

# NORFOLK ISLAND: THANATOURISM, HISTORY AND VISITOR EMOTIONS

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## Abstract

An increasingly popular tourism niche involves visits to sites of death and human suffering. This form of travel has become known as ‘thanatourism’ and its study is a research field that has emerged from studies of war and battlefield tourism (Seaton, 1996, 1999). Although considered to be a highly emotional experience for visitors, little remains known about thanatourists’ emotions during visits (Austin, 2002). To begin to fill this research gap, the current study explored tourists’ emotions whilst visiting Norfolk Island’s convict sites and attractions. Norfolk Island is a self-governing external territory of Australia, located in the South-West Pacific. It is rich in history and culture; a heritage that remains the nucleus of the islands primary industry - tourism. Study findings are drawn from arrival and departure visitor questionnaires and follow-up, in-depth, post-travel interviews. The findings indicate that viewing convict sites produces a multitude of emotions, all of which impact on visitor experiences in some way. The study utilises Fredrickson’s (1998) *Broaden and Built Theory of Positive Emotions* to explore how visitors’ thought-action repertoires are broadened throughout their emotional encounters. Findings build upon current knowledge of thanatourism and Norfolk Island’s history and heritage. In doing so, the study has developed a greater understanding of the role of emotions in visitor experiences.

## Keywords

Norfolk Island, thanatourism, emotions, convict settlement, history, heritage, tourism.

## Introduction

*Visits to historical sites, including those that portray events associated with human suffering and mass death have become a significant aspect of tourist visitation. (Austin, 2002: 447)*

Significant media and technological advances, particularly of late, have exposed societies around the world to the latest news of human conflict, death and suffering like never before. In addition to seeking knowledge and insight into arising events and issues, individuals also seek elements of entertainment, excitement and thrill from such consumption. Examples include viewing breaking news stories, purchasing real life crime novels, reality television programs and viewing the sites of motor vehicle accidents. This ‘morbid curiosity’ has even extended to the tourism industry through what has become known as *thanatourism* (Seaton, 1996, 1999).

Thanatourism is the name given by some to explain the desire of tourists to view and experience places associated with death and human suffering (Lennon and Foley, 1999). Travel to such places has also been referred to as ‘heritage atrocity tourism’, ‘dark tourism’ and ‘black-spot tourism’ (Austin, 2002; Lennon and Foley, 1999, 2000). The term ‘thanatourism’ was developed in response to tourists’ increasing desires to consume and experience places where death, disaster and natural and man-made tragedies have occurred (Austin, 2002; Lennon and Foley, 1999, 2000; Strange and Kempa, 2003).

Seaton (1996) identified five forms of thanatourism. These comprise:

- Viewing and experiencing enactments of death or tragedy,
- Attending sites where individual death, mass death, disaster or tragedy have occurred,
- Visits to memorials of the deceased,
- Viewing relics, evidence of, or symbols linked to particular tragic events that are in some way connected to death, in locations other than the original sites, and
- Experiencing reenactments of events that in some way involve death.

Lennon and Foley (1999, 2000) identified two broad categories of thanatourists (or dark tourists). The first include those who travel for the purpose of connecting personal thoughts, experiences, grief and memories, and are in some way emotionally, physically or spiritually connected to a site or event (Lennon and Foley, 1999, 2000). Examples of these tourists include relatives or friends of the deceased, a person engaging in a religious pilgrimage or homage, or those who travel to remember and pay tribute to those who fought for their country and/or freedom (Lennon and Foley, 1999, 2000). The second group refers to those who travel to sites of death, disaster and tragedy for the purpose of entertainment, excitement and pleasure, with no obvious connection to the site or event other than value adding to their overall tourism experience (see Tarlow, 2005).

The concept of thanatourism has interested researchers of late, as tourism has in the past, generally been conceptualised as an enjoyable leisure activity that is completed solely for positive gains. To date, much thanatourism research has explored war and battlefield sites that have become popular tourist hubs. Other thanatourism attractions include selected museum exhibits and travelling exhibitions, war memorials and public reenactments (Austin, 2002; Lennon and Foley, 1999, 2000; Seaton, 1996, 1999). Knowledge has also been gained from studies conducted at Holocaust Memorials and sites (Beech, 2000; Lennon and Foley, 1999; Yuill, 2003), ANZAC Gallipoli services (Slade, 2003), the site of Princess Diana's death (Blom, 2000), and New York City's Ground Zero site (Lisle, 2004; Maracoux and Legoux, 2005). All sites are popular tourist attractions that have been successfully marketed as unique heritage destinations.

Thanatourists often travel with a preconceived perception of their destination and visitor experience (Seaton, 1996). Many thanatourism destinations, such as those previously mentioned, have featured largely within global media over time (Lennon and Foley, 1999, 2000; Slade, 2003). This can have both positive and negative implications for destinations and local communities (Austin, 2002). Thanatourism can be viewed positively within communities as it can bring back much needed travel visitation after a significant event (war, death or natural disaster) (Seaton, 1996, 1999). Memories and emotions experienced during travel are often discussed long after visitors have returned home amongst family and friends (Gnoth, 1997). In addition, governments have viewed thanatourism as a means of capitalising on local tragedies, by embracing and incorporating them into elements of local history and culture through museum displays, visitation to sites and providing both on and off-site interpretation. Lastly, an increase in 'volunteer tourism' has been identified at many thanatourist-like destinations throughout the world. Examples include the Asian Tsunami of 2004 and the Pakistan earthquake of 2005.

On the other hand however, thanatourism may negatively impact upon local communities in that it has the ability to glorify past tragedies. Thanatourism could also limit communities from moving on from disasters. Locals are often faced with painful memories and, at times, un-welcome visitors yielding video and digital cameras and asking questions about what went on during the tragedy. The glorification of an event in this way can have the ability to potentially tarnish a region's image as a tourism destination. For example, after a shooting massacre occurred at The Port Arthur Historic Site in Tasmania, Australia, in 1996, visitor interest began to grow. In an attempt to move on from the tragic events of that day, staff now ask tourists not to mention the massacre whilst on-site. Visitors have been subsequently advised to read a brochure provided, and privately reflect in the memorial garden, with hopes to continue the site's primary focus on convict tourism.

The current study explored Norfolk Island visitation as a potential form of thanatourism. A brief discussion of the island's history and tourism industry precedes a detailed discussion of tourist responses.

### Norfolk Island's Historic and Cultural Past

Convict arrival and settlement is a distinct aspect of Australia's past (Baxter, 1989; Cegielski, Janeczko, Mules and Wells, 2001; Hughes, 1987). Recently, convict settlement and incarceration sites have become popular attractions for tourist visitors. This visitor interest has provided local and national governments with incentives to preserve and sustain sites, whilst also educating and entertaining visitors about convict history and heritage (Cegielski et al, 2001; Dewar and Fredericksen, 2003; McKercher and du Cros, 2002; Rojek, 1993; Strange and Kempa, 2003; Trotter, 2001; Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). Popular convict sites within Australia include Fremantle in Western Australia, Port Arthur, Sarah and Maria Islands in Tasmania, Botany Bay in Sydney and Norfolk Island (Hughes, 1987). Yuill (2003) identified that thanatourists are motivated not only by the opportunity to learn, but also by nostalgic, entertainment, novelty and thrill seeking desires. It has also been revealed that the more notorious the dark site, the more popular it is as a visitor attraction (Cegielski et al, 2001; Hughes, 1987; Lennon and Foley, 1999, 2000; Strange and Kempa, 2003). Until now, little research has been conducted on tourism at Norfolk Island despite its abundance of history and heritage.



Figure 1 – Map of Norfolk Island  
(Source: [www.environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk/botmap.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk/botmap.html))

Norfolk Island is located 1,035 miles east of Sydney, Australia, and 660 miles north of Auckland, New Zealand. The isle is located at latitude 29 degrees south and longitude 168 degrees east. Discovered and named by Captain James Cook in 1774, its sub-tropical climate, isolated location and uninhabited nature made it an appealing location for three separate settlements over time (Baxter, 1989; Holdaway and Anderson, 2001). Norfolk Island's first two settlements were locations for convict incarceration, whilst the third settlement was to house Pitcairn Island migratory settlers (O'Collins, 2002). Each of the three settlements will now be discussed.

## The First Settlement

*They were flogged and imprisoned, they worked in chains... with no expectation that they would be reformed. Confinement to Norfolk Island in particular was known to be horrible and brutalizing punishment but was defended as a necessary deterrent and as a means to get incorrigibles out of the way. (Hirst, 1983: 72)*

The first (European) settlement of Norfolk Island (see Anderson and White, 2001) involved the transportation of troublesome convict repeat offenders. The first group departed Sydney, bound for Norfolk Island on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1788, aboard the *Supply* and under the command of Lieutenant Henry Lindbird Ball (Morris, 2003). Their landing the following month at Anson's Bay was complicated by the vast and dense vegetation, towering cliffs and the problematic coral reefs surrounding the island (Hoare, 1969). These characteristics made escape virtually impossible for transported convicts, whilst also providing an abundance of hard labour including clearing land, erecting shelters, sowing crops, hunting, and fishing (Cox and Stacey, 1971; Morris, 2003). Agriculture and farming by prisoners saw the cultivation of flax, cotton, corn, rice and other necessary plants (Cox and Stacey, 1971). Moreover, convicts built the Lieutenant-Governor's House, the Store House, and a large agricultural work house (Cox and Stacey, 1971). Not only were the prisoners tormented by the remoteness of the island, but also by the harsh conditions including strong winds and the irritation of rats and caterpillars, all of which depleted their limited crop supply (Hoare, 1969; Morris, 2003).

Despite a devastating hurricane, the settlement succeeded. Houses and buildings neared completion, agriculture strengthened and self-sufficiency transpired (Cox and Stacey, 1971). Word of the successful convict settlement soon returned to Sydney Cove, where letters from Governor Philip to the Secretary of the Home Office recommended that Norfolk Island be home to more convicts (Hoare, 1969). Consequently, the population of the island grew steadily to 1,028 by May 1803. In 1805 however, Norfolk suffered an agricultural breakdown in which vital crops were lost, which led to poor health, disease and an increase in alcoholism (Baxter, 1989; Hoare, 1969). This led to an evaluation of the future of the convict settlement at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Cox and Stacey, 1971). Lieutenant-Governor Foveaux informed the local people of the government's intentions to evacuate a portion of the population. Evacuations commenced in 1808 and continued until the island was again vacant in 1814, after which time, the island became nothing other than a stop over for the occasional passing whaling ship (Hoare, 1969).



Figure 2 - Norfolk Island's Kingston and Arthur Vale Historic Area  
(photograph by the author)

## The Second Settlement

*Norfolk soon became one of the cruelest places on earth.* (Fisher, 2002: 97)

Overcrowding of Sydney's jails during the early 1820s led to the decision by the British Government to resurrect Norfolk Island as a convict settlement, this time for Van Diemens Land and New South Wales' worst repeat offenders (Nobbs, 1991). In 1825, Norfolk Island resumed as a penal colony and convicts laboured for long hours in all weather, with little food, rest or privileges. Small allocated farming areas provided the only source of enjoyment and convicts were only allowed to tend to their lot after sundown (Hoare, 1969). In addition to agricultural labour, convicts assisted in the construction of necessary buildings including Government House, the Military Barracks, the Lumber Yard, the Parsonage, Prisoners' Barracks, the Commissariat Store and the New Military Barracks during the 1830's (Coleman, 1991; Nobbs, 1991). The Military Barracks and the Prisoners' Barracks were both of considerable size, occupying 100 soldiers and up to 790 prisoners respectively (Cox and Stacey, 1971).

Harsh punishment was employed and included floggings, chains, solitary confinement and death by hanging (Hirst, 1983). Despite this, there were numerous attempted escapes as well as the infamous rebellions of 1826, 1834 and 1842 (Hirst, 1983). Such rioting eventually encouraged a reassessment of the convict system on the island. This led to the application of Major Thomas Bunbury's innovative agricultural practices in 1837, a limiting of sentences to 15 years in 1839 by the British government, and a trial of Alexander Maconochie's new prisoner punishment and treatment system, which had also been trialed in Van Diemens Land (Hoare, 1969; Nobbs, 1991). Problems persisted however with continued riots and attempted escapes. Information about the harsh and cruel conditions reached Bishop Wilson of Hobart during the late 1840's who expressed great concern for prisoners (Nobbs, 1991). The last convicts were deported to Hobart in 1856.

## The Third Settlement

The third settlement involved descendents of mutineers from *HMAV Bounty* and their Tahitian partners from Pitcairn Island, who moved to the island en masse in 1856 after lobbying the British Crown to be shifted to a new location (Denoon, 1997; Holloway, 1977; Maude, 1961; and Spect, 1984). Their request followed a devastating landslip on Pitcairn Island that destroyed crops and other food stocks and threatened their current existence (Maude, 1961). With permission granted by the government, the Pitcairn Islanders moved to Norfolk Island, bringing with them their unique heritage and culture (Denoon, 1997). The Pitcairn Islanders were soon self-sufficient and the population grew steadily and, as time passed, all that remained of the second settlement was several derelict buildings within what is now known as the Kingston and Arthur Vale Historic Area (KAVHA).

All three settlements were important to shaping the island's history and modern day culture. The first settlement provided the island with many stories and some tangible artifacts about learning to adapt and live in such isolated and barren conditions. The second saw the erection of many, now historic buildings that draw many international visitors to see and learn about the convict way of life. The third and most recent settlement has provided the island with many of its modern day descendents. Visitors remain fascinated by the island's Pitcairn/Polynesian influence, particularly the traditional language that features on many billboards and signs, and the Polynesian-style dancing that is regularly performed for visiting tourists.



Figure 3 - Local Pitcairn/Polynesian-style dancers  
Source: Norfolk Island Official Website- Gallery (2007) <http://www.norfolkisland.nf/gallery/>

### Tourism on Norfolk Island

Today, the three historic settlements contribute to Norfolk Island's unique culture; a heritage that is valued by the local community (Coleman, 1991). Many Norfolk Islanders are proud of their local history and continue to embrace their unique cultural past and view tourism as a means of preserving their culture and history and educating others about it. Tourism is largely viewed as a positive initiative and it is the largest and most valued and profitable industry on the island.

Leisure tours for island visitors began operating as early as 1932 and visitor numbers continued to grow after the conclusion of the Second World War. The tourist market on the island consists mainly of mature aged travellers from Australia and New Zealand (Prideaux, Crosswell and Ng, 2002). Tourists are drawn to the island not only to experience the history and connection to Australia's past, but are also lured by tax-free shopping opportunities, an extremely low crime rate and the relaxed, friendly way of life (Prideaux et al, 2002). The convict and Pitcairn/Polynesian-based tourism industry remains a strong part of the island's persona. Many styles of accommodation exist, along with numerous car rental companies, coach tours, souvenir shops, a tourist bureau and a contemporary international airport, in addition to numerous visitor activities (Hoare, 1999). The 6<sup>th</sup> of March, Foundation Day, and the 8<sup>th</sup> of June, Anniversary or Bounty Day, mark memorable times on the island annually.

The island's tourism industry is loosely divided into Pitcairn/Polynesian influenced activities and a convict component. Activities influenced by the third settlement include visits to Cyclorama (an artistic, interpretive centre), theme-based evening meals, day coach tours and displays of Pitcairn/Polynesian dancing and costume. Also, many of the tourist shops are generously stocked with Pitcairn-influenced souvenirs, clothes, ornaments and jewellery. The convict history is equally as abundant within tourist circles on the island, with many activities and tours focusing on the first and second settlements. Popular activities include attending local museums, visiting historic buildings and ruins, as well as popular themed nights, excursions, coach tours, meals and souvenir shopping. Many visitors seek relaxing and quiet leisure experiences that include soft-core historic and cultural activities. Shopping and beach activities are also popular amongst visitors.

## The Island's Historic Centre - The Kingston and Arthur Vale Region

The KAHVA, the site of the convict settlements where many of the crumbling ruins and historic buildings still remain, is a particularly significant heritage attraction on the island. Many convict and historic activities and attractions are available for tourists at the KAVHA. Particular attention has been placed on retelling stories and exhibiting relics and ruins from the second convict settlement, as well as significant Pitcairn paraphernalia (Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly, 1981; Prideaux et al, 2002). Bus tours operate daily with commentary from coach guides. Package tours are also popular amongst visitors and integrate a bus tour, a meal and entrance to museums, galleries and an interpretation centre (Norfolk Island Official Website, 2007).

Norfolk Island's KAVHA has been recognised as a location of global historical importance, for both convict and *Bounty* significance (Coleman, 1991). Currently the area is registered as a site of the National Estate and is viewed as an important area for preservation and conservation due to its convict settlement history (Prideaux et al, 2002). In addition to this, Norfolk Island, together with other prominent convict heritage sites within Australia (including Fremantle Prison and Port Arthur), is currently under review for potential World Heritage Listing. Restoration of significant historic buildings from the second settlement has taken place since the late 1970s with financial assistance provided by the Australian Government and/or original plans, records and maps obtained from the Tasmanian Government (Hoare, 1999; O'Collins, 2002). The main road within the KAVHA is Quality Row which consists of a War Memorial, restored Administration Buildings, a golf club and course, All Saints Church, numerous government offices, and ends with the historic cemetery; all of which are still in operation today. Significant attractions within the area for tourists include the restored Government House, the Old Military Barracks, the New Military Barracks and the Commissariat Store. Moreover, popular limestone ruins of the second settlement include the barracks and prisons, the hospital and the Surgeon's Quarters, the Settlement Guard House, the Crankmill and the Royal Engineer Office (Norfolk Island Official Website, 2007). Also, it is within the KAVHA that museum premises operate, allowing visitors to explore independently, and/or take a guided tour through the ruins and museum complexes. A bookshop and café operate on-site (Hoare, 1999).



Figure 4 - A Heritage Building along Quality Row, Kingston  
(photograph by the author)

## Local Attitudes towards Tourism

Visitor numbers are controlled on the island and many tourists are questioned on their travel intentions when arriving at the international airport. Currently, with no tax on multiple incomes, many islanders have more than one source of employment and are therefore often, in some way, connected to tourism (Hoare, 1999). Despite there being a lively musical culture on the island in the 1960s-1980s (see Hayward, 2006 133-155) there is currently little ‘night life’ or activities geared towards younger travelers and the majority of visitors are generally retirees or are over 50 years of age (Prideaux, 2004). Having recognised the mature aged tourist demographic, Norfolk Island Tourism has capitalised on this market by promoting its destination as a location ideal for tour groups (Prideaux, 2004). Attempts to diversify the visitor market are occurring however, with new soft-core adventure sports options being introduced in an attempt to lure a new, younger form of visitor. This is a current research initiative of Norfolk Island Tourism.

The discussion will now explore of the role of emotions in tourism and the desire of visitors to experience death and suffering. This will lead to an exploration of visitor experiences at Norfolk Island convict attractions.



Figure 5 - A headstone in Norfolk Island's Cemetery – Kingston  
(photograph by the author)

## The Emotions of Travellers and Consuming Death

Visits to sites such as Norfolk Island's KAVHA are likely to be emotional for all visitors in some way. Emotions play an important role in how individuals deal with issues and events such as death (Mascolo, Harkins and Harakan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2001). Izard and Malatesta (1987: 496) identified emotions to be “a particular set of neural processes that lead to a specific expression and a corresponding specific feeling”. In addition, Nuttin, Fraise and Meili (1963, cited in Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart, Roy and Wickens, 2003: 429) also defined emotions as:



*A temporary experience with positive or negative qualities that is felt with some intensity as happening to the self, is generated in part by a cognitive appraisal of a situation, and is accompanied by both learned and reflexive physical responses.*

Within the field of psychology, emotions have been studied at great length (see for example, Fredrickson, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003; Frijda, 1986; Greenfield, 2000; Lazarus, 1991; Plutchik, 2000; Russell, 1980). Examples of several prominent theories include Schlosberg's *Emotions Model* (1954) Plutchik's *Emotions Profile Index* (EPI) (1980), Russell's (1980) *Circumplex Model of Affect*, Holbrook and Westwood's (1989) *Pleasure Arousal Dominance* scale (PAD) and Plutchik's (1980) *Emotional Wheel*. Many researchers have focused specifically on the study of specific emotions and their contribution to producing well-being and satisfaction amongst individuals (see for example, Fredrickson, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Emotional reactions are often most significant when an extremely positive or negative event has taken place. According to Fredrickson (1998, 2000, 2003), many studies within psychology have focused specifically on negative emotions experienced by individuals when faced with a traumatic event or experience. For example, constant sadness may lead to depression. In an innovative and contrasting study, Fredrickson (1998) explored the role of positive emotions in individual well being when developing the *Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions*. This theory has been used to assess the role of positive emotions in personal growth and broadening individuals' thought and action repertoires. Study participants have ranged from Catholic nuns through to university students. Her studies indicate that positive emotions equate to satisfaction, fulfillment and potentially a prolonged life (through broadened repertoires). Fredrickson (1998, 2000, 2001, 2003) argued that positive emotions create affirmative states that allow individuals to gain essential social, psychological, intellectual and physical resources and skills that benefit overall well being. Taking this one step further, it can be deduced that if individuals experience desired emotions, fulfillment and satisfaction will take place.

Studies of emotions, death and suffering indicate that the experience is both challenging and highly undesired for those affected (Lazarus, 1991). Thanatourism is unique however, as it refers to individuals who are motivated primarily to experience the death and suffering of others for the purpose of enjoyment, pleasure and satisfaction. Austin (2002) identified that as thanatourism (or what he terms "heritage atrocity tourism") is a relatively new field of research inquiry, little is known about visitors' emotions and the role that emotions play in the consumption of death for pleasure.

### Researching Convict Tourism on Norfolk Island

This study was designed to explore the emotions of thanatourists to assess the contribution of emotions in fulfilling and satisfying visitors. The study therefore extends the work of Fredrickson in that both negative and positive emotions have been considered as contributors to fulfillment and satisfaction. The inclusion of both positive and negative emotions adheres to the nature of thanatourism demand - to experience sites of death and human suffering for the purpose of enjoyment, entertainment, education and satisfaction (see Yuill, 2003). Adaptations of the thanatourism motivations identified by Yuill have been included within the current analysis.

The central research question within the study was: *How do visitors' emotions enrich tourism experiences at Norfolk Island's convict sites during travel and beyond?* Furthermore, the aims of this study were four-fold. Firstly, this study aimed to determine the strength of connections between tourism at convict sites on Norfolk Island and thanatourism knowledge. A second aim was to identify the meaningful tourism experiences of visitors to the sites. A third aim was to explore the role of negative and positive emotions in enhancing tourists' experiences. Lastly, a fourth aim was to explore how visitors' emotionally meaningful experiences contributed to personal growth, satisfaction and fulfillment.

As mentioned, Norfolk Island's KAVHA provided the case study site where research was conducted. A mixed methodology intertwining a combination of interpretivist and positive paradigms founded the study. The research instruments consisted of combined qualitative and quantitative arrival and departure questionnaires, together with in-depth, semi-structured, follow-up, post-travel interviews. In order to examine visitors' emotions in heightened depth, visitors were surveyed when arriving on the island, upon departure and, if willing, after returning home. During the fieldwork stage of the study, between November and December of 2006, 100 arrival and 100 departure questionnaires were collected and seven follow-up interviews were conducted. An additional five in-depth, face-to-face interviews were also conducted with tourism operators and staff on the island. Data gathered during the staff interviews did not provide the basis of the current research findings but did provide insight into visitor behaviour and trends. After departing the island, data was analysed and entered accordingly into computer analysis software programs SPSS and NUD\*IST.

### Norfolk Island Visitors

Australians and New Zealanders provided the bulk of the island's tourist trade, including 40.5% from Queensland, 28% from New South Wales, 7.5% from Victoria, and 18% from New Zealand's north and south islands. 61.5% of visitors surveyed were female. The majority of visitors were over 65 years of age (67%), followed by 32% aged between 55 and 64. 33% of visitors surveyed were repeat travellers; a figure which highlights the significant repeat visitation market on the island. In addition to this, 71% of visitors were travelling with their families, friends and partners, whilst 26% were in tour groups, and 3% travelled alone. Moreover, in terms of household income, 29% recorded an income of less than \$20,000 AUD, 30.5% between \$20,001 and \$40,000 and 12% between \$40,001 and \$60,000, 7.5% between \$60,001, and \$80,000, and 5.5% over \$80,001. 10.5% of participants chose not to answer this question.

24% of visitors were motivated by the desire to seek and discover. 21% travelled to the island to pursue historic interests, 14% to enjoy a relaxing holiday, 10% to participate in an organised tour, and 9% to spend time with family, friends and/or partners. Moreover, 22% were influenced to travel to Norfolk Island by positive word-of-mouth. Other motivations identified included the low crime rate on the island, the abundance of activities geared towards the older visitor market and the ease of direct flight access from Australia and New Zealand. The advantages of the use of the Australian dollar and the English language also provided a major draw-card for many visitors. The sub-tropical, South-Pacific climate, oceanic views and the relaxed, friendly, laid back way of life also appealed.

Visitors to the island expressed an interest in experiencing the island's history and heritage attractions. 73% of visitors identified that the island's history and heritage was a leading travel motivator for them. A further 37% noted their specific interest in visiting the KAVHA during their stays. Visitors with a desire to experience the history and heritage of the island were particularly motivated to experience the architecture, ruins and museums. Moreover, visitors were drawn:

- To learn and gain historic and cultural knowledge (22.92%),
- By a connection to Australia's history and heritage (16.91%),
- To visit the heritage homes on Quality Row (12.40%),
- To experience Norfolk Island's culture (9.77%),
- To pursue genealogical interests (3.38%), and
- To gain understanding, appreciation and awareness of the three settlement periods (1.87%).

### Norfolk Island Visitor Experiences

Visitors participated in a range of organised and independent activities during their stays on Norfolk Island. Seaton (1996) identified that thanatourism involves experiencing enactments of death and tragedy, individual or mass death sites, memorials of the dead, evidence, symbols or relics linked to death and reenactments of death, dying and human suffering; and the activities completed by visitors have been categorised below to cohere with his framework.

- *Enactments of death and tragedy:* Visitors to Norfolk Island's KAVHA participated in numerous historic and convict-oriented activities. Due to the affordability of vehicle hire on the island (when data was collected), many visitors travelled independently to the site. For organised tour visitors however, the primary mode of transport was coach. A large portion of these visitors explored the site independently, walking through the second settlement old buildings and ruins and taking time to read interpretive signage, read from guidebooks, and take photographs and video footage. Whilst at the KAVHA, participants also identified visiting the heritage homes that were open to the public along Quality Row, Government House, the Pier Store, the KAVHA museum and church, the old Slaughter Bay and the adjoining old hospital, Surgeon's Quarters, penitentiary and cell blocks.
- *Individual or mass death sites:* Through guided and self-guided interpretation of the historic precinct, visitors learned about the brutal history of the second convict settlement. On-site interpretation were in the forms of museum staff, tour guides, a documentary film within the museum complex, museum exhibitions, displays and interpretive signage; both inside and outside the museum. Moreover, the museum's gift and bookshop was identified as a useful source of local historic and convict-related material.
- *Memorials of the dead:* Although there was no memorial as such for the convicts that were transported to the island, tourists did identify several sections of the KAVHA that resembled memorials. The first of these included the cemetery. Many islanders pride themselves on their unique cemetery where, unlike other convict sites throughout Australia, headstones were provided for convict men. As a consequence, the cemetery has become a popular tourist attraction and is now a regular stop for guided tours. It is important to note here however, that there are other non-first or second settlement bodies located within the cemetery. The tourist visits to the cemetery do however; focus only on the convict and historic sections. Within these sections, cemetery staff were undertaking the significant task of painting the inscriptions of the early graves at the time of this study. This was being done in order to preserve the inscriptions that were being worn down gradually by the coastal weather and constant sea breezes. A second convict-style memorial included the museum displays that featured convict artifacts, some stories of convicts, some written documents, plans and photography of the era.
- *Evidence, symbols and relics:* Visitors took time to view convict exhibits and displays at the KAVHA museum. The displays featured convict prisoner chains, prison paraphernalia, an original cat of nine tails, artifacts retrieved from the *Sirius* shipwreck, together with guns, knives, cannons, bottles, and some crockery. Tourists were interested in old photographs, written documents, drawings and other pictures, which were also on display within the museums.
- *Reenactments:* While there were no specific reenactments during the time of data collection, visitors did describe participating in convict-themed evenings involving penal dress and dinner, with entertainment included. These 'Night as a Convict' tours are run by one of the island's three tour companies - Pinetree Tours.

### Emotions Experienced by Visitors

58% of visitors identified that viewing the KAVHA was emotional for them in some way. Moreover, 23% identified themselves as being connected to the island. Connections ranged from historic and literary interests, to genealogical and ancestry searches. All participants were asked to consider what emotions were experienced when considering convict treatment and suffering during the island's history. This was in keeping with the primary aim of the study - to explore visitors' emotions to highlight similarities between convict tourism and thanatourism. An arriving visitor discussed a connection with the island within the following statement:

*I only just arrived yesterday, but already I feel a close connection to the island and the people because I had an ancestor who settled here and was a carpenter on the Sirius. I have been fascinated by the island's history for years and have read many*

*books. It seems just a quiet, peaceful, pleasant place; too nice for such terrible things to have happened. I feel a deep sense of respect for the convicts who were brought here.*

Visitors identified many emotions during the three data collection stages. These emotions were analysed through a qualitative categorization process described by Jennings (2001). Emotions were grouped into recognisable cohorts that, when classified, allowed for patterns and themes to be identified. The emotions described by visitors contributed to eight groups including *anger, fear, denial, grief, empathy, pride, novelty seeking* and *personal reflection*. Each of these groups will now be discussed in no specified order.

Visitors firstly described emotions that related to *anger*. Specifically, emotions of *anger, disgust, and resentment* were felt towards convict treatment on the island. Visitors were angered by various elements during the island's second settlement, including convict treatment, Britain's punishment system of the time, poor health, and inadequate living conditions. These elements were recognised to contribute to a large number of deaths on the island during the period. Comment made about convicts' living conditions and treatment produced further emotional reactions including *astonishment, surprise* and *shock*. Furthermore, visitors described prisoner management as *sheer brutality, a tragedy, terrible, cruel, harsh, barbaric* and *inhumane*. When considering those who caused such suffering to take place (prison guards, commandants and British nationals), visitors described feelings of *hatred, malice, animosity, bitterness* and *vengefulness*. These emotions were reflected in the following comment made by a departing tourist:

*Being here today has given me a chance to stop and think and yes I am very emotional about seeing the place. I can't help but think about those times and those poor men, their struggles to survive and with such little hope for a better life or future. I feel anger, rage, resentment and immense frustration for those times. Seeing the Kingston area makes me think about man's treatment of fellow man. I am left wondering- have times really changed since then?*

The second group of emotions relates to *fear*. The KAVHA and specifically the penitentiary, cemetery and ruins, produced feelings of *fright, discomfort, and unease*. The site was described as *chilling* and *sobering*. Emotions relating to *fear* were surprising given the time that had passed since the convict era. These emotions illustrate however, that the site and the interpretation are powerful in conveying the events and the challenge of life during those times. These emotions were reflected in this comment made within a follow-up participant interview:

*Some of the stories told by the museum guides were terrifying and upsetting. Although times have changed, I cannot help but think of my grandson who's the same age as some of those convict men, with his whole life ahead of him, unlike them. The British should have been more mindful of their struggles and not so fast to punish. Those men were so young, many stealing and committing crimes just to feed their families. The way they were treated; it is just frightening.*

The third group of emotions identified related to *denial*. Emotions involving *denial* were noted by visitors and included *disbelief, unacceptance* and *depression*. Those who identified these emotions commented on their failure to accept convict treatment and general living standards during those times. In addition, participants also recalled the gruesome medical and surgical treatments and procedures during convict times when visiting the hospital ruins and old medical quarters. Treatments and procedures discussed by guides and other forms of interpretation were described as *incomprehensible* and *unacceptable*. A departing visitor in the following statement discussed *denial*:

*When I saw the convict settlement site, particularly the penitentiary, it was unbelievable; too hard to comprehend. It made me feel so sad, it was just horrible. Being there and looking at how small those cells were just made me feel awful. The whole place had a eerie feel to it, it was perplexing.*

A fourth group of visitor emotions related to *grief*. Visitors described feelings of sorrow for the convicts who suffered and died from poor treatment and illness. Visitors identified feeling both *upset* and *depressed* after learning of punishment methods, viewing a cat of nine tails, and other forms of convict memorabilia. Furthermore, some visitors also described feelings of *regret*, *repentance* and *unhappiness*. During an interview with an employee of the KAVHA cemetery, the comment was made that visits to view gravestones was a highly emotional experience for visitors, an experience that reduces many visitors to tears. A visiting tourist discussed feelings of *grief* in the following statement:

*When my husband and I spent time down at Kingston, we were both overcome with grief and sadness for those men. When I was there I took time to think about their plight. It was so sad to hear about what went on and seeing the derelict buildings was almost like a visible reminder of it. It was cruel without doubt, but those were the times, we have to accept and remember that that was how things were dealt with in those days. We left thinking how little we as a human race have learned from those 'dark times', that's what really saddened us.*

The fifth group of emotions involved *empathy*. More specifically, visitors described emotions including *sympathy*, *concern*, *compassion* and *sorrow* for convicts during their time on the island. In addition to this, visitors also described feeling *moved* and *changed* when hearing of particular survival stories. *Concern* was another emotion expressed particularly by female visitors; several making the comment that the majority of convict men were no younger than their children and grandchildren. Visitors also commented that the majority of the crimes committed during those times were insignificant in comparison to present day standards, thus making the treatment seem *incomprehensible*. A departing visitor commented on feeling *empathy* during her visit to the island's cemetery in the following statement:

*It was terrible to see the inscriptions on the gravestones. Some of the convict men were so young, not to mention all the young children and women who died through illnesses and diseases. I feel sad now, even though they died so many years ago. Not only were the convicts taken from their families but they had such little hope for a better future.*

Emotions relating to *pride*, and particularly *national pride*, contributed to a sixth group. Visitors identified feeling both *humbled* and *respectful* during their time at the KAVHA, as it was considered that the convicts were not only part of Australia's heritage, but also its ancestry. Connected to *nationalism* and *pride* were concepts of *self-respect* and *dignity*, whilst at the same time feeling both *ashamed* and *uncomfortable* with convict treatment. Many visitors felt both *nostalgic* and *reflective* when considering the importance of this aspect of Australia, Norfolk Island and Britain's history. National pride was reflected in this comment made by a departing visitor:

*I think that it is important for Australians and particularly young people to learn about their country's past. I am an Australian and being here has meant a lot to me. I feel a great deal of respect for the convicts and what they went through. Even though they were felons, they are the backbone of our nation's history. We could learn a lot from these stories and value a lot more.*

A seventh group of emotions that emerged within data involved those relating to *novelty* and *thrill-seeking*. Emotions that connected to the novelty and entertainment aspects of tourism experiences included *fascination*, *interest*, *nostalgia* and *astonishment*. Moreover, visitors also described feelings of *realisation*, *appreciation*, *entertainment*, *thrill*, and general *happiness* when visiting and learning about the island's convict sites. A departing visitor made this comment:

*Seeing all this really gets your blood pumping. It has been great to see the site and be spooked by all the creepy stories. It is so eerie here. It has also been really interesting, because you get to learn about history, but it is in a fun, interactive way. I think that really appeals to the younger traveller, not everyone is here for a history*

*lesson. I for one came here to have some fun and enjoy myself, so serious emotions weren't really an issue for me.*

The eighth and final group of emotions as described by visitors related to *personal reflection*. Emotions included *self-reflection, thankfulness* and *relief*. Visitors described feeling *respectful* and *thankful* for what the convicts and settlers went through and their role in shaping the island and Australia's history. Additionally, visitors described *relief* at being born within a different time and place whereby punishment and imprisonment standards contrast significantly to convict times. Many visitors made a similar comment to that of this departing visitor: "It really makes you stop, think and appreciate what you have and how times really have changed".

### How Visitors Gained from Norfolk Island's Convict Past

The study aimed to explore the role of emotions in developing meaningful tourism experiences that visitors could gain from in a positive way. Recalling Fredrickson's (1998) *Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions*, it was acknowledged that by experiencing positive emotions, individuals broadened their thought-action repertoires. In keeping with Fredrickson's thinking, the discussion will continue by exploring how visitors thought-action repertoires have been broadened through the emotions encountered during visits.

Visitors broadened their thought-action repertoires when gaining *knowledge and insight and understanding and appreciation* and by pursuing *interests and experiencing pleasure* during their tourism experiences. Each of these areas will now be discussed. Firstly, visitors gained knowledge of, and insight into the lives of convicts during the second settlement whilst experiencing the island's KAVHA. It would be commonplace to believe that visitors' knowledge is broadened simply from exposure to the old buildings and through tour guides stories and other forms of interpretation. Emotions have been recognised to play a significant role in instilling knowledge and insight into the minds, viewpoints and perspectives of visitors. This was identifiable through the tracking of visitors' emotions throughout tourism experiences.

Firstly, many visitors were motivated to travel to the site due to 'morbid curiosity' and many simply for 'a unique activity'. As visitors viewed the sites and learned about the harshness of life during the convict era, emotions were experienced that shaped attitudes and understanding of the events that occurred there. The entire tourism experience, including the emotions felt by visitors, contributed to a broadening of knowledge on Australia's and Norfolk Island's convict history. Furthermore, in some instances, this knowledge contributed to feelings of pride and nationalism amongst Australian visitors. From their visits to the island's convict sites, Australian tourists began to appreciate and embrace the island and their nation's convict heritage and history. Additionally, a portion of visitors who identified a genealogical connection, and who had researched whilst on the island, had a broader knowledge of their family's past.

Visitors also broadened their thinking when gaining understanding and appreciation of the island's convict history. It was not simply the convict historic interpretation that led to visitor understanding. Rather, visitors' emotions also played an important role in their abilities to empathise with those who suffered. Visitors felt regret, respect, sorrow and disbelief in convict treatment, whilst developing a deeper sense of appreciation and understanding of the island's convict past. This broadened understanding is exclusive to visitors to Norfolk Island, as the island's convict history, buildings, ruins and settlement stories are unique to there. Additionally, visits to the island strengthened understandings of and connections between Norfolk Island's convict history and mainland Australia.

Lastly, visitors also broadened their thought-action repertoires when gaining and/or strengthening personal interests during their leisure experiences. Many visitors experiences involved meeting locals, tourism staff and other visitors, spending time with friends and relatives, seeing new places, participating in new and varied activities and experiencing the island's history and culture; many for the first time. The emotions experienced during time spent at the convict sites intertwine these

external elements in addition to simply learning about the harsh treatment of convict felons. The majority of departing and returning visitors who participated in the study identified their tourism experiences as satisfying and positive. Enriching, satisfying and emotionally charged visitor experiences broaden individuals' future interests. Satisfying experiences may lead to repeat visitation, strengthen travel motivations, encourage travel to other convict sites on mainland Australia and may also encourage interest in convict and Norfolk Island history.

## Conclusion

This study has made four significant advances. Firstly, it revealed that emotions are an important aspect of tourism experiences involving death and human suffering, in this instance, visits to convict sites. Emotions intensified throughout visitor experiences as knowledge was gained and tangible artifacts and remains were encountered. Secondly, experiencing a combination of positive and negative emotions linked to death and human suffering can broaden visitors' thought-action repertoires. Despite the gruesome stories and visible reminders of convicts' harsh treatment, the majority of visitors were satisfied with their tourism experiences. It is important also to note that visiting convict sites comprised only a portion of visitor experiences on Norfolk Island; as tourism activities were also geared towards remembering the island's Pitcairn/Polynesian history.

Most importantly, exploring visitor gains at convict sites has made it possible to identify that emotions -including anger, grief, fear, empathy, pride and nationalism - can combine to create positive, satisfying and fulfilling tourism experiences. This extends the work of Fredrickson (1998, 2000, 2001, 2003), who explored only positive emotions in producing personal growth and satisfaction. Thirdly, as visitors progressed through their tourism experiences, so too did their emotions. This study has highlighted that emotions resemble experiences, in that there is a distinct journey involving their development and shape, whereby emotions gain depth and complexity. Lastly, visitors' emotions play a significant role in broadening thought-action repertoires. The emotions experienced by visitors at the convict sites complemented the tangible and intangible heritage and knowledge of convict life that was gained by the visitors. These emotions were powerful in shaping attitudes and viewpoints, and potentially future travel and other behaviour as a consequence.

Applying Seaton's (1996) thanatourism framework to Norfolk Island's convict sites, combined with the exploration of visitors' emotional journeys, has allowed the research question to be answered. This study has identified numerous similarities between thanatourism and tourism at Norfolk Island's convict attractions. The emotions experienced by visitors reflect the human suffering that occurred on the island during its past. In addition, visitors' emotional reactions (that have been shaped by exposure to tangible and intangible heritage), have contributed to lasting memories and impressions of convict life and treatment on the island. This therefore suggests that Norfolk Island's convict attractions do resemble thanatourism when considering Seaton's (1996) theoretical framework.

A deeper understanding of visitors' emotions has provided a profound insight into convict tourism on Norfolk Island and, in doing so, has highlighted the comparability between convict tourism and thanatourism. It is anticipated that such realisations will assist Norfolk Island administration and ultimately government policies in three key areas. Firstly, a greater understanding of the island's visitor market has been gained, which may assist in future tourism marketing campaigns and demographic based visitor knowledge (Ashworth and Goodall, 1990; Goodall and Ashworth, 1988; Hall, 2006; Kolter, Bowen and Makens, 1999; Lumsdon, 1997; Poon, 1993). Secondly, increased understanding of visitors' emotional needs and motivations can assist in tourism-based activities, in on-site interpretation and in off-site marketing and promotional initiatives. Finally, understanding the emotional impacts of the island's convict attractions could assist in creating more suitable tourism experiences that blend tourists' desires with the local people.

## Future Research

After undertaking this study, including several weeks researching on-island, it seems that Norfolk Island has much potential for future thanatourism research. Other than the island's convict past, fieldwork revealed that tourists are travelling to the island with other potential thanatourism motivations. The first was connected to ancestral searches. It was beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in too much depth that a portion of visitors, particularly retired travellers, were visiting Norfolk Island to search for their non-convict ancestors. Some examples included prison guards, ship personnel, and numerous searches for Christian missionaries who were more connected to the Pitcairn/Polynesian history than the convict era. A second potential field of thanatourism was considered by the researcher after discussions with other academics. It has been speculated that the 2007 media coverage of the Norfolk Island Janelle Patton murder case could be luring visitors to view the sites where the incident and trial occurred. Future research is required to explore these two areas in order to consider them as other forms of Norfolk Island thanatourism.

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