

KÖNIGSBERG AND HULL



The Chief Baltic and Scandinavian Ports with which Hull traded in the 18th Century



Late 14th-century Baltic Oak coffins from the Augustinian Friary, Hull (Hull and East Riding Museum). Timber has always been one of the main imports at Hull from Scandinavia and the Baltic.

Since the 14th century ships had transported goods between Hull and Königsberg. The latter was a member of the Hanseatic League, the great trading alliance of some 85 north European cities. Hull was a Hansa trading post, and it was Hanse ships, chiefly from Danzig (Gdansk), that dominated its trade with the Baltic through much of the later Middle Ages.

With the fall of the Hansa in the 16th century, and the exclusion of the Dutch from the mid-17th century, the Baltic trade passed increasingly into the hands of English merchants, many of them from Hull. It was not unusual for a member of the merchant's family to live at one of the Scandinavian or Baltic ports. Henry Maister of Hull was based at Danzig in the 1650s, and his son Henry became the leading English merchant at Gothenburg where he settled in 1699.



William Maister (1701-76) of Stockholm and St Petersburg by Georg Englehart Schroder. He was a younger brother of Henry Maister the builder of Maister House, Hull. The Maisters imported iron from Sweden but also exported cloth to Danzig and Königsberg.

The ships sailing from Königsberg to Hull in the 18th century carried hemp, flax, linseed and linen yarn. The linseed was used in Hull's oilseed crushing mills and emerging paint industry and the yarn went to mills in Lancashire and the West Riding. By the end of the century over 90% of the linen yarn imported into England from Prussia landed in Hull. In the 18th century Königsberg was culturally and economically closer to England than to Berlin.



Flax field near the Baltic (Igor Kiyakhin)

To be Sold by Auction,
(For Account of the UNDERWRITERS)
On TUESDAY next, the 16th inst.
At ELEVEN o'Clock in the Forenoon
At the Warehouse of Messrs. *Richard Terry & Sons*, in the
High-Street

ABOUT
Three Tons Damaged
Riga and Narva
FLAX,
AND ABOUT
Two Tons Damaged
HEMP.

Will be put up in LOTS to suit Purchasers, and may be viewed previous to the Sale, by applying to *Thomas Lonsdale*, Foreman at the Warehouse.

John Levett,
HULL, Jan. 13, 1810

WILLIAM RAWSON, Printer at the Advertiser, Lowgate, HULL

'The ships that crowded the harbour at Königsberg loaded yarn worth – ship-ton for ship-ton – five times as much as tobacco, four times as much as sugar and three times as much as pepper'. (Gordon Jackson, *Hull in the Eighteenth Century*)

The harbour at Königsberg in the 18th century, a reconstruction. (East Prussian State Museum, Lüneburg)

