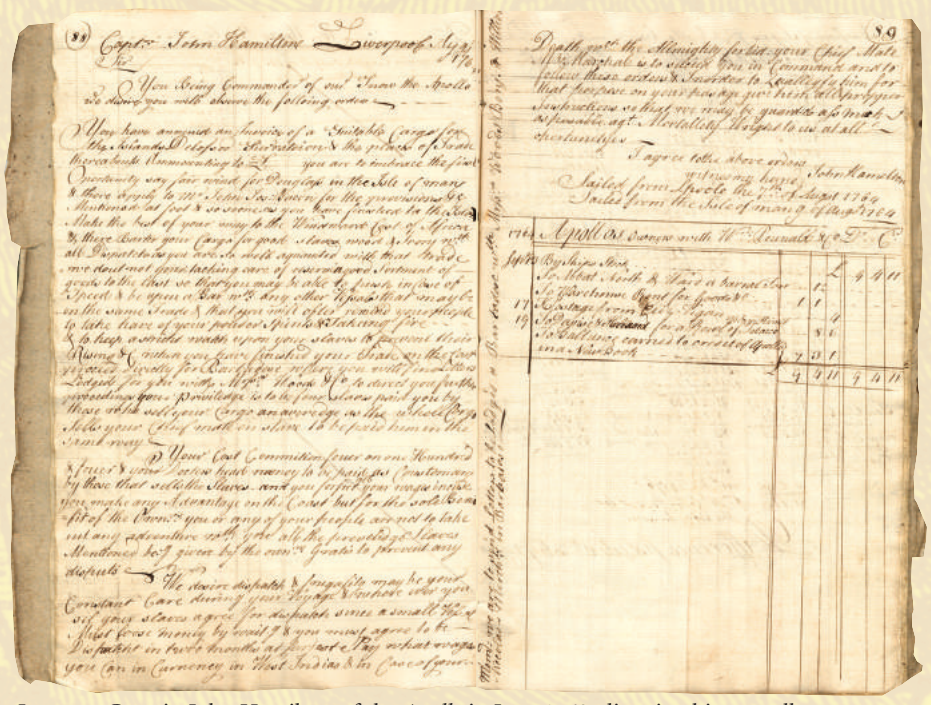
nections

The Liverpool Merchant Connection

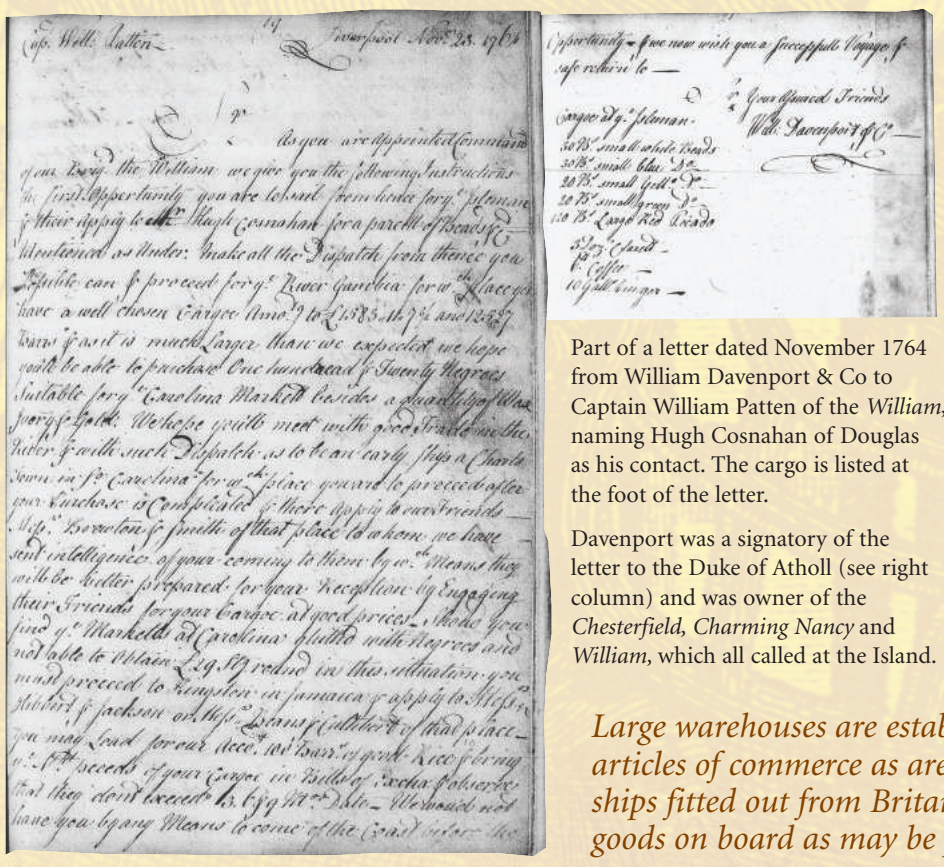
In the 1750s and early 1760s
at least half the Liverpool slaving ships
called at the Island for part of their cargoes.
This increased their profits, helping Liverpool to
become the principal slave trading port in Britain.

Letters of instruction

Before sailing from Liverpool, the captain of a slaving ship was given detailed instructions, often naming the merchant in the Isle of Man, who would supply part of his cargo.



Letter to Captain John Hamilton of the *Apollo* in June 1762, directing him to call on John Joseph Bacon at Douglas.

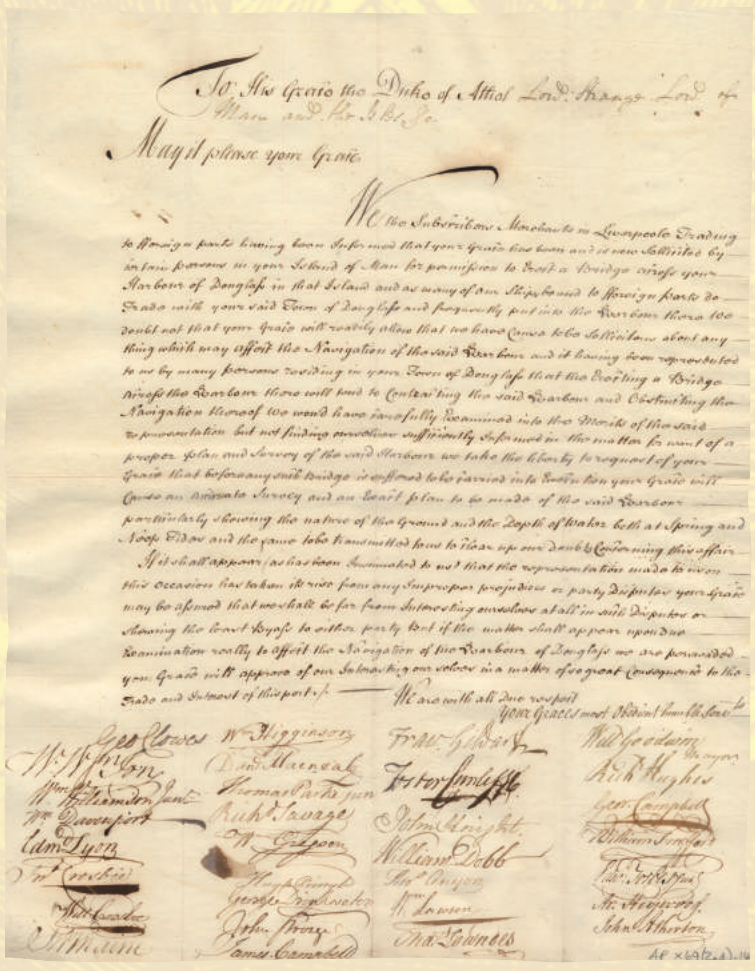


Part of a letter dated November 1764 from William Davenport & Co to Captain William Patten of the *William*, naming Hugh Cosnahan of Douglas as his contact. The cargo is listed at the foot of the letter.

Davenport was a signatory of the letter to the Duke of Atholl (see right column) and was owner of the *Chesterfield, Charming Nancy* and *William*, which all called at the Island.

A letter to the Duke

Concerned over George Moore's comments about the proposed new bridge at Douglas, in 1757 the Mayor and 32 other Liverpool Guinea merchants wrote to the Duke of Atholl for reassurance. Between 1757 and 1758 these merchants co-owned over 170 vessels which undertook more than 340 Guinea voyages.

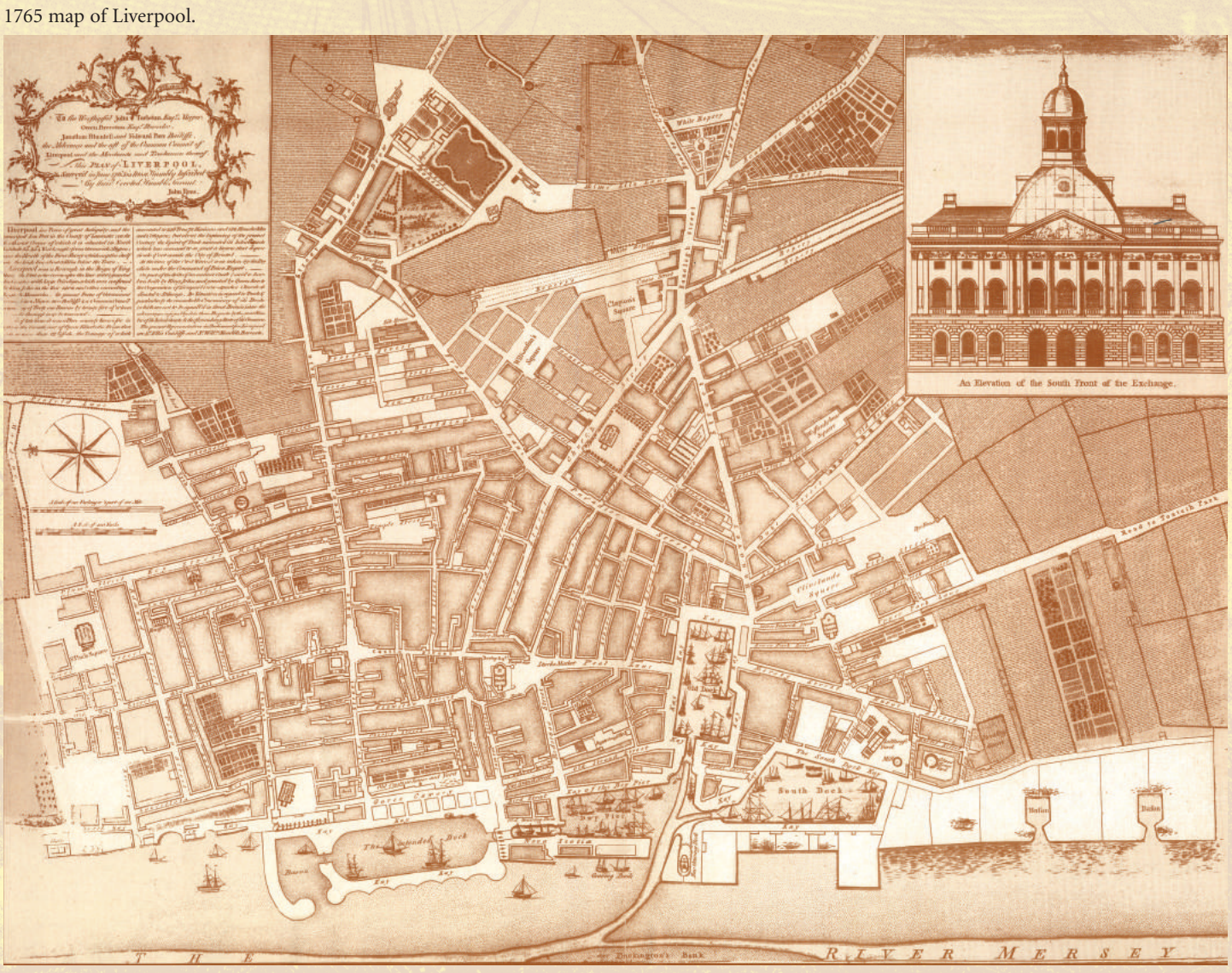


Letter to the Duke of Atholl from Liverpool merchants.

The Duke replied: *no permission shall be given for a bridge to be built on any part of the harbour of Douglas that may be prejudicial to the trade in general or more in particular to the town of Liverpool, for which I have a very great regard.*

The extract below is part of the evidence collected by the Treasury against the Isle of Man's role in the Guinea trade.

Large warehouses are established in the Island of Man and well furnished with such articles of commerce as are necessary for the trade on the coast of Africa, and the ships fitted out from Britain for that coast do touch at the Island and receive such goods on board as may be proper for completing the assortment of their cargoes.

From a report made by the Board of Customs in Edinburgh to the Treasury in London, 7 June 1764.

1765 map of Liverpool.