"The time has come, the Walrus said,
To talk of many things:
Of shoes — and ships — and sealing wax
Of cabbages — and kings."

The inconsequential miscellany of items in Lewis Carrol’s rhyme came to mind when considering the variety of goods exported from Lancashire ports to the colonies in the mid-eighteenth century. There are scores of different articles, in quantities large and small, which Lancashire merchants knew, or assumed, would be saleable in various colonial markets. Obviously, such merchants looked to manufacturers in Lancashire or the adjoining counties to supply such exports, provided that transport from the manufacturer to the port was easy and cheap. Lewis Carrol’s items can be used as convenient headings in considering these exports and their effect on the economic development of Lancashire industry.

I

SHIPS
There are records of several thousands of ships in the colonial trade belonging to Liverpool to be found in the Liverpool Plantation Registers between 1744 and 1786, when a new ship registry act was passed. Over four hundred ships belonging to Lancaster have been found from other sources during the same period, and twenty belonging to Preston and Poulton-le-Fylde, all trading to the colonies. It is not always possible to identify their cargoes. Sometimes business records have survived, particularly for Liverpool and Lancaster ships, but most information comes from the Public Record Office papers. Exchequer Port Books have survived for parts of the 18th century, and record duties paid on cargoes in and out, with the
names of consignees, but not the ownership or place of register of the ships. When ships entered or cleared from a colonial port, a customs officer known as a ‘naval officer’, recorded details of ship and cargo which were returned to Britain to prove that the various legal requirements of colonial trade were being enforced. Details of the ship’s register were copied, including the names of master and owners but, unfortunately, these owners were not necessarily the consignees. As with the Exchequer Port Books, cargoes are given as quantities, and some returns are given in great detail. In others, summary phrases such as ‘British goods’ or ‘European goods’ or ‘plantation stores’ are used. In the St. Vincent returns for the early 1760’s, one clerk used the description ‘a general Liverpool cargo’ several times. But the documents include some duplicates, and so the ‘general Liverpool cargo’ of the Bridget of Liverpool, 150 tons register, from Liverpool and Cork was as follows:

20 tierces 430 barrels 80 half barrels of beef; 471 firkins of butter; 75 barrels of herrings; 200 boxes of candles; 3 trunks, 5 casks, 15 bundles of dry goods; 2 casks of hams; 1 cask of refined sugar; 20 casks of bottled beer; 10 casks of lime; 46 (coils?) of cordage; 6m (thousand?) bricks; 12 puncheons of rum; 20 kegs of tripes.

A similar duplicate entry for the Lark of 40 tons adds wrought iron, saddlery, cheese, pickles and thread stockings to the ‘general Liverpool cargo’. Another entry for the King of Prussia of 70 tons is probably more precise and accurate, when the cargo is given as beef, pork and butter and ‘a Liverpool cargo’, and on clearance to Nevis only as ‘A Liverpool and Cork cargo’.³

KINGS

Many of the public records concerning ships and their cargoes were created by the demands of government so as to control trade between Great Britain and her colonies, and similar regulations were made in other European countries with colonies. The Kings of Great Britain, France, Portugal and Spain and the Stadtholders of Holland and their supporters in government, were of prime importance in the colonial trade, because they sought to secure a monopoly of colonial trade as far as this could be contrived. To the monarchs and their governments, the revenue from imports from the colonies was of great consideration. George III is reported to have been in company with his Prime Minister, William Pitt the younger, near Weymouth, when an imposing carriage, complete with outriders in livery, passed by. The owner was known to be a rich Jamaican planter and the King turned to the Prime Minister and said:

Sugar, sugar, hey? All that sugar? How are the duties, hey, Pitt, how are the duties?⁴
The income from duties on valuable colonial goods, and the taxation in various ways of the wealth of the merchants and shipowners handling them made the colonies worth fighting for, as the numerous colonial wars attest. Tobacco, sugar, rum, coffee, cocoa, cotton, dyestuffs, from the tropical or sub-tropical colonies; tar, turpentine, timber, masts and spars for shipbuilders as well as colonial-built ships, from the temperate colonies; codfish and whale products from the northern colonies, and skins and furs from most American mainland colonies — all these could be absorbed in great quantities in most countries in Europe whatever the local supply of such goods might be. Kings and princes of countries which had no colonies often prohibited the import of colonial goods, or at least reduced their import by high tariffs, to prevent the loss of foreign exchange by payments to the colonial powers. Revenue duties and prohibitive duties alike produced much smuggling.

The rulers of the colonial powers, urged on by their merchants, tried to gain maximum benefit for their own countries by creating a mass of regulations for the colonial trade, known usually in British history as the Navigation Laws and, elsewhere, as the Mercantile System. Expressed simply, the regulations created a monopoly for the mother country of the import of goods from their own colonies and, equally, monopoly of the supply to their own colonies of the goods from Europe which they required. Both imports and exports were to be carried only in the vessels of the mother country, in the French system; in the vessels of the mother country or of the colonies, in the British system. Goods sent to the colonies should be manufactured in the mother country, if possible; if such home production was not possible, then goods made elsewhere were to be landed in the mother country, pay duties there, and be shipped thereafter to the colony. For example, the supply of English, Irish and Scottish linens was insufficient in the 18th century to supply both the home and colonial demand; so German and Russian linens were imported to Britain and paid duty, but merchants were allowed a drawback of duty paid if such linens were re-exported. Similarly goods from the colonies intended for a European market outside the mother country had to be landed in the mother country and pay duty before being re-exported.

The advantages of such a system to the merchants and manufacturers of the mother country are obvious; Lancashire benefited therefore from the operation of the Navigation Laws. Lancashire ports indeed had some advantages over other British ports. They were closer to the colonies in America and the West Indies than the ports of the East and South East coasts, a saving in cost of transport. In war time, the ports of the North West had an advantage over the ports of the Channel and the South West. They were farther away from the ports of Holland, France and Spain, Britain’s rivals.
and enemies in the colonial wars, the ports which sent out privateers as well as naval vessels to attack enemy commerce. The North Western ports could send their vessels out to the colonies 'northabout Ireland', an advantage reflected in cheaper insurance premiums, or, if a merchant was inclined to gamble, with no insurance at all. Samuel Derrick, master of ceremonies at Bath, in 1760 visited Liverpool (to sing the praises of the medicinal waters in counteracting the effects of high living by rich Liverpool merchants?). He wrote about the merchants and their ships;

Thus, their insurance being less, they are able to undersell their neighbours; and since I have been here, I have seen enter the port, in one morning, seven West India ships, whereof five were not insured.\(^7\)

In 1691, William Stout, a Lancaster grocer and ironmonger occasionally venturing into overseas trade, estimated the possibilities of profit in reference to the War of the League of Augsburg 1688-1697, sometimes called the War of English Succession:

it was computed that if a merchant made an equal adventurer in three ships, if but one came in safe, he was in the maine no looser; and if two came safe, a good gainer; and if all, much more. And in the maine it could not be computed that above one in five miscarried . . . And it was observable that the quantity of burthen of shipping rather increased at Liverpool . . . during all the war in King William’s reign.\(^8\)

One result of the Navigation Laws was to encourage local shipbuilding — at Liverpool, at Chester, at Lancaster, and at some smaller places.\(^9\) The basic rule of the Laws as applied to vessels trading with the colonies was that they should be British built, or built in the British colonies; the exception was that prizes of war could be 'made free' to enter the colonial trade, but only after the payment of special duties on the ship and its tackle. Lancashire merchants could therefore buy ships built at home, or buy cheaply built American vessels. Liverpool newspapers frequently advertised for sale colonial-built vessels, often with some such phrase as 'made only one voyage home', that is, to Britain after launching in America. Another phrase in such advertisements reflects another stimulus created by the Navigation Laws, to industries in Britain supplying the tackle required to equip a vessel for sea, rope, sailcloth, cables and anchors. Advertisements state among the details of a colonial-built vessel that 'all her materials (were) sent from home'; this could include essential ironwork such as nails and bolts, lead and copper for plumbing, as well as sailing tackle.\(^10\) Therefore, ropemaking, sailcloth weaving and other maritime industries flourished in Lancashire port towns.
Sailcloth weaving also was well established in Warrington and Kirkham in the Fylde, within easy reach of nearby ports; both places had manufacturers able to compete for supplies of sailcloth for the Navy in the South coast dockyards, in addition to supplying Irish Sea demands. Even a small hamlet like Farnworth, now part of Widnes, had its sailcloth weaving establishment in the 18th and 19th centuries, supplying Liverpool as is shown by the marriage in 1770 of one of the daughters of Thomas Kidd, one of the owners, to a Liverpool sailmaker, Paul Bridson.

Some of the goods sent to the colonies, such as rope, sailcloth and ironwork, may not necessarily have been made of raw materials produced in Britain. Russian flax and hemp provided the raw material for the best sailcloth and rope, so much so that the new USA navy after 1783 insisted on Russian raw materials in preference to their own American-grown flax and hemp, stimulated before the American Revolution by British bounties. Russian and Swedish iron competed successfully with British-made iron in British markets and, therefore, in the colonial markets in manufactured iron goods exported from Britain. The Whitehaven customs letter books in 1751 have a reference to iron bars from Petersburg to be re-exported in a Whitehaven slaver to the coast of Africa, being counted as 'manufactured' because adapted by rolling and slitting at a Whitehaven iron works into dimensions suitable for the trade. The theory behind the Navigation Laws accepted the use of foreign raw materials as inevitable, and welcomed the expansion of manufacturing industry which resulted, whether the demand came from the home or the colonial markets. To make sure that British manufacturers gained the benefit from colonial demand, the Navigation Laws stipulated that goods for the colonies should be sent there only from British ports, and that they should be if possible of British manufactures. Lancashire industries therefore were stimulated to increase production, as were British industries in general.

SHOES — ANOTHER OTHER CLOTHING
Shoes might seem a trivial item in a cargo list, but can be taken as an indicator of a wider variety of goods exported. An early Lancashire cargo list from private business papers is one from 1666, when the Antelope sailed from Liverpool to Barbados. Henry Blundell of Ince Blundell with his cousin, William, and his sister, Winifred, took an eighth share, worth £40, in the outward cargo. The list includes as bought in Warrington:

18 pairs of men's plane shoes at 2s.4d. Total £2 2s.0d.
6 pairs of women's shoes 1s.10d.. 11s.0d.
6 pairs of slippers 2s.4d. 14s.0d.
There are similar references in the Exchequer Port Books which give the cargoes of ships sailing from Lancaster to the colonies between 1698 and 1715, in which William Stout was involved, together with other Lancaster merchants and manufacturers. William himself in 1706 shipped to Virginia in the Content 34 lbs of new shoes; another co-owner sent 1 cwt. of new shoes. The colonists could of course make their own shoes, and in the ships in which William Stout was concerned, there was shipped tanned leather, 20 pairs of shoemaker’s lasts sent by an ironmonger, and 2 gross of wooden heels sent by another ironmonger as well as 44 lbs of new shoes. The Account Book between 1754 and 1758 of sales in Jamaica undertaken on commission by two men from Liverpool, Thomas Case and Thomas Southworth, has several references to shoes, pumps and slippers being sold there. Some came from Liverpool consigned to Case and Southworth by Liverpool men, but also via Liverpool came two consignments from a Manchester merchant, and one from a Rochdale merchant. Two consignments came from Lancaster in two Lancaster ships, and two from Preston by different Preston merchants in a Preston ship. Shoes of various sorts seem to have been a regular export from Lancashire throughout the century.

Inevitably there were also exported quantities of stockings. William Stout and others sent out men’s, women’s and children’s woollen hose, reckoned by the dozen pairs, in various voyages to Barbados and Virginia. Similar exports, including silk stockings, occur in other cargo lists. But there were also other items of clothing shipped out from Lancaster by William Stout and his associates, such as felt hats, knitted woolen caps by the hundred dozen, 9 women’s bonnets, 4 dozen women’s tippets, haberdashery by the pound, and sheep leather gloves by the dozen. In the 1740’s Benjamin Satterthwaite was sent out to Barbados by a group of Lancaster merchants, and he reported home on his sales of fine hats, felt hats, red caps, figured caps, worsted caps, breeches, Kersey coats, Saxagotha coats, greatcoats, surtouts, and handkerchiefs. He was not always successful. He wrote in 1740 that he would have to return some coats, Saxagotha coats, and breeches, and that he had sold the Kersey coats at 14s.6d, ‘except for one of them . . . so full of holes nobody will give 2s.6d for it.’ In 1749, Robert Gillow, founder of the famous furniture firm in Lancaster, consigned some furniture to Benjamin Satterthwaite, about to sail to Barbados again, and he packed the spaces and drawers of the pieces with such clothing as caps, boy’s, men’s and women’s hose and riding coats. Case and Southworth in Jamaica in the 1750’s also had many consignments of clothing to sell.

But in far greater amounts, both in cost and quantity, were exports of cloth, both for clothing and general use. In the cargo of the Antelope in 1666 there were 3,332 yards of linen cloth, bought in Warrington,
costing £130 15s.9d., by far the most expensive item in the total cargo costing £215 15s.5d. Benjamin Satterthwaite had a variety of types of cloth to sell: broad hollands, narrow hollands, cotton hollands; white and red ‘cottons’, probably the Kendal cottons which were woollens with a special finish; coloured stripes and jeans, Blackburn checks of linen, and silk checks; tufted fustians; grograms, camblets and diapers; blankets and counterpanes. Case and Southworth had more varieties to sell, and as well as consignments from Liverpool merchants, sold cloth and clothing from merchants in Chester, Preston and Lancaster, and also from merchants in inland towns, Keighley in Yorkshire, Rochdale and Manchester. 20 Abraham and John Rawlinson, the second generation of Lancaster merchants of that name trading to the West Indies, in 1785 bought more cloth for export than of any other manufactured goods, according to their ‘Voyage Book No.3’, which covered their export cargoes from 1785 to 1799. 21

With all this cloth and clothing to keep clean, it is not surprising to find that Lancashire exports included soap. More research is needed on colonial naval officers’ returns to assess the amount of the trade, since the available business papers offer little evidence. Case and Southworth sold some soap from London on their own account, and two small parcels from two Lancaster merchants, imported to Jamaica via St. Eustatia. Abraham and John Rawlinson sent out small quantities of soap compared with other items of cargo, but fairly regularly between 1791 and 1795. In Lancashire directories the soap boilers are often given as ‘tallow chandlers and soap boilers’, and the export of candles from Liverpool and Lancaster is regularly mentioned in naval officers’ returns and business papers, in considerable quantities. 22

SEALING WAX — AND PAPER
A Lancashire reference to export of sealing wax has not yet been found, but it was among the imports from Britain to the USA after the Americans became independent in 1783. Herbert Heaton made a study of the first year’s customs statistics issued for 1789-1790 by the newly founded federal government and found ‘a motley of books and binoculars, guns and glue, sealing wax and slippers.’ 23 The Case and Southworth accounts include seals from William Wright of Halifax in Yorkshire, amongst goods shipped from Preston aboard the snow Clifton; in that consignment there were also inkpots and (pen)knives and, ominously in view of the Jamaica climate, coffin ties, coffin handles and coffin nails. 24 In the same category as seals and sealing wax, cargo lists contain quantities of paper. William Stout and his associates sent to Jamaica and Barbados reams of brown paper and ‘whited brown paper’, and goose quills by the thousand. William himself sent ‘5 lb weight of printed books’. Case and
Southworth sold paper from Liverpool and Lancaster sent in ships from those ports and from London on behalf of a Liverpool merchant. Abraham and John Rawlinson in their ‘Voyage Book No. 3’ recorded exports of paper from Lancaster to the West Indies.

It will be recalled that in 1767 paper was among the imports into the 13 American colonies which were chosen by Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to bear taxes designed to pay the expenses of royal governors and judges in the colonies. Paper was imported in great quantity and, therefore, suitable for taxing. When we consider the commercial use of paper in the trade with Britain, this becomes more obvious: ledgers and account books, copies of letters, accounts, bills of lading, bills of exchange, often in triplicate to go by different ships, all were needed to keep the business of export and import properly organised. In addition, many of these items might be needed to deal with government departments, and there was the continuous stream of correspondence between colonies and Britain created by the civil, military and naval establishments. In the early part of the 18th century, the need to use carefully whatever supplies of paper were available in the colonies produced some very peculiar shapes and sizes of sheets which the colonial naval officers used to make their shipping returns. Later in the century, ready printed sheets with headings for ruled columns were used for such returns, presumably supplied from Britain by the government.

The demand for paper, therefore, meant that British manufacturers had a good market in the colonies. Lancashire had its share of the market, with papermaking works in the Bolton area and, nearby, the clean water of the Lake District fostered paper making there.

CABBAGES — AND OTHER FOODSTUFFS
Cabbages were not dutiable, and so do not appear in the cargo lists. But there is a special maritime connexion for cabbages, in that sauerkraut, a type of pickled cabbage common in the German lands, was one of the remedies tried against scurvy, the scourge of mariners deprived of fresh food.

Other foodstuffs were a regular part of exports particularly to the West Indies. Between 1785 and 1799, Abraham and John Rawlinson spent more money on this item than on any other they exported. Most of the salt beef, pork and butter was shipped at Irish ports, particularly from Cork, Waterford and Belfast.

Benjamin Satterthwaite had trouble in selling some of the provisions shipped to him in Barbados. He wrote on 10 January, 1740, to his stepfather, Miles Townson of Lancaster, a leading figure in the group of merchants employing Benjamin:
Lancashire Colonial Exports

(Provisions from Belfast) proved but ordinary — 40 or 50 (casks of butter) pretty well, the rest proved excessive bad. It began to run out of the firkins which obliged me to sell . . . and to let 'em have 20 barrels of beef (which proved very good) with 40 firkins, or else might keep it.

On 31 July he wrote to his stepfather's partner, Thomas Hutton Rawlinson:

Am afraid the beef and butter will not keep. However I've filled the barrels with pickle and stowed them up for a better market or as long as they'll keep.

The reference to pickle reminds us of the importance of salt in the preservation of foodstuffs in the 18th century, and therefore of the great advantage to Lancashire merchants of cheap salt from Cheshire. Also of importance is the fact that the mainland coastline of America and most islands in the West Indies, had no local supplies of salt except that which was made by evaporating sea-water, a time consuming task not always with good results, and in the colder parts of the American mainland, needing quantities of fuel. Therefore some Liverpool ships took out cargoes mainly of salt, when other goods were not available, and the sailors sewed sacks on the voyage to be ready for unloading. The profit for the ship was expected from the return cargo from the colony to Britain.

From Lancashire the foodstuffs were usually the more expensive items, such as hams, for which Abraham and John Rawlinson kept a special account, fish such as salmon or ling, and Isle of Man and other Irish Sea herrings. Bottled ale was as likely as salt beef or butter to be faulty. Benjamin Satterthwaite wrote on 29 February 1740 to Thomas Hutton Rawlinson about Thomas's wife's venture:

Malle's ale proved all very bad; it was excessive thick and quite dead.

A letter of 1 August 1740 to Miles Townson indicates another hazard:

I have not opened one cask that has less than 5 dozen (bottles) in a cask broak; it's much. If they flatten it enough, that that's left is very good.

And of course from Lancashire ports went quantities of Lancashire and Cheshire cheese. The *Antelope* in 1666 carried 20 cwt. 1 qt. 11 lb. of cheese costing £20 4s. 2d. Part of the cargo of the *Clifton* from Preston sold in Jamaica in 1754 by Case and Southworth were 91 cheeses, though three were also listed as 'rotten'; they were shipped by William Riddehough and Co. of Preston. Some consignments were quite small. Benjamin Satterthwaite sold in 1739-40 '21 thick cheeses (weighing) 4 cwt. and 18 lbs ( invoiced at) . . . £4 1s. 0d.', in return for which he sent home sugar and rum invoiced on 13 May,
OVERSEAS MARKETS
Another way of looking at the export trade of Lancashire ports to the colonies is to look at the three main markets and their differing demands for goods. The mainland colonies of America provided one market, mostly to provide for the needs of white settlers, though as the century went on, there were more slaves in the Southern colonies creating some demand for cheap clothing and for working tools. In the West Indies with their plantations on a larger scale than in the mainland South, the small white population and the larger slave workforce of the plantation economy, with little local industry, produced a different demand. Finally, the demands from the coast of Africa for goods in payment for slaves to work the plantations in the Americas created another market for Lancashire goods.

THE MAINLAND COLONIES
There were different types of markets in the thirteen colonies, varying according to climate in a particular colony and the modes of production thus dictated, together with the number and spread of inhabitants, and the state of development of the settlements from the first experimental foundations to the sophisticated settled communities with considerable diversification of occupations and trades. We must picture the early settlements, especially in the 17th century, as heavily dependent on Britain for manufactured goods, because the settlers were mostly concerned with hunting, timber production, agriculture and fishing. The primitive settler in the wilderness was likely to build his wooden house with British axe and saw, break up the soil with British hoe and spade and plough, defending himself and his family from animals, Indians, Frenchmen and Spaniards with British gun and munitions. Other valuable possessions, the Bible and other books, cutlery, pots and pans, blankets and linen, would also be at first from Britain. As such families prospered, particularly if they produced good export cargoes for Britain such as furs and skins, beams and planks and barrel staves, tar and turpentine, salt fish, or agricultural produce such as tobacco or rice, then more expensive goods from Britain could be bought; more expensive and varied types of textiles for use indoors and outdoors, better tableware, furniture, metal goods of all sorts of iron and steel, copper, brass, pewter, tinware and lead. This is not to say that the pioneers and, even more so, the later more developed settlements, could not produce their own goods from local materials,
either by family household skills, or by specialised craftsmen. But in spite of growing American production, the flow of goods from Britain continued, and the foundation of the United States of America made little difference. Herbert Heaton's article on 'The American Trade' from Britain after 1783 states that 87% of manufactured goods imported in 1788-9 into the USA came from Britain; he summarised their variety as follows:

- cloths (and clothes) of all fibres, kinds and qualities; pottery ware — useful and ornamental — for every part of the American home, from the kitchen to the dining room, living room, and bedchamber; metalware of every kind, size and shape from Birmingham and Sheffield; enough sheet glass to repair all the damage done in a dozen presidential elections; enough paint or white lead to give two coats to every building from Salem to Savannah; and a motley of books and binoculars, guns and glue, sealing wax and slippers . . . 84,000 gallons of beer, ale, stout, or porter in casks, and 18,000 dozen bottles for those who liked British brands and wished to see the label on the bottle; nearly 700,000 bushels of salt to help to preserve the beef and pork for the winter; 150,000 bushels of coal for the fireplaces of towns which had burned up their local supplies of firewood in a country where coal seams had not yet been seriously tapped; nearly 2,000,000 pounds of nails for the carpenters of the rapidly growing coastal towns; 86,000 pounds of cheese for those who liked their cheese to have a tang and bite; 18,600 packs of playing cards . . . but what were they among 4 million people? — and 178 pounds of snuff, of which 91 were Irish.

Some of these goods might be counted as luxuries, popular among those who could afford the price of imported goods and who would wish to boast that they came from Britain. The growth of the rich planter class in the southern colonies of Virginia and South Carolina, or the merchant class in the sizeable towns, such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia, certainly encouraged trade in such items. But in reading a succession of cargo lists in the colonial naval officers' returns, it is striking that the American imports continuously included ordinary and cheap goods which by mid-century might have been assumed to be made in America. George Washington wrote on 25 February, 1768, to James Gildart of Liverpool, to whom he was shipping tobacco, complaining that he had been:

expecting long, very long before this, to have had the salt and sacks . . . (free from freight according to engagement) for want of which I hitherto too have, and now do, suffer exceedingly, especially for the latter (the sacks).

Having received the shipment, he wrote again on 25 June, 1768:

Scarcely any of the sacks contained four bushels (of salt) (which I conceive they ought to have done), and not one of the bags worth a shilling, nor ever could be, no two being alike — some extremely wide, others very narrow — and all, or mostly all, made of old, slaizy, and patched cloth . . . to get good, exceedingly good ones, was almost the sole motive which induced me to send for the salt.
The Townshend duties on American imports in 1767 were to be levied on tea, white and red lead, paint, paper and glass; apart from tea, these are hardly luxury items. Nor are many of the goods listed by Herbert Heaton as imported into the USA in 1788-9 to be counted as luxuries.

Many of the goods imported in the mainland colonies and later into the USA could be produced by Lancashire industry, or easily brought to Lancashire ports from the adjoining counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, Cheshire and Yorkshire. With the spread of canals, some goods could come from even wider afield. After the American Revolution the Liverpool merchant partners, John Sparling and William Bolden, resumed their trade with Virginia, begun long ago when they were residents there; their surviving Letter Book covers the years 1788 to 1799 though the business was being run down from about 1793. From Liverpool, after 1788, Sparling and Bolden shipped woollens from Yorkshire, the Lake District and Wales; rugs, spotted blue and white, from Rochdale; flannels, white and red, from Colne; buttons and twist from Stockport; checks and handkerchiefs from Manchester; ribbons from Congleton; sailcloth from Kirkham; and cordage and rope from Lancaster. Lancashire firms in Warrington, Billinge and Ashton-in-Makerfield supplied hardware, including locks and hinges, nails and pins, and iron pots. Odd items were tobacco pipes, perhaps from Rainford near St. Helens, earthenware from Prescot, and gunpowder, perhaps from the Furness district of North Lancashire. The firm also arranged shipments from London of calicoes, chintz, printed cotton and silk which seem to be East Indian goods and various sorts of linen which seem European in origin, ‘much cheaper in London than elsewhere’. There were also from London, in small quantities, starch, pepper, tea, powder and shot and ‘half-minute glasses’. But the bulk of the Sparling and Bolden goods were sent from Liverpool.35

The theory behind the Navigation Laws assumed that the colonies were to be markets for British manufactures, even to the extent of limiting colonial industrial growth by legislation to protect British industry. Hence Parliament passed various Acts to prohibit or restrict certain forms of industry in the 13 colonies, particularly by forbidding exports from one colony to another of certain colonial manufactures. In 1699 the Wool Act was passed, in 1732 the Hat Act and, in 1750, the Iron Act, all to benefit the British industries concerned. But Charles M. Andrews states:

the injurious effects . . . have in the past been greatly overstated. It is doubtful if any of these measures materially hampered the progress of colonial industry, which on the manufacturing side attained at best no great proportions until after 1750.34
The failure of American industry to meet the needs of the American people, and thus allowing the expansion of British industry to supply their market, demands a specialist on colonial society to explain. But looking at the problem from the British side, the British merchants selling in the 13 colonies had many advantages. The poor roads of America limited distribution from American industrial centres, unless by sea, in which case British ships had good opportunities of competition by bringing larger cargoes and wider varieties of goods from industries already supplying British and European markets with similar items. Further, British merchants were willing to extend to their American correspondents long credit, based on the more financially secure British and European markets. This extension of credit was often speculative. When the American Revolution broke out, debts owed by the inhabitants of Virginia to Britain amounted to £2,305,408. Sparling and Bolden were owed £1,588 15s. 4½d by Virginians, as well as unknown debts due to their partners in Virginia. No wonder that the letters in the Letter Book beginning in 1788, sent to their agents in Virginia, contain insistent demands for remittances to be returned quickly to Liverpool in return for goods sent out. 35

THE WEST INDIA TRADE
Willingness to extend credit to colonial producers is also found in the West India trade. When planters overspent, or met with misfortunes in war, hurricanes or epidemics, and seemed unlikely to recover, British merchants found themselves taking possession of West India plantations, often the last thing they wanted. Edward Chaffers of Liverpool, a merchant working with a long-standing Liverpool partnership of Crosbie and Trafford, wrote in 1768 about a small cotton plantation in Carriacou in the Grenadine Islands which they had been forced to acquire. He gave orders to sell it for £1,000 if possible. In 1769 another letter said that the firm was willing to accept £800. In 1770 the plantation was still not sold and the outcome is unknown. 36 At the end of the century, John Gladstone, Liverpool merchant and father of the future Prime Minister, had similarly acquired West Indian plantations with their accompanying slaves — a source of some embarrassment to his son William Ewart Gladstone in the debates on the abolition of the slave trade. 37

The type of goods sent out to the West Indies from Britain is well illustrated in 'Estimates for the purchase and working of a Jamaica Plantation about 1791' published by Bryan Edwards, an experienced planter. 38 'Plantation stores' bought annually from Britain are costed at £850, against other stores bought in Jamaica valued at £400; these are included in total expenses for the year of £2,150. 'Provisions chiefly from Ireland' are so small in quantity apart from 80 barrels of herrings, that they must be intended for the white staff of the
plantation; the slaves were supposed to grow their own food. Clothing for the slaves was a considerable quantity: ‘Osnaburghs or German linen’ for working clothes for field workers, woollens for ‘a warm frock for each negro’, linsey-woolseys for the slave women, checks for the craftsmen’s and house servants’ shirts, and blankets for the sick and pregnant. Tools for the field workers were hoes and bills, and ox-yokes and iron tyres for wagons. Materials for the sugar harvest were ladles, skimmers and huge boiling coppers, and copper piping for the distillation of rum. Coopers’ stores included barrel hoops, both iron and wooden and rivets to secure them. Carpenters’ stores, apart from 160,000 nails of various sizes and two or three dozen felling axes are not specified.

Lancashire merchants could supply most of these items. ‘Osnaburghs’ might be German made, but could be Lancashire imitations of the German originals. Furness iron and Warrington or St. Helens copper could produce the metals. The South Lancashire metal industries produced all sorts of edged tools and other small metal manufactures.

In addition to the plantation stores for the working population of the West Indies, there were also large quantities of more expensive goods for the rich plantation owners and their managers, and for the merchants and white inhabitants of the ports and townships. The Rawlinson brothers of Lancaster in 1785 exported to the West Indies quantities of foodstuffs, mostly from Ireland, but including more expensive foods from Lancashire; candles in great quantities and soap; textiles of all sorts; furniture from many other Lancaster firms as well as the famous Gillows; ironmongery; pottery and glassware; ‘curled hair’ (for upholstery?); hats, caps and shoes; saddlery, stationery; and sailcloth and twine. Some of these were from Lancaster firms; others from all over the county. From Lonsdale north of the Sands, there were goods from Broughton, Ulverston, Penny Bridge and Flookborough. Near Lancaster there were suppliers of goods in Grange, Silverdale, Ellel, Galgate, Catterall, Myerscough and Wyresdale. In South Lancashire, goods came from Preston, Walton, Leyland, Clayton Green, Bolton, Wigan, Warrington and, of course, Manchester for textiles.

THE SLAVE TRADE
The slave trade has special importance for Lancashire, with Liverpool for long the leading port in the trade, and Lancaster the fourth leading port from 1750 to 1775. It was claimed by Eric Williams in 1944, that the profits of the slave trade financed the Industrial Revolution in Britain, in which the growth of the cotton industry in Lancashire played an important part. However, recent research has shown that the profits of the slave trade were never consistently high, and overall were never large enough to provide more than a small share
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of the capital required for the Industrial Revolution. Professor Roger Anstey in 1975 calculated that the average profit for a British slave trader between 1750 and 1790 was about 10%, and that of this only 0.11% was available for investment outside the trade. But the collection of evidence to link the slave trade and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution did prove that many industries were stimulated to produce the goods needed on the coast of Africa to buy the slaves. Lancashire industries particularly benefited by supplying the slave traders of Liverpool and Lancaster, as well as those of Whitehaven, for a time the fifth largest slave trading port in Britain. Slaves had to be bought on the coast of Africa by providing what goods the native kings and slave dealers wanted and these men drove hard bargains. Slaves were not captured from African lands by the superior armaments of the white slave traders, nor by cheating ignorant natives by offering them useless trinkets and sub-standard goods in return for slaves. Some white traders undoubtedly kidnapped free black Africans and made them into slaves, and some, undoubtedly, cheated the black slave dealers— but not with impunity, because they damaged their own reputation and that of others from their home port and, therefore, prejudiced future trade. No doubt the black slave dealers did their share of cheating if they thought they could succeed, swindling not only the white slavers to whom they sold, but also the black slavers of the interior from whom they bought slaves. They had the advantage in trade, in that they were supplying eager buyers of slaves for the expanding market in the West Indies and America and of trade goods sent from the coast to the interior.

A study of the bills of lading of slavers bound for the coast of Africa shows that various parts of the coast of Africa had different demands for goods and different assortments of goods as the price of a slave. A slaving cargo therefore was designed for a specific slave market in Africa. The predominant demand was for textiles and, in the early days of the trade, these were mostly East Indian produced cloths in cotton, light to wear and brightly patterned and dyed. A. P. Wadsworth and Julia de Lacy Mann, in their classic Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire 1600-1780 published in 1931, have shown how the colonial wars in India interrupted the supplies of such cloths and forced British merchants to turn to their own country for imitations. Lancashire men succeeded in imitating many of them (and the area behind Glasgow was more successful than Lancashire in the 18th century in producing muslins and Paisley patterned shawls and similar cloths). By the end of the century then, slave trade cargo lists were still using Indian names for textiles, such as romals, anabasses, niconnees and bafts, but these were now also made in Lancashire. Other textiles were useful on some part of the African coast; there were markets for British woollens and linens and even
for old sheets. Metal goods for the trade were iron and copper bars, knives, cutlasses, trade guns and gunpowder, pewter, copper and brass bowls. So Warrington and St. Helens copper, Furness iron and gunpowder and Wigan pewter competed with Birmingham and Sheffield metal goods. Imported goods for the slave trade still important in various cargoes were some East Indian textiles, cowries and cornelians, Italian beads and West Indian rum or Dutch gin.

As with the direct trade to the mainland colonies and the West Indies, the involvement in the slave trade reached back from the ports of Lancashire to the industrial hinterland. For textiles here is an estimate of the number of people and the amount of money involved, presented by Samuel Taylor to the Privy Council investigation the slave trade, in a statement dated 8 March 1788; ‘An Account of the Trade of Manchester to Africa’.

The value of goods annually supplied from Manchester and the neighbourhood for Africa is about £200,000 of which about £180,000 are for the purpose of negroes only. This manufacture employs immediately about 18,000 men, women and children. This manufacture employs a capital of at least £300,000 including that part of the capital which belongs to the dealers in the materials who sell them to the manufacturers. Besides the manufactures which are directly furnished by the manufacturers of Manchester for the African trade, they equally furnish for the West India trade upwards of £300,000 a year worth of manufactures in the making of which still greater number of hands are employed.

CONCLUSION
What seems important to understand from this collection of detail about exports from Lancashire ports to the colonies and in the slave trade, is that Lancashire manufacturers large and small derived from the colonies a demand for their produce over and above the demand from the home markets of Great Britain and from the markets in Europe. The colonists needed British products to make up for the lack of industry in the colonies and they needed also, thanks to the restrictions of the Navigation Laws, the services of British merchants to sell colonial produce in Europe as well as in the British Isles. The greater the success of the Lancashire merchants in selling colonial produce, the more goods the colonists could buy from Britain and the more production they could organise to increase their own prosperity. Thus the demands of the colonial market were always important to British industry during the 18th century, in spite of boom and slump, or the disturbances of the frequent colonial wars. Statistically, in the light of trade figures for the whole of the British Isles, T. S. Ashton wrote in 1948:

Historians have tended to pay undue attention to the commerce with distant lands. The overwhelming bulk of the import and export trade was with the Continent and, in particular, with the countries nearest to Britain. Compared
with this, the traffic with India, the West Indies, and North America was small and that with Africa insignificant. . . . Trade with the Baltic, from which Britain drew her naval stores, was of more political and economic consequence than that with the whole of the tropics. 46

Some of the trade with Europe was a re-exportation of colonial produce, however, and the trade with the Baltic in flax and hemp, timber (especially mast timbers), and iron helped to equip the ships in the colonial trade as well as other shipping and the royal navy.

A more recent view than that of T. S. Ashton was given by Ralph Davis, in 1979, at the beginning of his book on The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade, which covers mainly the period 1784 to 1856:

Colonial demand was an important supplement to domestic growth in building up many small branches of British industry, causing them to improve their organisation, and encouraging them to small cumulative technical advances. Their products were gradually cheapened and so enabled them to penetrate deeper strata of the population in Britain and Europe as well as America. This kind of development through widening and deepening of markets, furthered by the breaking down of artificial barriers to trade, was seen by Adam Smith as the principal road to the wealth of nations. It continued unaided by any great technical breakthrough, alongside more spectacular changes elsewhere, until far into the 19th century. 49

This analysis has special significance in considering the economic history of Lancashire in the 18th century. The ‘spectacular changes’ in the textile industry, power driven, factory-based mechanisation and the associated ‘technical breakthrough’ in engineering, transport and the metal and mining industries, have not allowed sufficient importance to be given to the small-scale industries in Lancashire and adjoining counties, carried on in small townships and villages. Some of these small centres of production never grew into the big industrial towns typical of the Industrial Revolution. Mechanisation, steam power, access to raw materials or to new lines of transport, often meant concentration of production in big towns, at the expense of small and scattered centres of production. But their existence indicates the presence of markets which they could supply and the colonial market was an important factor in their prosperity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is a revised and extended version of the Presidential Address to the Lancashire Federation of Local History Societies in 1983, and I am grateful to the Federation for the opportunity of speaking as a student of Lancashire ports trading to the colonies in the 18th century to a group of local historians mainly from Lancashire inland towns.

Some of the research has arisen as part of a study of the Liverpool Plantation Registers between 1740 and 1786 undertaken by means of a grant from the Social Sciences Research Council to the Department of Economic History at Liverpool University. I am much indebted to the Council and the Department for their support and to my wife, who has shared the research work over many years.
NOTES

1 On the Liverpool Plantation Registers, see ‘The Liverpool Plantation Registers 1744-1773 and 1779-1784,’ E. P. Microform, Wakefield 1978, an introduction by M. M. Schofield and D. J. Pope and also the references there to the work of the late R. G. Jarvis, including THSLC, 105 (1953).

2 The Liverpool Registers contain 43 Lancaster registrations and seven for Preston and three for Poulton-le-Fylde. Other registrations come from summaries in the Public Record Office, Colonial Office papers, naval officers’ returns. On these and the Exchequer Port Books as sources for maritime history, see R. Davis, *Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London, 1962), Appendix B. The research on which this paper is based is limited; the colonial naval officers’ returns before 1740 have not been completely explored and no work has been done on the Exchequer Port Books apart from the vessels in which William Stout was involved, printed in J. D. Marshall, ed., *The Autobiography of William Stout 1665-1752* (Manchester, 1967), Appendix A, ‘Extracts from the Public Records relating to William Stout’s shipping ventures’.

3 Public Record Office, C.O. 265/1, St. Vincent returns 1763-1765, a confusing set of papers since there are some duplicates by different clerks. For Bridget see entry 29 Nov. 1764 f.3, and duplicate f.8; for Lark entry 21 Apr., 1764, f.13, and duplicate entry 30 Apr., 1764 f.19; for King of Prussia entry 2 Jan., 1765 f.21, and clearance 19 Feb., 1765 f.26. The folio numbers were added by the Record Office. For ‘Liverpool’ cargoes since 1670, see a letter from a Barbados merchant 1692 quoted in A. P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire 1600-1780* (Manchester, 1931), p. 72 note 3.


7 Quoted Gomer Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers and . . . the Slave Trade* (Liverpool, 1897), p. 172-3. For a French view of shipping routes from the North Western ports dated 1702, see Davis, *op. cit.*, plate opposite p. 318.


9 Small Lancashire shipbuilding places found in various registers were Cuerdley near Preston, Preston, Poulton-le-Fylde, Warton near Carnforth, Grange, Lindal, Penny Bridge near Greenodd, Ulverston, Piel of Fouldrey near Barrow in Furness and Milnthorpe in Westmorland but in the customs port of Lancaster.

10 See for exampless, *Williamson’s Liverpool Advertiser*, 5 July, 1765, Elizabeth ‘only made the passage home from America (Rhode Island); 23 Aug, 1765, Thomas ‘only one passage to Liverpool from Rhode Island . . . rigging and sails English made and new’. See also Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 3, ‘New England and the Middle Colonies’ (Washington D.C., 1932), pp. 137 and 140 for ships built 1745 and 1747 for Liverpool merchants for the slave trade.

11 On Warrington sailcloth, see Stout, *op. cit.*, p. 94 entry 1688 on results of war 1688-1697, ‘the south of this county . . . making canvas’; Wadsworth and Mann *op. cit.*, p. 404 note 4 on further progress and then recession due to war 1739-48; and T. Pennant, *Tour in Scotland . . . 1772* (Chester, 1774),
p. 10 which dates to 1772 the claim that Warrington supplied ‘nearly one half of the navy of Great Britain’, a phrase common in later accounts of the industry at Warrington. On Kirkham, see F. J. Singleton, *The Flax Merchants of Kirkham*, THSLC, 126 (1977); see pp. 94-96 for supplies to the Navy, including a reference to competition from Warrington manufacturers.

12 On Farnworth, Widnes, see T. C. Barker and J. R. Harris, *A Merseyside Town in the Industrial Revolution: St. Helens 1750-1900* (Liverpool, 1954) p. 120. The marriage of Paul Bridson is in Williamson’s *Liverpool Advertiser*, 8 June, and Farnworth Parish Registers, 5 June, 1770.


14 The Whitehaven customs letter books are in the library of H.M. Customs and Excise, London. The letters are from Collector to Board, 6 Nov. and Board’s reply 17 Dec., 1751.


16 William Stout, *op. cit.*, Appendix A.

17 The Case and Southworth Accounts are in Liverpool Record Office in the Central Public Library, Liverpool. Consignments from Liverpool were in the ships *Molly* 1754 and 1755, *Preston* 1754 by Thomas Case, and *Tiger* 1758, all for Liverpool merchants; in *Baldwin* 1755 and *Molly* 1756 from Liverpool for Thomas Booth of Manchester; and in *Eleanor* 1756 from Liverpool for John Wood of Rochdale. From Lancaster consignments came in *Henry* and *Two Sisters* 1756 for Sudell and Fell and John McMillan respectively, and from Preston in *Clifton* 1755 for William Riddehough and James Low of Preston. The dates are those for the completion of the accounts.

18 For a description of Benjamin Satterthwaite’s activities, see M. M. Schofield, *The Letter Book of Benjamin Satterthwaite of Lancaster 1737-1744*, THSLC, 113 (1961). The quotations here and later are from my complete transcript of the letters.

19 The Gillow MSS are in the Westminster Library, London, and there are microfilm copies at Lancaster University. The consignment details, and a letter to Benjamin Satterthwaite of 11 Oct. 1749, are in a ledger of invoices and bills of lading for the years 1746-1779, with many other details of Gillow transactions and exports.

20 Consignments came from Liverpool in *Molly* from John Marsden of Chester 1755 and from John Wood of Rochdale 175(4) and 1756; from Lancaster in *Two Sisters* 1756 from John McMillan, in *Anson* 1758 from Thomas Wildman, and in *Hothersall* of Poulton but from Lancaster 1758 from Sudell and Fell, all merchants of Lancaster; and from Preston in *Clifton* of Preston from Robert Farrer, James Low, Richard Pedder and Sons, William Riddehough and James Walmesley, merchants of Preston and Joseph Stell of Keighley, in accounts dated between 1755 and 1757. Manchester merchants sent the most consignments: Lucy Barton and Sons (becoming Richard and John Barton, and then Richard and George Barton) in five ships, Newdigate and Ford in two ships, James Greatex in one ship and Thomas Parrot in eight ships, all from Liverpool between 1754 and 1759. The part
in colonial trade of merchants from inland towns, either as direct consigners of goods, or as part owners of ships, needs further exploration. Wadsworth and Mann, op. cit., p. 45 and pp. 224-231 ‘The Shipping Trade’, give some examples, and the Liverpool Plantation Registers have examples of Manchester shipowners including some in the slave trade.

21 The Rawlinson MSS are in Lancaster Library, and the ‘Voyage Book No. 3’ is only one example of the material available about the family business and exports to the West Indies. J. Foster, Pedigrees of the County Families of England vol. 1, Lancashire (London, 1873), has a full pedigree, showing that there were three generations of Rawlinson merchants in Lancaster; but for Abraham senior 1666-1737 there is as yet no clear evidence of West India trading. His sons were amongst those who sent out Benjamin Sattethwaite to Barbados; see Letter Book, op. cit., passim.

22 Consignments came in ship Fame 1756 from London for Case and Southworth, and in Phillis 1754 from St. Eustatia on account of Nicholas Atkinson and Marsden and Benson, both of Lancaster. On directory entries, see for example, G. T. and I. Shaw, eds., Liverpool’s First Directory . . . Gore’s Directory for 1766 (Liverpool, 1907), which has eight ‘tallow chandlers and soap boilers’, and seven ‘tallow chandlers’. See also T. C. Barker, R. Dickinson and D. W. F. Hardie, The origins of the synthetic alkali industry in Britain, Economica (1956), for some details of Liverpool soap production in the context of the demands for soap in the Lancashire textile industry.


24 The consignment was mostly metal goods and the account begun in 1755 was not closed until 1759.

25 See William Stout, op. cit., and Case and Southworth Accounts, consignments in Molly 1755 by her master John Stanton from Liverpool, and in Sisters 1755 from London for White and Blundell of Liverpool, and in Henry 1756 from Lancaster for Sudell and Fell.


29 Herrings for sale in the West Indies are mentioned by Benjamin Satterthwaite, in the Case and Southworth Accounts and in the Rawlinson ‘Voyage Book No. 3’, which also mentions salmon and ling. The export of herrings from the Irish Sea fisheries of Liverpool and the Isle of Man, to the West Indies and to the Mediterranean, deserves further study. It is possible that fish from the Scottish Western Isles, for instance from Campbeltown fishing vessels, also came to Liverpool for export.

30 The Trade Winds, pp. 197-8.

31 Examples of the mixture of American and British made goods in American homes can be seen at The American Museum in Britain, at Claverton Manor, Bath. There are shown a number of rooms of the 17th and 18th centuries, reconstructed and furnished with suitable period pieces. The British and some European manufacturers are plentiful in the early rooms and mingled more evenly in the later 18th century with American made furnishings. I am
grateful to the Education Officer of the Museum for information and discussion about the displays.

32 These letters are quoted in Charles H. Gildart, *The Gildart Families* (California, 1962), of which there are copies in the Liverpool and Lancashire Record Offices.


36 The Chaffers MSS are in Lancashire Record Office and contain many cargo details. For the cotton plantation, see Letter Book 1767-1770, letters to Captain Alexander Wotherspoon, 17 March, 1768, bound for Virginia and then Grenada, to William Ormandy of Grenada, 4 Jan., 1769, and to Captain Edward Ashburner, 25 Jan., 1770, bound to Grenada. Wotherspoon’s ship *Susannah* has Crosbie and Trafford (but not Chaffers) as part owners when registered at Liverpool, 30 May, 1766; Ashburner’s ship Sarah, registered at Liverpool, 10 Aug., 1757 and 23 Sept., 1769, was a regular trader to Grenada from 1764 and owned by John Tarleton of Liverpool.


39 Edwards’ phrase ‘Osnaburghs or German linen’ implies a difference if not a clear one. From most records it is impossible to decide whether Osnaburghs means a German import or a British substitute, but the Rawlinson ‘Voyage Book No. 3’ does give evidence of British manufacture. As well as ‘Osnaburghs’ bought in Lancaster which could be imported, ‘Osnaburghs’ were bought from John Platt of Wigan, and from William Pollard and from Henry Critchely, both of Leyland, hardly likely to be importers. This was in a voyage list for September 1787, and there were repeat orders for the Leyland men in 1789 and 1790. In a list for March, 1788, ‘Osnaburghs’ were brought from James Smith of Glasgow and in June 1790, ‘Scotch Osnaburghs’ were brought through a Lancaster merchant from Alexander Morrison of Dundee, with repeat orders through to 1795.


41 The analysis is from the first year of entries in the ‘Voyage Book No.3’, when in 1785 there were 6 cargo lists for the Windward Islands and Jamaica. A list of the types of goods and their costs and whether bought in Lancaster or elsewhere, is printed in M. M. Schofield, *Outlines of an Economic History of Lancaster 1680-1860*, Part I (Lancaster, 1946), pp. 45-47.

42 E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (N. Carolina, 1944).


44 The assessment of the place of Lancaster and Whitehaven amongst slave trading ports is based on *Public Record Office, Board of Trade papers, 6/3 ff. 150-189, ‘Account of the Tonnage . . . cleared from Great Britain to Africa . . . 1757 to 1777’.*

45 On cheating and kidnapping, see John Newton, *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade* (London, 1788), reprinted in B. Martin and M. Spurrell, eds., *Journal*


