

Irish Imperial Networks

This is an innovative study of the role of Ireland and the Irish in the British Empire, which examines the intellectual, cultural and political interconnections between nineteenth-century British imperial, Irish and Indian history. Barry Crosbie argues that Ireland was a crucial sub-imperial centre for the British Empire in South Asia that provided a significant amount of the manpower, intellectual and financial capital that fuelled Britain's drive into Asia from the 1750s onward. He shows the important role that Ireland played as a centre for recruitment for the armed forces, the medical and civil services, and the many missionary and scientific bodies established in South Asia during the colonial period. In doing so, the book also reveals the important part that the Empire played in shaping Ireland's domestic institutions, family life and identity in equally significant ways.

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*Migration, Social Communication
and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century India*

Barry Crosbie



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This book is dedicated to my wife and family

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Preface

This book examines the historical interconnections between Ireland, India and the British Empire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a greatly overlooked subject in the scholarship of modern Irish, British imperial and South Asian history. Specifically, the book focuses on the role of imperial networks and how Irish people in India set about circulating their own ideas, practices and material goods across the Empire during the colonial period. Indeed, the geographical connections and networks linking different parts of the world traced in this book reflect my own personal journey and career path to date that has taken me back and forth across what was once the British Empire.

My earliest encounter with the Empire and its long, complex history began as a child growing up in County Wexford, an important site of Cromwellian conquest and English colonisation in Ireland during the late 1640s. It was in Wexford, where my parents' house lay in close proximity to the walled, mysterious environs of 'Cromwell's Fort', that I first became interested in the idea of colonialism and in developing an understanding of how Ireland's past has been shaped by it. Later, as a student of history my studies took me to Cambridge, for so long one of the great intellectual centres of the Empire, where I learned to appreciate how colonial histories were seldom isolated, individual histories, but were in fact closely interwoven narratives whose common themes were replicated across different parts of the globe.

Subsequent spells spent researching and writing this book in many former British colonies, including India, Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago, have served to further develop my understanding of colonial histories, where I have been fortunate enough to appreciate first hand the diverse manifestations of the Empire's profound impact on the lives and spaces of those involved in it.

Today, teaching in Macau, a former Portuguese colony neighbouring Hong Kong, whose university's language of instruction is English,

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it appears the legacy and global impact of the British Empire endures. Given the relatively recent phenomenon of British decolonisation in East Asia with the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty, it is perhaps fitting that the book now reaches the end of its journey with me on the China coast.

Acknowledgements

Throughout my time spent as a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge, my supervisor, Professor Sir Christopher Bayly, was an immensely important mentor who provided me with much of the necessary framework for thinking about the connections between Ireland, India and the British Empire. Through his stimulating discussions, insightful commentaries and friendly counsel, he not only helped to encourage my spirit of academic enquiry but has been a tremendous source of inspiration at all times. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Roy Foster, Dr Timothy Harper, Dr Eugenio Biagini and Professor John MacKenzie for their very generous support, suggestions and encouragement throughout this project. I would also like to thank several colleagues at the National University of Ireland, Galway, especially Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, without whom my PhD thesis would probably never have assumed the form of a book. His constant encouragement, characteristic wit and humour, as well as his uncanny ability to identify the crux of an argument, contributed enormously to the successful completion of this book. Professor Nicholas Canny, Professor Steven Ellis, Dr Simon Potter and Dr Jason McHugh also deserve special mention. They have each made positive contributions to my experience in Galway by involving me in conferences and other academic pursuits, commenting on my work and offering precious advice.

I wish to offer the Master, Fellows, students and staff of Darwin College great thanks for providing me with excellent facilities, accommodation and a warm, supportive environment in which to study, write and socialise during my time in Cambridge. I must also acknowledge the help and the kind assistance that I have received from the staff of libraries and research centres in Cambridge, including the Centre of South Asian Studies, the Cambridge University Library, the Faculty of Oriental Studies Library, the Seeley Historical Library and Trinity College's Wren Library. In London, the staff of the following libraries and archives have been most helpful: the Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections in the British Library; the Royal Botanical Gardens

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Archives, Kew; the National Army Museum; and the Imperial College Archives, University of London. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Timothy Thomas for providing me with much valuable information concerning material of Irish interest in the British Library. In Ireland, I received much valuable and kind assistance from the librarians and archivists at the National Library of Ireland, St Patrick's College, Maynooth and All Hallows College, Drumcondra.

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During regular visits to the South Asian subcontinent I experienced outstanding hospitality, warmth and friendship, all of which made each journey joyful and edifying. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my parents-in-law, Nihal and Sarojini Jayawickrama, whose generosity, goodwill and knowledge has taught me much about the subcontinent and life in South Asia.

This book would not have been possible without the help, support and love of my family. My wonderful parents, Derek and Sheila Crosbie, have been models for me both in terms of personal and academic integrity. From them I have learned the value of commitment, hard work and perseverance. Their unwavering love, support and belief in what I was doing at all times have been essential to the completion of this book. My sisters, Diane and Genevieve, and brothers-in-law, Jamie and Jeremy, have also been incredibly supportive. I cannot thank them enough for the friendship and kindness they have shown me throughout the time spent researching and writing this book.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
BMC	British Military Consultations
Bod. Lib.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CUL	Cambridge University Library
GMC	General Medical Council
GSI	Geological Survey of India
GTS	Great Trigonometrical Survey of Ireland
ICS	Indian Civil Service
IMS	Indian Medical Service
NAM	National Army Museum
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collection (British Library)
PP	Parliamentary Papers
PRONI	Public Record Office Northern Ireland
SMS	Subordinate Medical Service
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
UCC	University College Cork
UCG	University College Galway