

CONVICT HERITAGE TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF FREMANTLE PRISON, AUSTRALIA

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History and Heritage have traditionally been strong pull factors in tourism. There are countries and destinations with strong tradition in these areas with practically no efforts needed for product designing, promotion or marketing. Destinations like Rome, Vienna or Paris, etc. can be cited in this regard. It is interesting to find that a country like Australia with a history of approximately 200 years (excluding the aborigines' history) has made extensive use of its history and heritage by converting them into tourism products and convict heritage tourism has emerged as a vital interest area for both domestic as well as international tourism. As a visiting fellow of the Australia India Council (2007) I worked on a project – "How Australia has converted its history and heritage into tourism products?" and further as a visiting Professor under the Australia Endeavour Award 2008 I worked on Convict Heritage in Australia. For this I carried out extensive fieldwork in different parts of Australia. This paper analyses the decision-making and planning for converting convict history and sites into convict heritage sites and further developing them as tourism products. It examines the attractions created in this area and the way they are marketed and promoted. After discussing the broad areas the paper discusses the Fremantle prison as a case study whereby it takes into account its conversion into a convict heritage site and its enrichment into a tourism product by introducing prison tours, theme parties and a live experience of prison life to the visitors. How do the visitors feel about this experience is another aspect dealt with in the paper along with the perceptions and attitudes of the host population, former prison officers and members of the Town Council in Fremantle. The paper also makes certain suggestions for further enrichment and rejuvenation of such tourism products in Australia. The paper, by dealing such themes, provides an insight into this emerging area of new tourism products that provide a successful tourism product case study for others to learn from and follow.

Keywords: Convict Heritage, Ghost Tours, Tourism Resource, Tourism Product, Tourist Gaze



INTRODUCTION

Conserving, showing and interpreting a ‘cruel and often tyrannical’ past of penal solitude to the visitors as a tourism product is something unique and a departure from the earlier practices of showcasing the histories or monuments that represented the life styles and cultures of the ruling and dominant social groups. The common humans and their histories/heritage were hardly considered as a theme that could act as a pull factor in tourism. Hence, the attitude of tourism planners as well as that of the industry was, why take pains to showcase them. The very word convict has a very specific meaning in Australia and is used not for every prisoner that has been convicted but only for those prisoners that had been convicted in England and transported to Australia as convicts. It remained a taboo in the Australian social context and it was very recently that not only this taboo was broken but quite a few historical studies emerged on the history of the Penal Settlements and their convict population along with the contributions of the convicts in building up the Australian nation. Even the business houses that were established by the convicts now take pride in that ancestry using the convicts’ history to market their products. The best example is that of a popular beer brand where the company claims that the beer had been illegally distilled by James, a convict from the first fleet and he was punished with 74 lashes – a much lesser sentence because the Governor of Victoria tasted the beer and liked it very much. The terminology also changed to refer the convicts as victims of forced migrations, birth stains and so on. This was because fresh researches proved the forced migrations and the injustices committed on the innocent or for exceptionally petty crimes to make free and cheap labour available for colonial expansion through punishment of deportation to the colonies where no local labour could be found (Robson, 1965; Hughes, 1987; Robinson, 1988; Davis, 1998; Frost, Maxwell-Stewart, 2001; Rees, 2001; Davidson, 2007). Not only was the history and life of the convicts rewritten to acknowledge their role in Australia’s development but gradually, the sites and events associated with them like the prisons, the female factories or the buildings constructed by convict labour, the convict hide outs, their working places such as coalmines, their escape routes, etc. became symbols of convict heritage and objects of tourist gaze. This paper seeks to examine the conversion of Fremantle Prison in West Australia into a successful Convict Heritage Tourism product.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this case study has been conventional. Three field visits were carried out to the site to have first hand experience of its tourism products. Interviews were conducted with the visitors, staff, local residents, historians and ex-prison officials besides getting questionnaires filled from them. I also explored their website, brochures and other literature like the official tourist survey and feedback. To have a historical understanding of the convict life, one also went through the published research works related to the theme in order to make a comparative analysis that whether the convict heritage showcased for the tourists' gaze and interpreted/transmitted to the tourists by the guides is historically authentic or as is the standard practice in tourism added with spicy stories and fiction.

BACKGROUND

History and Heritage continue to remain the strongest pull factors in tourism in spite of whether the past has been beautiful or horrible. For example, after the Second World War many sites worldwide, where terrible happenings had taken place, started attracting visitors and history preserved both, the loveable as well as the horrible memories for the present and future generations. Many sites where the kings and other public figures were either imprisoned or hanged aroused the curiosity of a visitor yet, to convert the horrible past into a visitor attraction has not been an easy task. The modern world established a symbolic relationship between history, heritage, arts and commerce with the tourist dollar being an answer to meet the cost of heritage conservation along with giving a boost to the local economies. Heritage Tourism has flourished in different forms in various countries but I consider the Convict Heritage Tourism as a significant departure from the various other forms of Heritage Tourism and no doubt Australia has established it as a brand in the tourism generating markets. A variety of factors contributed towards heritage awareness and conservation in Australia. Whereas the generation of the 1950s was busy in earning money and in development, there soon emerged nationalist education with patriotic feelings and reactions (who are we?) in the 1960s and an important saying was "we have got history if they have got". (Interview: David Crinion, Adelaide) A lot of community-based works emerged and throughout 1960s the centenary celebrations of the towns established in the 1860s marked the Australian continent. In

fact, there emerged a movement at the grassroots amongst the new generation where the elite, the artists and the common man were all for finding their history and conserving heritage. It was natural that such a movement would have its impact on the politics of the day and also affect the future. Community Histories, interest in non-Australian Histories that had a legacy on Australia and the History of Aborigines became prominent subjects of research and the monuments and sites related to such history, the objects of heritage conservation (interview: David Crinion). By the 1980s, heritage (both environmental and manmade) had become a major issue of conservation wherein the smaller and weaker players also had a say at the local levels. Researches were conducted to write public histories, and there emerged excellent works (by early 1990s) debating issues related to “presentation of history to a wider public” and the “relationship between the history historians write for themselves and the history they should write for others” (Rickard and Spearritti, 1991, p.1). The “wider public” and the “others” here would include many: popular press; television and radio; historical interpretations at museums, monuments and other heritage sites; tourists and tourism professionals or developers and so on. In fact, public history “also insists that history has a future, not only in the academy but in the real world” (Rickard and Spearritti, p.3; Also see Kapil Kumar, 2005 for uses of History in Tourism). It was virtually a heritage cultural movement that gained strength from strong traditions of community cooperation and had a huge bearing on the thinking of the times. It was in this context that the Fremantle Prison, built by the convicts themselves in the 1850s was converted into a heritage site in the 1990s with a vision to attract tourists.

HERITAGE: RESOURCE TO PRODUCT

Initially, the Fremantle Prison was preserved for heritage purposes as a memory of retaining the convict heritage of a prison and its life, the history of which dates back to the establishment of the Penal Settlement in Australia in the 1850s. The construction of the prison which started with the building of the Warder’s Cottages in 1851 and the entire convict establishment project got officially completed by end December 1859. By 1868, convict transportation from UK to Western Australia had ended; 1876 saw the disbanding of the Colonial Convict Department but the Fremantle Prison continued to host prisoners till 1991 from where started its process of development into a major historic heritage site of Australia. One cannot go into the detailed history but suffice here is to mention that almost 140 years of its history is witness to many events from housing the

most hardened criminals, women convicts, prisoners of war; the ones initially deported from England; escapes and the daily convict life. Interestingly, the archival data and records are rich and well preserved and the website of the Fremantle Prison on the Internet is extremely informative in this regard. I am not going into the details of such records here but some of these records are integrated in the tourism product for purposes of information, knowledge, anecdotes or entertainment of the tourists. In 1983 itself the Western Australian State Cabinet had decided to close the prison. It had also acknowledged that “the site offered tremendous possibilities for imaginative uses whilst maintaining integrity of the historic development”. The final decommissioning of the prison in 1991 not only saw a variety of heritage management strategies put into practice but also permitted the maintenance of its historic significance and allow “it to continue as a useful community enterprise”. There always had been a debate over heritage usage and conservation in Fremantle and it remerged over the future usage of the prison. One view expressed was to dismantle it (It’s an eyesore! Pull it down!) and the entire area to be used either to establish a new housing colony or to have markets with huge malls. Obviously, this was a viewpoint governed by commercial and marketing perspective. It is an eyesore! Represents a horrible past, pull it down, just place a memory stone there and a garden (interview: James Cooper) was another view. Another set of historians, though in favour of conserving the Convict Heritage have been opposed to its showcasing to tourists as they consider that intimate stories of human sufferings should not be reduced to sensational experience for entertainment. (Interview: David Dunston) The other viewpoint was to retain it as a heritage site that can be used for community services and ultimately it was the heritage conservation viewpoint that prevailed (Interview: Ron Davidson, Fremantle). In fact, Roy Jones has elaborately analysed Fremantle’s conversion into a heritage township (1992):

“Fremantle was seen by many, and not least by state planners, as rundown and obsolete by comparison and both the first metropolitan plan (Stephenson and Hepburn 1955) and an early City Council plan envisaged radical demolition and reconstruction. By the early 1970s, however, lessons from the destruction of built heritage in Perth had been learned and Fremantle’s historic townscape had gained in local scarcity value; the first gentrifiers had begun to move into the town: and, particularly as Perth Airport began to replace Victoria Quay as Australia’s “Western Gateway” (Ewers 1971), the economic pressures for (re)development in Fremantle were less strong than was the case elsewhere in the metropolitan area.”

Jones further mentioned that “the community of Fremantle have had to struggle to maintain a delicate balance between preservation and change” and accordingly “these changes have been largely dependent on the preservation of Fremantle’s pre-existing assets” (Jones, 2007). Prior to the Fremantle Prison certain other areas had seen heritage friendly development and these included the Western Australian Maritime Museum and certain other areas of the Victoria Quay under the port authority. However, struggle between community consultation and heritage preservation on the one side and business demand on the other side is an ongoing process which has very often witnessed protests and public meetings in favour of the former. One can say here that the decision to close the prison and the heritage preservation movement in Fremantle were timed in the same space. The result was the Fremantle City Council with the backing of its citizens emerged as a winner in preserving the settlers’ heritage at the entry point of Western Australia. No doubt the major credit for this goes to the heritage lobby group, i.e., Fremantle Society (Interview Ron Davidson). Initially, the entire development was focussed on heritage conservation and by 2003 the Department of House and Works, Government of West Australia came out with a Master Plan for the Fremantle Prison Heritage Precinct. The Master Plan declared it “a heritage icon with exceptional cultural heritage significance at state, national and international levels”. It also described it as the “most intact of all Australian convict sites – the most evocative and widespread set of convict transportation sites in the world”. In order to retain its cultural significance, the conservation actions according to the plan were to include interpretation, adaptation for existing and proposed uses, maintenance and repairs. The plan also acknowledged visitation as a “key element of interpretative conservation and income from visitation as a principle revenue source”. By 2003, the visitor number had touched the figure of 1, 12,000 per annum and the plan further sought for improved visitor experiences. Though developed as a premier heritage precinct and a heritage icon the vision of the master plan intended to “provide a lasting legacy for the people of Australia and greatly enrich the cultural life of the state and nation by conserving and interpreting the most intact convict era site in Australia”. At the same time the vision also aimed at making it “one of the Western Australia’s premier destination for tourism, cultural and educational activities” and to emerge “as a model for the care and management of exceptionally significant heritage properties in Australia”. The plans also envisaged partnerships with tourism and small business, community development, education and training, culture and arts, heritage, justice and health (Master Plan, 2003). The stage was set to

develop the site with a product mix of heritage, tourism and community services.

THE TOURISM PRODUCT

The Master Plan emphasised a vital role for the prison precinct in the development and expansion of tourism to Western Australia. By this time, it had attracted 6.9% of Western Australia's 4,46,000 international visitors between July 2001 to March 2002 and 3.7% of Western Australia's 9,40,000 visitors between April 2001 to March 2002. Initially, its paid tourism services included a guided tour programme with night and day schedules along with a self-guided tour of the ground. However, the plan acknowledged a high potential with increase in visitors' numbers by adding more touristic activities. Jack Carlsen et al (2007) in their project on Critical Success Factor for Cultural Heritage Tourism Operations have mentioned that an understanding of "the requirements for ensuring that conservation goals are met while tourism enterprise potential is maximised" is crucial to the "successful management of cultural heritage". And here was a heritage resource with an excellent plan to be converted into a major tourist attraction. I am not going here into the details of how the project team developed on the Master Plan and how the recommendations were put into operations but it is worth mentioning that a host of professionals, Prison Precinct Officers, members of the Fremantle Prison Trust, historians and community representatives had contributed in a big way not only in the consultation process to prepare the Master Plan but also in designing, developing and managing the product.

Today, the Fremantle Prison Precinct is a fully developed tourism product having passed through the stages of initial heritage conservation, planning and development. Besides, international and domestic tourists, its visitors include domestic tourists with convict ancestry, ex-prisoners., former prison officials and also the next generations of both these types of visitors and local residents. Though often the convict family identities are not disclosed, many a times such recognition is possible through the observing curiosity and actions of such visitors which the experienced guides and the ex-prison officials who work there are able to discern (Interview: Ms. Jane, Fremantle Prison). For ex-prison officers and ex-prisoners the visit is like refreshing the memories howsoever bad or worst they could have been along with maybe a good moment or two. For the convict families or their next generations it is like going into the ancestral

past with curiosity and amazement. Besides the buildings and the entire project that has been conserved, the tourist attractions include:

PRISON TOURS

Four types of tours are conducted of the convict establishment wherein “experienced guides bring the rich folklore and stories of the prison to life” (Prison Brochures) and interpret the convict history to the tourists:

The Day Tours are run every half an hour by an experienced guide. You get to know all about the prison life right from the arrival of a convict, his or her registration, medical checkups, life in the cells, kitchen and exercise yards, the painting and graffiti of the walls, the execution chamber, etc. all along with a lucid commentary from the guide which is based on convict history that survived either in the form of records or through the oral tradition. The escape attempts by the convicts, the modes of protests adopted by convicts, the iron hand measures of the guards, part narrations of the crimes committed by convicts, life of women convicts and their crimes, all add to the tourist experience by bringing back to life the 140 years of history.

TUNNEL TOURS

An extremely exciting and unique experience for the visitor is the tunnel tour started in June 2005. An adventure of a very different type, in this tour the visitors explore a one-kilometre system of tunnels built under the prison almost a century back. These tunnels are almost twenty metres beneath the prison and in the late 1800s water from these tunnels “sustained thousands of peoples in the Fremantle area”. The tour is a mix of trekking by foot and exploring the submerged passageways in replica punts used as boats and the visitor has to wear the headlamps and special boots along with overalls. By April 2006, the tunnel tours had received their 10,000th visitor. As per the official survey 74% of the visitors who do the tunnel tours would like to return for tunnels.

TORCH LIGHT TOURS

Run twice a week from 7.30 p.m. at night a tour by torchlight explores the nightlife of the Fremantle prison. Not meant for the faint hearted, the tourists are entertained “with spooky stories of the supernatural”. The brochure poses a question “Do you believe in ghosts?”

or “Are you ready to take your fears?” and also warns you about the few surprises that would be there on the way. In fact Ghost Tours are very popular with the youth and backpackers at all convict sites in Australia and there are quite a few publications on Ghosts.

GREAT ESCAPE TOURS

The prison has an interesting history of daring and dangerous attempted escapes by convicts and prisoners and the guides make you experience these, entertaining the visitors with folklore and stories of successful and unsuccessful attempts.

All these tours are creation of meticulous planning based on historical research and provide a thrilling experience to the visitors taking them back in time when the prison was alive. Enriched by the guide’s narration, my imagination made me feel each and every situation as if I was locked in the cell or exercising in the yard and what not when I took the tours. There is much for the tourists to explore and observe including listening to the histories of women convicts – an attraction for those interested in gender studies.

VISITORS’ CENTRE

Besides the tours, an interesting attraction is the Visitors’ Centre that also houses the convict database. Tourists can search here for convicts in their own family tree and we must remember that the Prison had housed convicts from England as well as Ireland besides the locals. Everything is computerised and a lot of research and effort has gone in building this database. You can search by surname or by the name of ship to find about the 10,000 convicts who had been transported to Swan River Colony between 1850 and 1868. Not only this you can know all about the 43 men and the woman who were hanged there, along with the convicts’ statistics that depicts the nature of crime, occupation, religion and marital status, age of the convict, length of sentence and the regions from which the convicts were deported. Added to these are the stories of various characters and their escape attempts. The Centre has interactive displays and you can virtually tour the prison on a big screen by pressing a few buttons. The most important thing to note here is that this data is based on hard historical research and the prison has its own historians to research and add more value to such data. Hence, what is being offered to the tourists to seek knowledge about or experience is authentic history.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

To make the precinct more tourist friendly there are other attractions as well:

The Prisoners' Art Gallery houses the artworks produced by the "Western Australian prisoners" during their jail life and holds exhibitions.

An eating joint named as "The Convict Café" provides you with homemade meals.

And lastly, you have the Gift Shop to buy souvenirs that reflect different periods in prison's history and include pens, keys, locks, published literature on convicts, small history of Fremantle Prison, gold coin, etc. etc. managed by very-very visitor friendly youngsters. However, 4% of the visitors in my survey considered it as a good way of making money and another 6% would consider it as a waste of money and not buy any gifts (see Table 1).

The prison also organises theme parties, theme dinners and other functions wherein while enjoying the food delicacies, the guests go back in time with staged re-enactment of convict history for entertainment or education. This not only generates additional revenues but also provides livelihood to the theatre artists or former prison officials.

A host of educational activities, based on prison history, like drawing competition, etc. are also carried out for youngsters and school children.

EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

Re-enactment of events from the prison history is often used for touristic entertainment. However, exhibitions based on events have been very successful. The most famous ones among these were on the work of "women from Bandyup Prison" and regular programmes of "rolling exhibitions from arts programmes in metropolitan and regional prisons". However, the most successful exhibition has been ESCAPEE – FREMANTLE TO FREEDOM launched in September 2006 in the Prisoners' Art Gallery. The theme of the exhibition was based on a daring and dramatic escape event of six Irish Fenian prisoners from the prison in 1876. Covering "over four countries with contrasting legal systems, this extremely well-researched exhibition depicted the bold escape of Irish Fenian convicts from West Australia to America." In fact, the year 2006 marked the 130 years of this escape and the entire scenario was put to life again not only through the exhibits of photographs, letters, diaries or replicas of the escape boat CATALPA but also by singing of the song 'The Catalpa' that was "performed as a street ballad soon after the

dramatic events of April 7, 1876.”A satire on the jail administration, the words of the “popular song and story” are sung to the tune of “The Boys of Kilmichael” and it goes on as:

“A noble whale ship and commander called the Catalpa they say,
Came out to Western Australia and stole six bold Fenians away.

Chorus:

Come all you screw warders and jailers, remember the Perth Regatta
Day,

Take care of the rest of your Fenians or the Yankees will steal ‘em
away.

Seven long years penal servitude, and for seven long more had to
stay,

For defendin’ their country old Ireland, for that they were banished
away.

Now all the boats were a ‘racin’ and ‘makin’ short tacks for the spot,
But the Yankee tacks into Fremantle and takes the best prize of the
lot.

The Georgette armed with her warriors went out the brave Yank to
arrest

But she hoisted her star spangled banner, sayin’: ‘You’ll not be
raidin’ my chest.’

Now they’ve landed all safe in Americay, and there they’ll be able to
cry:

‘Hoist up the green flag and shamrock. Hurrah for old Ireland we’ll
die.’”

In fact, this can be converted into a regular performance for the
entertainment of the tourist.

PRODUCT MARKETING

The marketing strategies had been chalked out in the Project Plan
itself and accordingly the site has a marketing manger to carry out the
tasks involved. Besides excellent brochures that are available at Tourist
information centres and accommodation units all over Australia, it has an
excellent web-site which is not only informative and educative but one
that really catches your eye and lures you to explore more.

Networking with other such sites, moving exhibitions, press releases
and hosting events form pat of the marketing strategies. Yet, the official
survey indicates that 39% of the visitors came to know about it from
friends and family, 12% through Travel guides at other destinations, 12%
by brochures, 7% through Visitor Centre, 5% each through the website

and accommodation units, 3% each through TV, magazines and Newspapers, 2% by exploring the map of Freemantle and 1% each through Radio and the prison staff. My own survey results are not much different with 42% through word of mouth, 12% through electronic media, 10% print media, 14% brochures. 16% from accommodation units and 6% others. Ironically, the tourism industry, except for the backpacker establishments, hardly markets the site. This, perhaps is due to absence of earnings through commissions for the industry. However, the increase in visitor numbers and the visitors' satisfaction rate (See Tables 1 and 2) over the years indicates the success of the marketing plan of the organisation.

Table 1. Comparative Figures for Official and Author's Surveys (in Percentages)

	Official Visitors Survey Results					Author's Visitors Survey Results				
	Ex	VG	G	F	P	Ex	VG	G	F	P
Overall Exp. of Visitors	72	24	4	0	0	85	12	3	0	0
Visitor's Exp. with Guides										
a) Knowledge	80	17	3	0	0	88	10	2	0	0
b) Attitude	84	13	3	0	0	92	7	1	0	0
c) Interpretation						94	5	1	0	0
Souvenir/Gift Shop	53	30	13	3	1	62	18	10	4*	6**
				Yes	No	Yes	No			
Will you recommend the site to others?				100	0	94	6			
Will you repeat the visit?				69	31	58	42			

(Source: Fremantle Prison Visitors' Survey Report; Author's survey results through questionnaires)

(Ex = Excellent; VG = Very Good; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor)

* Good way of making money

** Waste of money

The figures demonstrate that the number of visitors to the Prison has been increasing every year and an increase of 50,000 (roughly about 40%) within three years of the Master Plan launch is an impressive performance of the product as a pull factor.

Table 2. Tourists at Fremantle Prison

Year	Visitor Count
2000-01	115,825
2001-02	104,871
2002-03	121,691
2003-04	129,653
2004-05	128,555
2005-06	149,258
2006-07	174,842

Courtesy: Paula Nelson, Marketing Manager, Fremantle Prison

AN EVALUATION

By the year 2004-05, the number of visitors taking guided tours in the prisons had gone upto 1,28,555 and equipped with a number of awards this convict heritage tourist attraction is all set to be a part of World Heritage List and more and more grants are pouring in for its conservation. As a convict heritage site, it is a tourist destination that not only reflects, but also re-enacts the history and life of imprisonment over a long period of time. Constant research for the rejuvenation of the product by adding more tours, events and exhibitions has provided value addition to the product, which is serviced by an always smiling staff in a tourist friendly environment. The development of this convict heritage tourism product has demonstrated that the cultural heritage is not only a “valued point of reference as an identity within a given community” but is also a “potential source” of revenue generation through tourism. Prof. Jack Carlsen shared with me the findings of the project done by his team on critical success factors for cultural heritage tourism operations. Interestingly, the Fremantle Prison was not covered in this extremely well-done project but if I apply their key findings of critical success factors that they “identified from the literature and in discussion with the stakeholders” for the sites which they covered are all actually present in the case of the Fremantle Prison experience: the planning objectives were clearly set, there was sound financial planning, the “appeal, intellectual challenge and raised levels of visitors’ interests” has been there based on authenticity and conservation as the core value of heritage. At the same time certain aspects are still kept away from the tourists like the prison practice of tattooing, information on prison riots and graffiti that depicted revenge, sexuality or cruelty of prison officers. In fact, it was a new trend in tourism that was created with excellent marketing plans. The creation of such a touristic attraction once again proves that product designing in

tourism is not just dependent on market demand but the niche tourism product generates a market demand. (No doubt that war bunkers, firing different kinds of rifles, the voice of sirens and re-enactment of air raids are being showcased to the tourists by the Vietnamese).

For planners and developers of heritage tourism the Fremantle prison represents a successful case study and can be an excellent learning experience for those venturing into such planning and development. Not only authentic history is showcased to the visitors but the guides' narrations are also authentic based on actual occurrences that are found in the prison records. In spite of this there is still scope for further value addition to the exhibits. For example, some replicas can be created for convicts performing various tasks at different sites; photographic presentations of convicts around whom escape stories are narrated by the guides can be displayed (as done in the old Melbourne Jail). As a part of heritage re-enactment, convict heritage theatre shows can be introduced based on prison life themes on a regular basis. A small booklet on prison graffiti and drawings by prisoners can be another souvenir. The singing of 'The Catalpa' can be a regular feature. All this will not only enhance the tourist experience but also provide jobs to young artists. The Convict Heritage Tourism has emerged as a Special Interest Area and is there to stay for long. It should not be taken as a Dark Tourism product just because it depicts the history of forced migration or convict life. Rather, it has to be appreciated that the life of the commoner has been showcased as a tourism product. This is a welcome shift from showcasing the royalty or dominant social groups' lifestyles.

I would like to end this presentation by giving an interesting experience of the answers given to me by the visitors during my field study at the prison. My question was "After going through the prison tours what do you feel like?" and "the options were a prison officer, a convict or a human rights activist." Interestingly the answers were a mixed lot. The teenagers wanted to be prison officers whereas the adults, human rights activists. And surely no one wanted to be a convict. At the same time I would like to suggest that children below the age of 14 years should be kept away from such sites as the mind is not mature enough to grasp the realities of convict heritage in the real sense.

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INTERVIEWS

- David Crinion, General Manager, Tourism Policy and Planning, Government of South Australia, Adelaide
- David Dunston, Monash University
- Dr. James Cooper, Fremantle, WA
- Ms. Jane, Tourist Guide at Fremantle Prison
- Prof. Jack Carlsen, Chair in Tourism and Hospitality, Curtin Sustainable Tourism Centre, Curtin University of Technology, Perth
- Ron Davidson, President, Fremantle Heritage Society

FIELD VISITS

- Fremantle Prison, February-March 2007 and June 2008

QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS

Fremantle Prison Visitors' Survey 2008
Author's Questionnaires for Visitors 2008

ENDNOTES

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