



EXHIBITING THE EMPIRE

Cultures of display
and the British Empire



EDITED BY JOHN McALEER
AND JOHN M. MACKENZIE

STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM

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Exhibiting the Empire



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Exhibiting the Empire

CULTURES OF DISPLAY
AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Edited by

John McAleer and John M. MacKenzie

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INTRODUCTION

Cultures of display and the British Empire

John M. MacKenzie and John McAleer

Britain's overseas empire had a profound impact on people in the United Kingdom, their domestic spaces and rituals, and their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the wider world. The country's imperial status seemed to pervade almost every aspect of British culture from exhibitions, panoramas and theatrical performances to art, literature and music.¹ Such influences and impacts were multiple and complex, and frequently became deeply embedded in British domestic culture. New academic approaches, adopting multi- and interdisciplinary forms of analysis, have heightened our awareness of, and sensitivity towards, the influences of colonialism, imperialism and empire on British life, in terms of not only 'high' culture but also the popular culture experienced by the vast majority of the population. Indeed, in some respects, this was a Europe-wide phenomenon, though this book concentrates on the British experience.² Thus many recent studies have provided a more nuanced view of how empire impinged upon the everyday lives and imaginations of British (and other) people and the complex ways in which they interacted with, and against, the imperial state. Furthermore, these approaches have illuminated the multifaceted ways in which imperialism was interwoven with a whole host of different phenomena, from the development of academic disciplines to the growth of institutions like museums and botanic gardens.³ And the Empire had far-reaching and long-lasting effects, not least through its relations with the churches and their attendant missionary societies, and its role in forming aspects of national character, identity and public self-image.⁴ The churches and missionary societies were important in transmitting visual propaganda for their work, through their magazines, through lectures and magic lantern slides, through exhibitions and publications such as postcards.

However, despite these advances in our understanding of the ways in which an awareness of empire permeated British culture, less

attention has been paid to the literal display and exhibition of empire (and the idea of empire) in the imperial metropolis. Until recently, as Christopher Pinney has pointed out, the historiography of empire has largely ignored questions of materiality. The phenomena and process of empire were often discussed without paying any attention to the visual art, architecture, sculpture, costume and interior decor that have sustained all empires. In doing so, Pinney has highlighted the ways in which 'representation' and the 'material history' of the British Empire are more than mere supplements to 'politics', 'society' or 'culture'. In fact, they offer 'an alternative mode of historiography'.⁵ Nevertheless, the plethora of material culture, publications, visual images, theatrical performances and even people exhibited and displayed in Britain as a result of imperial expansion, consolidation and exploration remains to be comprehensively investigated, explained and contextualised. Discussion tends to be constrained within disciplinary boundaries or confined to particular media. Historians are apt to overlook the mechanics, practicalities and significance of putting empire-related subjects and material culture on display, on to exhibition walls, or into print, both in books and in the press. *Exhibiting the Empire* seeks to begin the process of correcting that imbalance. The chapters collected here explore and contextualise the ways in which the practices, results and complexities of Britain's extra-European activities were 'exhibited' (in the broadest sense of the word) to British people. And, as a whole, the collection addresses issues of central concern to historians of empire: the relationship between those in Britain (i.e. the metropole) and the wider world; the impacts and influences of the Empire on British society and its significance for British people.

Exhibiting the Empire suggests that the history of empire also needs to be, to a large degree, a history of display and of reception. As the contributions from a range of scholars and a variety of disciplinary traditions attest, a whole host of cultural products – paintings, prints, photographs, panoramas, 'popular' texts, ephemera, newspapers and the press, theatre and music, exhibitions, institutions and architecture – were used to record, celebrate and question the development of the British Empire.

In addition to these, atlases and maps became increasingly influential sources for exhibiting the world to the British public. Atlases sold in large numbers and were available in all libraries, while maps appeared on the walls of many schoolrooms.⁶ Geographical societies were founded in many regional port cities (including Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Newcastle, Southampton, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen) in the 1880s. These became influential in arranging lectures, with maps and slides, as well as organising many

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events for schools.⁷ In these and many other ways, the Empire was visualised, exhibited and displayed for a variety of reasons: to promote trade and commerce; to encourage emigration and settlement; to assert and cement imperial authority; to exhibit the curious and the marvelous; to digest and display the data and specimens derived from various voyages of exploration and missionary endeavours undertaken in the name of empire; to celebrate and commemorate important landmarks, people or events in the imperial pantheon; to prove the positive impact of British rule; and, often, to provide evidence of having been somewhere foreign and faraway. Captain James Cook offered practical reasons for bringing artists on his voyages. The images they produced would 'serve to make the result of our voyages entertaining to the generality of readers, as well as instructive to the sailor and scholar'. John Webber, an Anglo-Swiss painter, was employed on Cook's third voyage 'for the express purpose of supplying the unavoidable imperfections of written accounts, by enabling us to preserve, and to bring home, such drawings of the most memorable scenes of our transactions, as could be executed by a professed and skilful artist'.⁸

By considering a broad sweep of different media and 'imperial moments', this collection highlights the essentially contingent and changing nature of imperial display through time and in a variety of contexts. It foregrounds the continuing impact and cultural valency of empire in Britain throughout (and beyond) the country's imperial meridian. As such, *Exhibiting the Empire* confirms the importance of considering the cultural implications of 'empire' for wider British history. While this collection focuses primarily on how the Empire was exhibited in the British Isles, even here, in the 'metropolis', there were competing 'visions' and experiences of empire. Similarly, many of the media employed to 'exhibit' empire were inherently mobile and, almost by definition, international in their character; their reach and impact often transcended national boundaries. The phenomenon of exhibiting empire might also, therefore, be considered in a transnational context. The exhibition and display of empire and imperial themes was prevalent throughout the geographical sweep of the British Empire. Indeed, perhaps the architecture of buildings, addressed only tangentially in this book in the contributions of Barczewski and MacKenzie, represents one of the supreme means of exhibiting empires, both in the colonies and in the metropole. Such buildings conveyed ideological messages, as well as representing different facets of the imperial experience, political, military, technological, social, and recreational.⁹ They remain as one of the most visible manifestations of empire, as they do not only for all the empires of Europe and the United States but also for many historic empires. And among historic empires we

should identify those of the Ancient World and also those of the global peoples among whom Europeans established their power. Indeed, in the Middle East, India and South-East Asia, Europeans sought to incorporate and assimilate such earlier displays of empire into their own exhibiting and self-awareness of power.¹⁰ The whole question of architecture and monumental remains, however, is so vast that it would require a further volume or volumes to treat it adequately. Similarly, parallel visual phenomena, related to the areas that are treated here, can also be identified across Europe and the United States. In all these ways, ideas and concepts of empire were conveyed to a wide variety of people, migrants and travellers, officials and military, as well as indigenous at every level.

We should, however, also note the silences of empire. Empires always seek to exhibit themselves as a means to underpinning their power. But they also attempt to obscure, in both documentary and visual ways, anything that might undermine that power or bring their reputations into disrepute. There are various examples of this. One would be the involvement in the slave trade and the practice of slavery, highlighted particularly by abolitionist movements, but often apparently written out of documentary and visual records until modern times. Another would be the massacres and instances of near-genocide that tragically occur in all empires. Where there are, for example, visual representations of individuals, such as the indigenous Tasmanians, they tend to be presented within a Darwinian framework of inevitable, evolutionary extinction and consequently as quaint final examples of a disappearing race. Resistance to empire can also sometimes be expunged, particularly in the modern period. Earlier revolts, such as that in India in 1857, could be presented as hopeless, obscurantist, anti-modern and non-progressive acts of resistance, thus chiming with the ideological thrust of imperial propaganda. But modern nationalist revolts were treated differently and in some cases documentation was conveniently 'lost' or destroyed while visual representations were played down. When dealing with the multiple forms of exhibiting empires, we should also be alert to these attempted obscuring acts of omission.

Early exhibitions of empire

The exhibition of objects and images garnered from British overseas activities has a long history. In 1599, Thomas Platter, a visitor to London from Basle, described Sir Walter Cope's renowned collection of curiosities. One particular apartment in Cope's 'fine house' was 'stuffed with queer foreign objects in every corner'.¹¹ Platter acknowl-

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edged that there were many people in London interested in curios but 'this gentleman is superior to them all for strange objects, because of the Indian voyage he carried out'.¹² One of those who displayed objects resulting from overseas commercial ventures was Thomas Smythe, known as 'Customer Smythe' because of his close connections with Queen Elizabeth's customs service. An 'Esquimau canoe' brought back from one of the north-west voyages of which Smythe was an untiring promoter hung in the hall of his son Thomas, who became the first governor of the East India Company.¹³ Perhaps the most renowned early collectors were the Tradescants, whose collection today forms the basis of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Indeed, many British museum collections owe their origins to the networks of global trade and maritime endeavour that developed at this time.¹⁴

This interest in displaying material derived from increasingly global interactions was not just restricted to private connoisseurs. Writing at the end of James I's reign, for example, Samuel Purchas remarked that a great map representing Francis Drake's circumnavigation was 'presented to Queen Elizabeth, [and is] still hanging in His Majestie's Gallerie at White Hall'.¹⁵ The exhibiting of this object in the great spaces of state highlights the close connection between display and power, exhibition and empire. Later in the century, the triumphal arches erected for the coronation of James's grandson, Charles II, carried 'living figures' of the four continents and prominently displayed the arms of the chartered companies trading there. On the pediment above, a crouching figure of Atlas bore the globe surmounted by a model ship in full sail.¹⁶ Of course, such display was not just an English or British phenomenon. Philip II of Spain showed keen interest in the visual representation of the natural history of his American dominions. He sent his court physician, Francisco Hernández, on five expeditions in the 1570s to collect and visually record the flora and fauna of New Spain. Philip then decorated his chambers at San Lorenzo del Escorial with paintings derived from these drawings. In 1632, his son, Philip III, who was then also ruler of Portugal, directed the Viceroy of India to send him views of all 'the coasts, ports, harbours and anchorages of this State'. The Count of Linhares assigned the responsibility to Captain Pedro Barreto de Resende, who produced *Livro do Estado da India Oriental*, a survey of Iberian interests ranging from the Indian to the Pacific Ocean. It showed towns, ports and fortresses, as well as individual buildings, fortifications and schematic plots of vegetation from a high bird's-eye view.¹⁷ The Dutch East India Company also maintained a 'Secret Atlas' in manuscript form – 'a systematic pictorial inventory of all of the islands, cities, and towns associated with Dutch commercial interests, rendered in explicit detail and brilliant,

beautiful colours' – apparently to impress visiting dignitaries.¹⁸

And the European engagement with the wider world was not just confined to images or objects. William Dampier returned to England in September 1691 with a tattooed man, 'a Painted Prince, whose Name was Jeoly', in tow. Considering 'what might be gain'd by shewing him in England', Dampier soon sold him to new owners who 'exposed [him] to publick view every day' and privately by appointment to 'persons of quality'.¹⁹ James Cook's voyages in the second half of the eighteenth century continued this penchant for bringing people back from the Pacific to be exhibited in Europe. The most famous example of this was Mai, who arrived in London 1774 and was famously depicted by Sir Joshua Reynolds in a grand portrait, itself exhibited in 1776.²⁰ And this appetite for displaying and observing people as a result of imperial activity continued into the nineteenth century.²¹

By the eighteenth century, empire was increasingly exhibited in Britain in visually arresting two-dimensional form. William Hodges, the artist on Captain Cook's second voyage to the Pacific, exhibited regularly at the Free Society of Artists and the Royal Academy.²² Hodges subsequently travelled in India, exhibiting eight Indian landscapes at the Academy exhibition of 1786.²³ As the importance of India to Britain's Empire rose, so the subcontinent became the focus of an immense project of visualisation.²⁴ Indian pictures appear in as many as 20 per cent of all the house sales managed by Christie's, for example.²⁵ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu described her London apartments as 'like an Indian warehouse' and her dressing room as 'like the temple of some Indian god'.²⁶ Popular panoramas, history paintings treating of the death of Tipu Sultan, a profusion of lithographs, aquatints and engravings, exhibitions and photography constructed a new India.²⁷ Francis Swain Ward, who had gone to India in 1757 as a lieutenant, exhibited Indian landscapes at the Society of Artists between 1765 and 1773. When he was re-commissioned as a captain in the Madras Army in 1773, he gratefully gave the East India Company ten landscapes which it hung in the Committee of Correspondence's meeting room at East India House in Leadenhall Street in London.²⁸ The fall of Tipu Sultan in 1799 inspired much visual as well as political interest in Britain. Robert Ker Porter capitalised on this curiosity by painting a 200-foot-long panorama in just six weeks. Depicted on a semicircular (some say three-quarter-circle) plane, the *Taking of Seringapatam* was a pictorial reconstruction of the fourth Anglo-Mysore War. When it went on display at Somerset House, on the Strand, it transported viewers to the scene. One contemporary, Thomas Frognall Dibdin, commented that 'you seemed to be listening to the groans of the wounded and the dying', whose 'red hot blood' was spilled all

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over the canvas. The realism of the scene produced 'a sight that was altogether as marvellous as it was novel. You carried it home, and did nothing but think of it, talk of it, and dream of it.'²⁹

India continued to be an important site of imperial representation into the nineteenth century. In 1808, objects from Seringapatam were brought to London to be housed with other material in an 'Oriental repository' kept by the East India Company.³⁰ At the Great Exhibition of 1851, the British political presence in the subcontinent was powerfully represented by the exhibition of regalia such as palanquins, thrones, crowns and sceptres, as well as the crown of the Raja of Oudh and the regal dress of the Raja of Bundi. The ivory throne of the Raja of Travancore, a present to the Queen, was even used by Prince Albert for the closing ceremonies.³¹ In 1855, the Company's 'repository' was remodelled to reflect changing political imperatives about the value, utility and purpose of empire in the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, although it still contained 'monumental and artistic records of the progress of the British Empire in the East', it also aimed 'to illustrate the productive resources of India and to give information about the life, manners, the arts and industry of its inhabitants'.³²

Domestic display

The exhibition of empire was not solely undertaken by public institutions: the role of individuals in displaying objects was one of the most powerful ways in which empire was brought home, in many cases quite literally. Valentine's Mansion in Ilford was occupied by a succession of merchants connected with the East India Company. In 1771, it was said that '[it] may, with great propriety, be called a Cabinet of Curiosities', with goods from the Orient 'especially conspicuous'.³³ Outside, secretary birds roamed the gardens. Lawrence Dundas's home in Kerse, near Falkirk, also had a wealth of Indian articles. An inventory of 1763 lists twenty-eight 'Indian pictures' in the gallery, 'two Indian Cabinets' and 'one settee with blew Indian Sattin Work'd', among other things.³⁴

Lord Caledon, a returning governor of the Cape Colony, provides another example. Through networks nurtured by patronage and local connections, Caledon could exhibit imperial connections in his country estate in County Tyrone. His dinner table boasted 'new wine and Cape Madeira ... purchased from Messrs De Vos and Schaadu' by Robert Crozier, an Ulsterman whom Caledon had patronised at the Cape. Crozier provided Caledon with animal skins by the same consignment, including one which he packed up with 'camphire [camphor] and pepper which I thought a necessary precaution in order to prevent the hair falling off'. He also had a box of stuffed birds in

his possession, which he also duly dispatched.³⁵ Perhaps the most spectacular impact on the earl's estate was made by the Norfolk Island pine trees that another local contact, John Campbell, sent to Caledon from his posting in New South Wales. Campbell reported that he had a box containing 'about a half a dozen of the young Norfolk pines' and was sure that 'if they should reach your Lordship's demesne at Caledon', they would 'be considered beautiful exotics'.³⁶ In describing their peculiar charm, Campbell set out very clearly their prospective impact and effect on his patron's estate in Ulster: 'On some of the eminences of Your Lordship's domain at Caledon these trees would cast a most commanding and beautiful appearance, and it would give me the greatest pleasure to find that they flourished there.'³⁷

But the ostentatious display of empire-related objects, or the wealth derived from overseas commercial activities, was not always welcome. The example of the Nabob was often held up as the epitome of vulgar wealth and conspicuous consumption. Nabobs were criticised by contemporaries for their 'opulence' and 'Asiatic luxury', and their activities as 'importers of foreign gold'.³⁸ Perhaps the most glaring example of this was in their penchant for showing off the diamonds that helped them remit their earnings from India. When Thomas Rumbold's estate was sold off after his death in 1793, the listing from Christie's auction house included 'a cameo ring set with brilliants', 'an emerald cameo ring set with brilliants', 'a brilliant sipher [*sic*] cameo', 'a large single stone rose diamond' and 'a ditto brilliant with 11 rubies'. Nabobs flaunted their jewels: Robert Clive spent a fortune giving 'his Lady a new set of jewels' in 1768, while Warren Hastings's wife appeared at a party in Tunbridge Wells in 1784 wearing diamonds worth an estimated £20,000.³⁹ T.B. Macaulay provided a damning assessment of their baleful influence by connecting it very directly with their conspicuous consumption and exhibition of opulence:

The Nabobs soon became a most unpopular class of men ... That they had sprung from obscurity, that they had acquired great wealth, that they exhibited it insolently, that they spent it extravagantly, that they raised the price of everything in their neighbourhoods, from fresh eggs to rotten boroughs, that their liveries outshone those of dukes, that their coaches were finer than that of the Lord Mayor, that the examples of their large and ill-governed households corrupted half the servants of the country, that some of them, with all their magnificence, could not catch the tone of good society, but, in spite of the stud and the crowd of menials, of the plate and the Dresden china, of the venison and Burgundy, were still low men; these were the things which excited, both in the class from which they had sprung and in the class in which they attempted to force themselves, the bitter aversion which is the effect of mingled envy and contempt.⁴⁰

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The Nabob, as an example of the 'integration of the imperial world into the fabric of British national culture' through the exhibition of empire, was presented in almost wholly negative terms.⁴¹

Images and objects not only exhibited wealth or commercial success, however. Their display could be used to convey other imperial themes, such as civilisation and improvement, that gained momentum and attracted support as the nineteenth century progressed. For example, the London Missionary Society (LMS) established a museum in 1814 to display objects donated by King Pomare of Tahiti. Pomare claimed that he wished 'to send these idols to Britain, for the Missionary Society, that they may know the likeness of the gods that Tahiti worshipped'. But the missionaries themselves were also keen to return to Britain with evidence of the conversion of the unbelievers. They referred to these objects as 'trophies of Christianity': 'They call our ship, a ship of God, and truly it is. It has carried the Gospel to distant lands, and brought back the trophies of its victory.'⁴² The extraordinary juxtaposition of objects in this museum from an aesthetic or scientific perspective – an engraving which appeared in the *Lady's Newspaper* for 1853 showed a twelve-foot god brought from the island of Rarotonga by the Reverend John Williams standing beside a giraffe shot in Griqualand, South Africa, in 1814 – was perfectly comprehensible from the point of view of the LMS. That so many objects were on display, and that the artefacts covered terrain ranging from the domestic to the natural, apparently demonstrated the extent to which Christian civilisation could replace existing belief systems. The display of traditional Pacific costumes or indigenous religious artefacts was a clear indication that the people from whom these objects originated now adhered to European standards of taste, decorum and domestic habits. And, more importantly, the fact that they worshipped a Christian god.⁴³

Later flowerings

The exhibitionary impulse is often assumed to have reached its apogee in the Great Exhibition of 1851. But many more exhibitions on explicitly imperial themes followed in its wake, continuing well into the twentieth century.⁴⁴ Many see the climax of this movement as occurring at Wembley in 1924–25, but the imperial exhibitions continued right up until the Second World War. These exhibitions occurred throughout the British Empire and other parts of the world.⁴⁵ In Britain itself, the Glasgow Empire Exhibition of 1938 was the last of these great shows. It adopted contemporary Art Deco architecture and by that time its message could be propagated through a whole variety of media, including newsreel. Many of these exhibitions, including those

before the First World War and the great show at Wembley, included massive Pageants of Empire which conveyed imperial events to a large public, in the latter instance taking place in the new Wembley Stadium. But exhibitions ranged from these large-scale, international shows to smaller-scale affairs that promoted the activities of specific societies or indeed one company by using explicitly imperial iconography.

The recently formed Imperial Airways, for example, used exhibitionary techniques to promote its activities and advertise the imperial connections that it offered to customers. In 1929 at London's Olympia, at the seventh international aeronautical exhibition, the company occupied two stalls, both of which incorporated suitably imperial motifs. At one, a slow-moving painted panorama of scenes on the England–Egypt–India route passed behind the windows of an airliner cabin section. At the second stall, aircraft models were moved along a map of the route.⁴⁶ Five years later, in 1934, the airline mounted its own exhibition, entitled 'Flying over the Empire'. The exhibition, which comprised a large folding screen on which was mounted a map, models of Imperial aircraft, photographs depicting imperial scenes and several dioramas, toured the provinces and was remounted for a two-month Christmas show at the Science Museum in December 1935 (renamed 'Empire's Airway' with free admission). It was subsequently sent to Canada, South Africa and Australia and, by 1937, an estimated one million people had seen the exhibition.⁴⁷

The Empire Marketing Board (EMB) provides another illuminating example of the exhibition of empire in the early twentieth century. Although its existence was brief – from May 1926 to September 1933 – it managed to publish around 800 different poster designs to promote the consumption of goods and products produced in the Empire. These images and their exhibition were conceived in an effort to 'move the hearts and minds' and 'touch the imagination of the people' by 'bringing the Empire alive'.⁴⁸ By December 1927, a thousand frame-poster hoardings had been erected, many of them at sites which had never carried advertising before. By the time of the EMB's demise, there were 1,800 such hoardings in 450 towns across the country. Images produced by the EMB had widespread appeal and far-reaching impact. Commercial companies used them for stationery, and made them into pictures for jigsaw puzzles or designs for card games. Eight designs were reprinted in 5,000 sets by the EMB and issued as Christmas cards. MacDonald Gill's 'Highways of Empire' map was reprinted in miniature and 26,000 copies were distributed at the Schoolboy's Own Exhibition in 1929. The visually persuasive qualities of the images published by the EMB certainly seemed to have the desired effect. One teacher thought the posters were a 'god-send' because 'they vivify and intensify the very

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impression we wish our pupils to receive with respect to the resources and potentialities of our empire'.⁴⁹

As Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose remind us, 'Britain's imperial role and its presence within the metropole shaped peoples' identities as Britons and informed their practical, daily activities'.⁵⁰ Through a series of examples, drawn from a wide chronological sweep and expressed in a variety of different media, *Exhibiting the Empire* shows the diverse ways in which Britain's Empire was displayed and exhibited to people in the United Kingdom. Taken together, the collection suggests the complex interpretative contexts in which British people experienced and responded to the Empire as it waxed and waned from the late seventeenth century to the early decades of the twentieth.

Contributions range across a gamut of international, national, regional and domestic contexts. Traditional exhibitionary practices associated with artistic media like oil paintings and prints, such as those considered in the chapters by Eleanor Hughes and Douglas Fordham, offered a ready-made channel for disseminating information, ideas and ideologies about empire. The chapters by Jeffrey Auerbach, Sarah Longair, Nalini Ghuman and John MacKenzie explore the opportunities for exhibiting and celebrating empire provided by grand, organised, set-piece occasions. The Festival of Empire which took place in 1911, for example, offered a panoply of tangible representations of empire to its visitors: scale models of the Dominions' parliament buildings connected by the 'all-red tour' of the miniature railway; replicas of a Jamaican sugar plantation and a Malay village; an Indian section complete with jungle, palace and bazaar. The centrepiece event – the 'Pageant of London and the Empire' – traced the development of empire from the 'Dawn of British History' to a 'Grand Imperial Finale', in which hundreds of visitors from the Dominions joined with thousands of British performers to provide a 'living picture' that illustrated the vastness of the Empire on which the sun famously never set.

But empire was manifest in Britain in other ways and in other circumstances. Stephanie Barczewski, in her chapter on the iconography of British country houses, argues that the display of this imagery in domestic architectural contexts is connected to the growth, both in territorial scale and in metropolitan cultural significance, of the British Empire in the eighteenth century. John MacKenzie offers a detailed look at the ways in which the Delhi Durbar of 1911 – taking place half the world away in India – was represented in Britain, becoming the subject of major news reports across the United Kingdom. Newspapers around the country carried extensive reports of the ceremonial, often with 'library photographs' of the key sites in which they took place, as well as stories of the journeys of the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress

from Europe to India and around India itself. This serves to demonstrate the significance of the press, after the removal of controls and taxes in the mid-nineteenth century, in circulating more widely material and ideas about the British Empire, initially through reading rooms in libraries and other institutions, later in personal copies, creating a profound visual effect both through print information and through the increasing use of illustrations.⁵¹ Turning to aural representations, Nalini Ghuman, in her chapter, explores the musical contribution of Sir Edward Elgar, the newly appointed Master of the King's Musick, to the British Empire Exhibition held at Wembley in the mid-1920s – a reminder that empire was often 'exhibited' and experienced in Britain in intangible, as well as physical, forms. Through the performance of bands in public places, various forms of concerts and music in churches, as well as through the considerable sales of sheet music, such musical expressions of empire were everywhere, the imperial content invariably highlighted through highly charged texts.⁵²

And empire could be exhibited on much more modest scales than these powerful public examples. Several of the chapters that follow show how the Empire was 'exhibited', both visually and textually, in a variety of printed material. John McAleer and Berny Sèbe consider the importance of printed books in disseminating ideas about Britain's engagement with the wider world, as well as the ideas about empire this inspired and provoked. David Tomkins and Ashley Jackson explore yet another type of documentary evidence – ephemera. Drawing principally on the riches of the John Johnson Collection at the Bodleian Library, they argue that the printed ephemera that proliferated as a result of technical and social changes – programmes, postcards, tickets, posters, playbills, paper bags, cigarette cards, food labels and advertisements to name but a few – were one of the most important ways in which ideas about empire and the wider world were introduced to the public in Britain.

Exhibiting the Empire sheds light on the complex interplay between 'metropole' and 'periphery', both within the United Kingdom and in the wider Empire beyond. Clearly London, as the beating heart of the global British Empire, played a huge role in exhibiting that phenomenon to the general public. Jeffrey Auerbach considers the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Festival of Empire (held at the rebuilt Crystal Palace in Sydenham) which celebrated the coronation of George V in 1911. The British Empire Exhibition, held at Wembley in 1924 and 1925 where it attracted some twenty-seven million visitors, provides the backdrop for the themes explored by Sarah Longair and Nalini Ghuman in their respective chapters. But the Empire was exhibited beyond London. Monuments to James Cook's endeavours appeared in rural Bucking-

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hamshire, while objects collected by those who sailed with him were displayed in Cambridge and Dublin, among other places. Museums throughout the country sought to exhibit artefacts derived from voyages of exploration,⁵³ while later in the nineteenth century some shipping companies actually commissioned captains to supply ethnographic materials.⁵⁴ And exhibiting the Empire in Britain could have important ramifications beyond the shores of the United Kingdom. Sarah Longair's chapter shows how the authorities in Zanzibar tried to use the opportunity presented by the British Empire Exhibition in Wembley to present carefully calibrated images about the protectorate to the British public.

Contributions range widely over time and across space. Jeffrey Auerbach demonstrates in his chapter on the exhibitions held in the Crystal Palace that even a relatively short period of sixty years could make a great deal of difference to the ways in which empire was displayed and interpreted. No single collection of essays on such a wide-ranging subject, therefore, can claim to be comprehensive or all-encompassing. And the British Empire was not exhibited just in the United Kingdom; it was also displayed and experienced throughout the territories of that Empire and in the wider world beyond. Besides, while some representations of empire were clearly conscious acts, others were not. Representations of imperial events in ephemera might have been, as Ashley Jackson and David Tomkins point out, incidental, almost 'accidentally' expressing some association with empire. As such, *Exhibiting the Empire* does not claim to offer a comprehensive evaluation of the myriad ways in which the British Empire was imbricated in British domestic life and culture over the centuries. By offering a series of detailed case studies, however, the collection hopes to promote further research into the ways in which the Empire was made manifest and tangible to those living with it as a real political, social and cultural entity. All of this reflects the extent to which the phenomenon some art historians have described as 'the visual turn' has come to be significant in imperial studies.⁵⁵ Several recently published books demonstrate the commitment of the 'Studies in Imperialism Series' to this important historiographical trend, emphasising materiality, ritual, monuments, memory, and various ways of visualising and imagining empire.⁵⁶ It is quite clear that many more such studies will follow. It is hoped that the essays in *Exhibiting the Empire* will make a significant contribution to such developments, while also suggesting the potential riches remaining to be unlocked.

Notes

- 1 For exhibitions, art and music, see below. For panoramas, see Denise Blake Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), and for the theatre, Marty Gould, *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and the Imperial Encounter* (New York: Routledge, 2011), which convincingly overturns any idea that the British stage was somehow bereft of empire. For the cinema, James Chapman and Nicholas J. Cull's *Projecting Empire: Imperialism and Popular Cinema* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009) is a notable addition to the literature.
- 2 See, for example, John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *European Empires and the People: Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).
- 3 On museums, see John M. MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), and Sarah Longair and John McAleer (eds), *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012). Botanic gardens, as well as displaying plants and tropical products from colonised regions, often additionally displayed exotic botanical illustrations which conveyed visions of the botanical riches of the empire to a wider public. Some of these became popular in interior decor. See, for example, H.J. Noltie, *Indian Botanical Drawings, 1793–1868 from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Royal Botanic Garden, 1999), and H.J. Noltie, *The Dapuri Drawings: Alexander Gibson and the Bombay Botanic Gardens* (Edinburgh: Royal Botanic Gardens, 2002).
- 4 Among a growing literature on the public exposure of missions and missionaries, see Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).
- 5 Christopher Pinney, 'The Material and Visual Culture of British India', in Douglas M. Peers and Nandini Gooptu (eds), *India and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 231–61 (pp. 232–3).
- 6 The archive of the great map and atlas publisher John Bartholomew and Son is now deposited in the National Library of Scotland, and reveals just how extensive the sales of these products were. See also James McCarthy, *Journey into Africa: The Life and Death of Keith Johnston, Scottish Cartographer and Explorer (1844–79)* (Caithness: Whittle Publishing, 2004).
- 7 John M. MacKenzie, 'The Provincial Geographical Societies in Britain, 1884–1914', in Morag Bell, Robin Butlin and Michael Heffernan (eds), *Geography and Imperialism, 1820–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 93–124. See also Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), and Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith (eds), *Geography and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).
- 8 James Cook and James King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean ... for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere, in the Years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780*, 3 vols (London: G. Nicol and T. Cadell, 1784), vol. 1, p. 5.
- 9 See Ashley Jackson, *Buildings of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). See also the imperial chapters of Jeffrey Richards and John M. MacKenzie, *The Railway Station: A Social History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- 10 See, for example, Astrid Swenson and Peter Mandler (eds), *From Plunder to Preservation: Britain and the Heritage of Empire, c. 1800–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- 11 Quoted in Daniela Bleichmar, 'Seeing the World in a Room: Looking at Exotica in Early Modern Collections', in Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall (eds), *Collecting across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 15–30 (p. 22).
- 12 Quoted in Arthur MacGregor, 'A Cabinet of Wonder', in *The World of 1607* (Williamsburg, VA: Jamestown-Yorktown Federation, 2007), pp. 144–9 (pp. 144–5).
- 13 William Foster, *The East India House: Its History and Associations* (London: John Lane, 1924), p. 3.

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- 14 See Sarah Longair and John McAleer, 'Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience', in Sarah Longair and John McAleer (eds), *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 1–16 (pp. 2–3).
- 15 Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 20 vols (Glasgow, 1905–7), vol. 13, pp. 3–4. The map probably perished in the Whitehall fires of 1694 and 1697. See R.A. Skelton, 'The Royal Map Collections of England', *Imago Mundi* 13 (1956), pp. 181–3.
- 16 Olivia Horsfall Turner, 'Introduction', in Olivia Horsfall Turner (ed.), *The Mirror of Great Britain: National Identity in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Reading: Spire, 2012), pp. 9–14 (p. 13).
- 17 See John E. Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes: Britain's Global Visual Culture, 1745–1820* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 20–1. The *Livro* remained in manuscript form and is currently housed at the British Library, London.
- 18 Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes*, p. 31.
- 19 Neil Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 64.
- 20 See McAleer, 'Exhibiting Exploration', p. 50 below. See also Harriet Guest, 'Ornament and Use: Mai and Cook in London', in Kathleen Wilson (ed.), *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 317–44.
- 21 See Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
- 22 See John Bonehill, '"This Hapless Adventurer": Hodges and the London Art World', in Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill (eds), *William Hodges, 1744–1797: The Art of Exploration* (London: National Maritime Museum, 2004), pp. 9–14. See also Giles Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), pp. 53–4.
- 23 Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes*, p. 179.
- 24 See Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
- 25 Natasha Eaton, *Mimesis across Empires: Artworks and Networks in India, 1765–1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), p. 30.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 27 Pinney, 'The Material and Visual Culture of British India', p. 241.
- 28 Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes*, p. 171.
- 29 Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 135.
- 30 Carol A. Breckenridge, 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs', *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 31 (1989), pp. 195–216 (p. 198).
- 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 203–4.
- 32 Eaton, *Mimesis across Empires*, p. 292, n. 12.
- 33 Georgina Green, 'Valentines, the Raymonds and Company Material Culture', *The East India Company at Home*, <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/files/2013/02/Valetines-case-study-Final-Website-Draft-2.pdf> (accessed 5 July 2013), pp. 5, 6.
- 34 Helen Clifford, 'Accommodating the East: Sir Lawrence Dundas as Northern Nabob? The Dundas Property Empire and Nabob Taste', *The East India Company at Home*, <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/files/2013/02/Aske-Hall-Final-PDF-Version2.pdf> (accessed 5 July 2013), p. 19.
- 35 Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), Caledon papers, D2431/17/3/3, Robert Crozier to Lord Caledon, 20 December 1812.
- 36 PRONI, Caledon papers, D2433/C/11/26, John Campbell to Lord Caledon, 2 November 1812.
- 37 PRONI, Caledon papers, D2433/C/11/26, Campbell to Caledon, 15 August 1813.
- 38 See Philip Lawson and Jim Phillips, '"Our Execrable Banditti": Perceptions of Nabobs in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain', *Albion* 16 (1984), pp. 225–41 (p. 238).
- 39 Tillman W. Nechtman, 'A Jewel in the Crown? Indian Wealth in Domestic Britain

- in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 41 (2007), pp. 71–86 (p. 78).
- 40 Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Macaulay's Essay on Lord Clive*, ed. William Henry Hudson (London: George G. Harrap, 1910), pp. 94–5.
 - 41 Nechtman, 'A Jewel in the Crown?', p. 72.
 - 42 Sujit Sivasundaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 178, 185. For more on the London Missionary Society and its museum, see Chris Wingfield, 'The Moving Objects of the London Missionary Society: An Experiment in Symmetrical Anthropology', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012.
 - 43 Sivasundaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire*, p. 177.
 - 44 See Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg (eds), *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).
 - 45 Such exhibitions included those at Paris Vincennes, 1931, Johannesburg, South Africa, 1936–37 and Wellington, New Zealand, 1939–40.
 - 46 Gordon Pirie, *Cultures and Caricatures of British Imperial Aviation: Passengers, Pilots, Publicity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 177.
 - 47 *Ibid.*, pp. 184–5.
 - 48 Stephen Constantine, *Buy and Build: The Advertising Posters of the Empire Marketing Board* (London: HMSO, 1986), pp. 1, 6–7. See also Melanie Horton, *Empire Marketing Board Posters* (London: Scala, 2010).
 - 49 Constantine, *Buy and Build*, pp. 11, 17.
 - 50 Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, 'Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire', in Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1–31 (p. 22).
 - 51 See Simon J. Potter, *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire, c. 1857–1921* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), and Chandrika Kaul (ed.), *Media and the British Empire* (London: Palgrave 2006).
 - 52 See Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
 - 53 William Hunter acquired material from Captain Cook, now in the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow. See Lawrence Keppie, *William Hunter and the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, 1807–2007* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). See also Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), and Amiria Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) for many other examples.
 - 54 For this phenomenon, see Zachary Kingdon and Dmitri von den Bersselaar, 'Collecting Empire? African Objects, West African Trade and a Liverpool Museum', in Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas J. White (eds), *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 100–22.
 - 55 Earlier work on visual aspects of the British Empire includes John M. MacKenzie, 'Art and the Empire', in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *Cambridge Illustrated History: The British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 296–315; Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley and Douglas Fordham (eds), *Art and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); and Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (eds), *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998). For collecting, see Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750–1850* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005), and Holger Hoock, *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War and the Arts in the*

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- 56 Stephanie Barczewski, *Country Houses and the British Empire, 1700–1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Pamela Gupta, *The Relic State: St Francis Xavier and the Politics of Ritual in Portuguese India* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Dominik Geppert and Frank Lorenz Müller (eds), *Sites of Imperial Memory: Commemorating Colonial Rule in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

CHAPTER ONE

An elite imperial vision: Eighteenth-century British country houses and four continents imagery

Stephanie Barczewski

Just north of York, Castle Howard casts its imposing gaze over the North Yorkshire Moors. Built by the third Earl of Carlisle in the early eighteenth century, the house was intended as a lasting monument to the power and prominence of the Howard family, even though – or perhaps because – Carlisle came from a minor branch with little connection to his more renowned ancestors. If any added motivation was needed, it came from Carlisle's summary dismissal from the upper reaches of the political world in 1702, when the pro-Whig King William III was succeeded by the pro-Tory Queen Anne. The staunchly Whig Carlisle, who had risen to First Lord of the Treasury under William, suddenly found himself out of favour and out of office. He had already embarked upon plans for a grand house in the hopes of enticing the king to visit; now he had little else to do but concentrate on his new seat, which if all went well would dazzle his contemporaries with its splendour and display of the highest standards of taste and erudition. His creaky old castle at Naworth in Cumbria would simply no longer do as a seat for a man of his stature and – at this point thwarted – ambition.

For the job, he hired a man with no previous architectural experience, the erstwhile soldier John Vanbrugh, whom Carlisle had met at the Kit-Kat Club in London and who was at the time enjoying considerable success as a playwright. From this unlikely pairing sprang a country house that many architectural historians have since proclaimed to be England's greatest. Castle Howard's most famous feature is the dome over its central block, the first on a private house in Britain. Soaring seventy feet into the air, the dome is surmounted by an eight-windowed lantern that serves as the main source of light, while inside massive Corinthian columns bracket huge arches that open on to flanking stairways. In 1709, Carlisle commissioned the Italian artist Gianantonio Pellegrini to decorate the interior of the dome with a painting of the fall of Phaethon surrounded by represen-