition it was possible to announce in August, 1887, one day before the expiration of the time limit, that approximately 7½ million pounds capital had been raised, and in that same year the first sod was cut at Eastham by Lord Egerton of Tatton, who had become Chairman of the re-organized Ship Canal Company.



*Barton Road Swing Bridge and Barton Aqueduct.*