

## **Journeying towards new methods in prison tourism research: Mobilising penal histories at the convict ship exhibition**

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### **Starting out**

You start out by stepping foot from the outside, to the inside. You are directed to enter a long, thin room that unfolds in front you. A series of information boards introduce you to where you are standing. This is not just to the start of a convict story, but a convict *journey*. You have just stepped inside the prison ship. (Ethnographic diary, November 2013)

Convict ships have been the subject of academic attention for the past century from a variety of disciplinary perspectives: maritime history, colonial history and legal and penal history (see Anderson 2000; Bateson 1985; Campbell 2001; Vaver 2011). In this chapter, we attend to convict ship histories through the lens of penal tourism, focusing on how this period of carceral history has been conveyed and expressed through the tourist site of the Galleries of Justice Museum, Nottingham, UK. In paying attention to museums as sites of tourist experience, and to the prison museum as a specific ‘penal’ tourist attraction, we seek to contribute to recent debates concerning touristic engagements with prison spaces. Whilst much attention has been paid to museums housed in former prisons – their narratives, layouts, the social engagements they inspire, and the atmospheres they evoke – less has been said of the ways in which prison histories are *mobilised* in penal tourist sites.

In this chapter we aim to bring debates from the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Sheller and Urry 2006) to examinations of prison tourism. Over the past decade, the study of mobilities – concerned with the relationships between movement and power – has ‘taken hold of’ and ‘transformed’ the social sciences (Sheller and Urry 2006, 486). Accordingly, recent work has sought to demonstrate the incredibly mobile nature of prison life, past and present (Gill 2009; Moran et al. 2012; Ong et al. 2014; Peters and Turner 2015). Experiences, practices and processes of incarceration rely on a number of movements: the mobility of people (prisoners, staff, support workers, caterers, visitors into and out of the prison); things (contraband items for example); and even ideas and imaginations. It is our contention that with a ‘turn’ towards carceral mobilities (Turner and Peters, forthcoming), studies that interrogate the politics of movement could be usefully applied beyond their current remit (of working prisons and current prisoners). In this chapter we step inside the prison museum and ask what a mobilities approach can add to our understanding of penal tourist sites. We focus our attention specifically on the convict ship exhibition at the Galleries of Justice because the transportation of prisoners represents a highly mobile period of penal history. This mobility translates to the design of museum display at the museum, providing an exemplar of the ways in which mobility and penal tourism techniques intersect. This also allows us to shine new light on convict ship histories by exploring their (re)presentation in the present through the prison museum. This *moves* us beyond studies of convict ship history that are told through the lens of different disciplinary perspectives, to instead an understanding of how those histories have been articulated in the present, for public consumption.

In order to demonstrate the role of mobilities for *understanding* prison tourism and *doing* prison tourism research, we split the remainder of the chapter into four parts. We begin by introducing the concept of mobility in greater detail and the insights it can generate for understanding prison spaces. We next move to the museum and suggest the ways in which

mobility can aid interrogations of how museum spaces are designed and operate to generate knowledge about the past. We then combine these discussions by outlining how mobilising prison tourism and prison tourism research can shed new light on how we come to know and understand carceral worlds – and carceral pasts – as tourist consumers.. We conclude by suggesting that prison tourism adopt the concept of mobility and mobile methods to enhance our engagements with these tourist sites; and in turn that using these frameworks help us to better understand convict ship histories through their application in the museum.

### **Moving on**

Studies of mobility are currently at the forefront of social science studies, with an appreciation that our world is one that is ever ‘on the move’ (Cresswell 2006, 1).

Examinations of mobility have emerged from a need to take seriously how and why subjects and objects move, and the systems of power that drive and determine those mobilities (and, indeed, immobilities) (Cresswell 2010; Urry 2007). Studies of mobility have been employed across an array of disciplines from sociology to geography; and at a number of scales (from global movements to the intricate movements of the body), as a way of better understanding socio-cultural and political life, past and present (Sheller and Urry 2006). This chapter seeks to bring the study of mobilities to criminology, demonstrating how such thinking can help us make sense of carceral worlds and their transformation through prison tourism.

Mobility, as a framework for unpacking the *politics* of movement (Cresswell 2010), has been adopted in recent studies of prison life that are both historical and contemporary in focus (see Gill 2009; Moran et al. 2012; Ong et al. 2014; Peters and Turner 2015). That said, studies of mobility have come to carceral studies later than other disciplines because of the assumed *immobility* that defines the prison experience. There is a common assumption that incarcerated experience is anything but mobile (Moran et al. 2012, 449). These experiences

are typically understood to be defined by fixity whereby the movement of the subject is limited within specific parameters or boundaries (the prison wall being a prime example) – with liberty and agency greatly reduced. These assumptions regarding the permanence, fixity and immobility of prison life have largely resulted in the manifold mobilities that permeate the carceral sphere being overlooked.

Yet of late, carceral scholars have argued that mobility may well be a useful framework for understanding incarceration. Entering a prison requires *removal* from everyday, public spaces, to secure and confined spaces. It entails the movement of individuals across a border from the ‘outside’ to the ‘inside’ via technologies of mobility (such as prison vans or trains) (see Moran et al. 2012; Turner 2016). Once inside the prison, the movement of inmates is highly routinised by systems of power that define cell-time, leisure-time and work-time. In addition, prisoners can (and do) resist their controlled mobility through engaging in illicit movements (such as protests), and illicit activities that see the entry of contraband items move from outside to within the prison (over prison walls, through visiting rooms or travelling inside the body itself). In short, prisons are highly mobile environments. Yet the study of mobility and carceral life has not been fully exploited. To date, studies of mobility have tended to focus on the literal movement of people within and between prisons, holding centres, courts and so on. However, the wide literature on mobilities (see Adey et al. 2014 in particular) alerts us that it can be applied more widely in making sense of incarceration.

In a recent paper, for example, we have demonstrated how mobilities provide a helpful framework for uncovering new understandings of transportation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Peters and Turner 2015). Transportation (or the mass, migratory movement of incarcerated individuals by ship) is clearly a phenomenon underscored by mobility. However, as we show, movement does not just occur on a global scale, from start point to destination. Mobility happens in the space between – on board the ship – through the routinised movements of

incarcerated bodies (up to deck, and then back down below); through the intimate motions of the body made sick and unwell by conditions on board; to the chaffing of irons moving against the skin (ibid.) In this chapter – staying on the topic of the convict ship – we argue that mobilities can help us understand and analyse touristic engagements with convict ship history in new ways.

On the one hand, prison tourism (and arguably all tourism) involves movement. On an overarching scale, John Urry (2002) reminds us that the practice of tourism is one whereby individuals move, between ordinary life and the *extraordinary*; between the home and the *away*. Moreover, much prison tourism involves visiting sites that were former prisons (see Strange and Kempa 2003; Walby and Piché 2011). Yet, as argued elsewhere (Turner 2016), a ‘double’ movement occurs whereby consumers not only move from spaces of everyday life to extraordinary, exotic and ‘other’ spaces of tourism. It also involves moving into an extraordinary space that few of us will ever experience: the prison. On the other hand, when navigating tourist sites, visitors literally move – they move within and around former prison sites – and this in turn helps to make knowable carceral spaces for those engaging with them as tourists (see Morin and Moran 2015). In this chapter we examine how mobility is utilised by those designing penal tourist sites (curators and so on), and by those experiencing these attractions. In the next section we consider how tourist sites such as museums are spaces that rely on mobility to re-tell stories from the past. We then introduce our case study: the Galleries of Justice prison museum,

### ***Moving through***

Museums can be defined as repositories for preserving and displaying history. They are vehicles for communicating ‘authoritative knowledge’ about the world to a wide public audience (Crang 2003, 259). More than this, they can often be described as tourist attractions:

spaces that convey national, regional, local or subject-specific histories to visitors for education and/or entertainment (Van Aalst and Boogaarts 2002). With the project of safeguarding history becoming more pervasive, the discipline of museology has emerged to interrogate how such spaces function to re-tell histories in the present (Vergo 1997). To date, under this rubric, studies of museums have focused on the politics of curatorship (Crang 1994, 2003); the design, layout and material items that constitute museum exhibitions (Geoghegan 2010; Hoskins 2007; Karp and Levine 2004); the place of performance in presenting the past (Johnson 1999); the role of visitors in engaging with, and co-constructing the narratives they encounter (Macdonald 2007); the place of new virtual, audio and sensory technologies as mediums of bringing the present into touch with the past (Ciolfi and Bannon 2007); and most recently the ‘atmospheres’ generated in museum spaces for visitors (Turner and Peters 2015a).

What is missing in these accounts is how movement matters. In this chapter we aim to interrogate the way visitors move in museums and how we as researchers can use movement to understand the functioning of museums as penal tourist sites. After all, museum spaces are not static. They are spaces through which visitors move. From cabinet to cabinet and room to room, tourists engage with collections of materials, objects and narratives that have been transformed into carefully curated displays and exhibitions (Geoghegan 2010, 1462). It is through movement that tourists are routed around museums, and in turn, are routed through histories. It is through movement that visitors can engage with the intentions of curators or resist the ideal ‘navigation’ of museum space. In this chapter we ask how we can better understand the prison museum as a tourist site and understanding its function and operation in relaying penal histories. We focus our attention on the Galleries of Justice museum sited at the former Nottingham Gaol, UK, which also acted in various guises as a prison and court between approximately 600AD and 1991 (Baker 2014). We consider specifically an

exhibition charting the history of transportation. In what follows we describe our research in the prison museum and our use of mobile methods to engage with the workings of this space of penal tourism.

### **Moving *with***

Fieldwork at the Galleries of Justice was conducted from 2013 to 2014 and consisted primarily of an autoethnographic approach (Jewkes 2012) where we engaged with the prison museum ourselves, shuttling between insider and outsider roles, as both ‘tourist’ and ‘researcher’ (see also Butz and Besio 2009). By engaging with the prison museum directly – the carefully designed layouts, articulated histories, material displays and planned performances – we were able to access and consume the carefully curated layouts and exhibition designs that were engineered by museum staff and experienced by museum visitors. Following the work of Crang and Cook (2007, 6) this method was not simply a technique that allowed us to ‘read’ a space, landscape or event to identify a socio-cultural construction of past. Rather it was a dynamic, reflexive and considered way of engaging the past and interrogating it in the present. In other words, it was an embodied and critical foray into taking seriously the workings of the museum in relaying penal histories. This approach has been widely employed as a way of gaining richer understandings of how museums function (see, for example, Crang 2003; Macdonald 2007). Multiple site visits involved taking part in a variety of scheduled tours as well independent navigation of the museum exhibits. Alongside this active (and as we will argue, *mobile*) participation, short conversational interviews were held with curatorial staff and tour guides.

However, the research techniques that we employed in data gathering at the Galleries of Justice were not simply ‘classic’ social science methods – ethnography, interviews and textual analysis (Last 2012). In recent years scholars have noted that research methods –

ways of *doing* research – are typically static (see Law and Urry 2004). D’Andrea et al. (2011, 153) have argued that such methods fall short when trying to capture social experiences that are ‘experiential’, ‘embodied’ and ‘phenomenological’. If we are currently living in a world defined by mobility (and immobility), this new way of thinking, arguably demands new methods (or at least a reinvigoration of current techniques). Law and Urry have contended that ‘classic’ methods typically take place in places or sites we assume to be static (the interview room, the research site, the archive) (2004, 403-4). We often fail to appreciate that these spaces to be motionful and in flux. Accordingly, in the research we employed *mobile methods* (Büscher and Urry 2009; D’Andrea et al. 2011; Fincham et al. 2010; Ricketts Hein et al. 2008), using reflexive field-diary notes made *on the move*.

Indeed, mobile methods are often defined as those where ‘the research subject and the researcher are in motion in the field’ (Ricketts Hein et al. 2008, 1267). In other words, rather than trying to make sense of a world of movement retrospectively through interviewing or a survey, mobile methods are those which aim to study movement *as it happens*. As such, mobile methods allow researchers to capture meanings that are made *as* people are mobile (in this case, as they (we) navigate and move around the museum). This generates a richer knowledge of embodied engagement and the accumulation of understanding of the narratives relayed at tourist sites, because it generates data whilst ‘being there’ or being ‘in-situ’ (Fincham et al. 2010, 6). This involves a ‘contingent process of adjustments of methods’ to meet the ‘needs and requirement of research projects’ (D’Andrea et al. 2011, 155).

In conducting this research (following Büscher and Urry 2009, 104-8) we engaged with observational methods attuned to people’s movements: their strolling, navigating, stopping, starting, and so on as they moved through the Galleries of Justice, and more specifically the convict ship exhibition. Our research also involved ‘active participation’ whereby we, as researchers, involved ourselves in the movement under investigation,



resulting in a ‘co-present immersion’ in the mobile landscape under exploration. This might be thought of as a *mobile* autoethnography. In light of this we did not simply make ethnographic notes of our experiences in the prison museum and convict ship galleries, but rather, we plotted time-space diaries, keeping a detailed record of what we were doing and where, alongside how we moved and the modes of our movement. This resulted in a form of data that had ‘a sense of wonder, depth and felt-life’ to it, revealing how movement fundamentally shapes experience (Büscher and Urry 2009, 106). We next turn to the convict ship exhibition in the Galleries of Justice prison museum and discuss how a focus on mobility and the use of mobile methods, helps us to understand the workings of this site in conveying penal pasts to tourist consumers.

## **Moving towards convict ship histories**

### ***Moving through time***

The transportation of individuals via ship can be first dated to 1584 when Richard Hakluyt, a geographer, cleric and historian (c. 1552-1616) suggested using convicts as a free workforce in the American Colonies. By the late-16th century this process was institutionalised to a greater degree and by the late-18th century, as part of a growing call to civilise punishment in Britain, the shipping of convicts was a preferred sentence for many. The Piracy Act 1717, which established a seven-year penal transportation to North America, became an alternative punishment for those convicted of lesser felonies. In addition, those with more serious sentences – such as the death penalty – could have this sentence translated to one of transportation via a Royal pardon. In this way, transportation became a much-used method for dispensing with convicted people. Transportation of criminals to North America thrived from 1718 to 1776. By 1775, 50,000 British convicts were transported to North America. When the 1776 American War of Independence prevented the continuation of this

transportation, criminals were instead transported to the British Colonies in Australia and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) (The Howard League for Penal Reform 2012). The years 1787-1868 witnessed the movement of 162,000 British and Irish convicts in 806 ships to these destinations.

During the mid-1800s some felons held in Nottingham's gaol were also subject to sentences of transportation. As we have noted elsewhere (Turner and Peters 2015b) the Galleries of Justice re-tells both Nottingham and Britain's penal history in a linear and sequential order, moving the visitor through different epochs of prison life (pre-reform, post-reform, transportation, post-eradication of the death penalty) that correspond to different spaces of the museum (the medieval dungeons, the Georgian prison, the laundry and work spaces, the exercise yard). Accordingly, visitors move through prison histories chronologically. On occasion, these linear narratives are disrupted by the use of costumed guides who embody characters from different moments in time (the sheriff, the turnkey, the matron) but who also shuttle between time-zones, on the one hand acting as narrators in the present, re-telling penal pasts from an omnipresent perspective, before, on the other hand, transitioning or *moving* to a character role that is positioned in one moment of prison history (for example, the matron ordering tourists to march around the exercise yard in silent reflection) (see Turner and Peters 2015b). That said, the transportation gallery is positioned to reflect its moment in history alongside the broader narration of prison history in the museum.

However, whilst the visitor moves to the exhibition space logically, from an adjacent time-zone (the 1800s prison) the convict ship gallery is also set apart from the remainder of the museum. Like other prison museums in Ontario, Canada, or in the USA (such as Alcatraz, Robbin Island or the Eastern State Penitentiary) (see Walby and Piché 2011; Strange and Kempa 2003, and Bruggeman 2012 respectively) the Galleries of Justice relies on using its architecture – as a former prison – to relay prison histories from the past in the present (see

Turner and Peters 2015a, 2015b). Crucially then, the material prison maps on to the histories that are told. Visitors are literally stepping into the prison itself, moving them arguably closer to the pasts they hope to grasp and understand. Of course, as Piché and Walby contend (2004) penal tourism rarely offers an accurate insight into prison life whether the material ‘shell’ of a prison is used to house the museum or not. However, the use of former prison buildings does add an ‘atmospheric’ quality to visitor experience allowing tourists to ‘touch’ the past in ways not possible if histories were re-told in purpose built museum spaces (Turner and Peters 2015b). For example, in the Galleries of Justice, visitors can literally touch the imprints of former prison life that are etched into the very fabric of the building – running fingers along the carvings that inmates have scratched into the brickwork and walls. In short, by using (and playing upon) the materiality of former prison buildings curators are able to literally *move* visitors closer to history, reducing the distance between past and present (Turner and Peters 2015a).

The convict ship gallery, whilst positioned ‘correctly’ in the passage of time presented in the museum, does not rely on the former prison building in the same way as the rest of the museum space. The visitor is not taken to an actual prison ship or segments of it. Therefore, the narratives of the history of transportation that are relayed do not have the ‘authentication’ provided by a link to a substantial, material architecture as in other areas of the museum.. Accordingly, as we physically moved to the convict ship exhibition space, this movement marked not a temporal disjuncture, but (as we noted in our time-space diary) a spatial *departure* (Ethnographic diary, November 2013). We were moved to a very different kind of exhibition space from the rest of the museum and this movement in turn shifted engagements with the prison histories conveyed. The majority of the museum not only relies on the ‘actual’ (though eroded, and degraded) materiality of the Nottingham prison in re-telling history (see DeSilvey 2006). It also relays the past through simple, material – one might even say *raw* –

props such as chains, whips, shackles, and so on, that allude to a stark history of imprisonment with few words required. The tourist is literally moved to a different kind of museum space when entering the convict ship gallery. Without prison architecture to fall back upon, the curators instead construct a gallery space designed to feel like, and look like a ship. Moreover, when moving to the exhibition space relating to convict ship history, visitors were, *and we were*, for the first time released from the charge of the costumed guides. Unlike the rest of the museum where the visitor is toured around the site and histories are narrated in person by museum staff who have taken on past-prison personas, here, visitors (such as ourselves) are herded to the next gallery, and left – exiled almost. We described this juncture in our time-space diaries:

Our time in the post-reform prison and the exercise yard is (was) over. The matron lined us up against the wall and inspected our hands to check for cleanliness and that we were not hiding any items that might be used as weapons or as a means of enabling our escape. She ushers us towards a door. We move towards an entrance – our tour of prison life continues. This time for the first time in over an hour we are [were] not greeted by a costumed guide. We are now on the convict ship. There is no ‘captain’ to greet us, no next character in our journey through the prison ages. We are on our own. We’ve been abandoned. One might even say, banished.

(Ethnographic diary, November 2013)

In what follows we discuss the techniques used by curators in the convict ship gallery, in the absence of material architecture to support narratives. In particular we consider the importance of mobility – and our mobility as researchers – as a central tool for re-telling and understanding the penal past.

### *Voyaging onwards*

Transportation, as form of punishment, has an obvious mobile history (see Anderson 2000; Peters and Turner 2015). The convict ship was not only a prison but a prison that *moved*. Ships (of any kind) most obviously move in a linear fashion from port to port, across space from a start point to destination (Hasty and Peters 2012). Indeed, ships have been regarded, somewhat simply, as the facilitators of horizontally linking the spaces of capital accumulation – cities, towns and so on, and building empires and colonial outposts (see Ogborn 2008). Certainly the convict ship can be regarded in such a way, facilitating the A to B movement of incarcerated subjects. The embarking and disembarking of convicts in particular – the start and end of their linear journey – were points of celebration amongst the crew of ships, particularly surgeons, whereby the delivery of a healthy cargo of convicts represented a successful voyage (Vaver 2011).

The convict ship exhibition relies on the movement implicit in convict ship history to relay the narrative of this era of penal history. Most simply, the gallery itself is curated as a journey – with a start point (embarking) and end point (disembarking) – manifested in the visitor moving in *to* and out *of* the exhibition space. When the visitor arrives, the ‘staging’ (see MacCannell 1999) of the exhibition is designed to make the tourist imagine they are stepping from the dockside in to the convict ship. This is in part realised as the visitor transitions from the outside space of the exercise yard into the inside space of the convict ship exhibition hall (Ethnographic diary, March 2014). Upon entering the exhibition space, the tourist is greeted by barrels and rope, canvas bags of grain and the exhibition walls are clad in what appear to look like planks – creating a visual image that plays on the knowledge most visitors would associate with seafaring and shipping at that time (see Figure #.1).

< **Insert Figure #.1:** Stepping on board the convict ship, material ‘cues’ such as barrels and rope are used to re-create the interior of a ship (Photo: by the authors) *about here* >

Once within the ‘ship’, the main content of the exhibition (the space between) is curated as the middle passage, narrating life aboard the convict ship. Accordingly, this design means that the visitor is not simply navigating a set of displays relating to convict ship histories that are disconnected from the space in which they appear. Rather, display boards are positioned to create a movement through the gallery space – a technique that is engineered to reflect the voyage undertaken by convicts. In part, the spatial layout of the gallery determines this movement. Shuttling from tourist to researcher and analysing our movements through the exhibition, we noticed that the gallery is long and thin (Ethnographic diary, November 2013). In other words, the gallery itself is a *passage*. This means that visitor movement is restricted in the gallery. They (we) are forced to move through the exhibition in a linear way, taking in the information boards, plaques and images in a sequential, linear order, as we are ‘channelled’ through the exhibition (Figure #.2).

This curatorial engineering is not insignificant. Movement (and restricted, channelled, linear movement) through the gallery assists the visitor in grasping the penal history conveyed. In trying to articulate a voyage, the museum creates an exhibition that is itself a passage that the visitor journeys *through*. The visitor can begin to understand the movement that is integral to this era of prison history because they literally move through the gallery from start point (the dock) to end point (the colony). On a macro-scale then, the exhibition encourages the visitor not just to engage with convict ship history through abstract displays, but to go on a journey, retracing the steps of inmates from the beginning of their voyage to the end.

< **Insert Figure #.2:** The gallery design simulates a ‘passage’ much like a voyage, through which the visitor is forced to move, with no option to turn back (Photo: by the authors) *about here* >

This experience is of course distanced from the reality of the convict ship. As the exhibition is on solid ground, it lacks the ‘actual’ material architecture of the ship, and therefore the true horrors such as the sounds and smells, the illnesses and corporal punishment that characterised life on board. However, it does aim to relay the history more *effectively* by moving the visitor closer to an appreciation of the ship and, most importantly, the voyage in its design. Indeed, what is also notable about the overarching design of the gallery space is that the exhibition is organised in such a way that the visitor cannot move backwards. The gallery – in shape, form and organisation – provides no opportunity for the tourist (ourselves included) to turn back. There is no way to navigate back to the start of the exhibition – back to the dock, back to Britain. Once inside, it is a one-way voyage (as was the case for the majority of transported convicts). The visitor begins by setting out on the ship. The gallery ends with the arrival of the tourist in a recreated colony. The museum engineering reflects, very powerfully, through the use of movement and the channelling of visitor movement, the narrative of transportation. Accordingly, we argue, mobility is crucial to the museum design, visitor experience and narration of history as the tourist journeys from one prison space (the ship), to another (the colony). In what follows, we move from the macro-scale design of the exhibition to explore how small scale techniques of narration also assist visitors in understanding the movement integral to the history of transportation.

### ***Making waves***

Whilst the convict ship followed a linear passage across the oceans, the mobility of the vessel and those on board was not a simple, linear, *straightforward* movement alone. As we have noted elsewhere in relation to voyages of transportation:

The convict ship is a space of macro-movement from point A to B across the ocean, whilst simultaneously a site of apparent confinement for those on board who are unable to move beyond the parameters of the ship. Yet ... all manner of mobilities permeate the internal space of the ship. Accordingly, mobility is more than simply the macro-movement of prisoners across space, (mobility) occurs in the space of movement; between points A and B, as micro, embodied and intimate (im)mobilities are also played out within large scale regimes of movement. (Peters and Turner 2015, 847)

On board the convict ship – within the hold – bodies of those incarcerated would move: swaying, colliding, and tumbling with the *mobile* force of the sea (Peters 2012). Indeed, the convict ship was a space made mobile not only through its journey but through the geophysical properties of the water it moved within and across. The motion of the sea, made through systems of currents, winds, and jet streams would shift ships laterally as they moved forwards, pitching them upwards, and slamming them downwards. In turn, not only did the bodies of those on board move, they also moved internally – stomachs would churn with seasickness, bowel movements might result from illness. Mobility on the convict ship was as much about these internal movements (within the ship, within the body) as the macro-movement that defined transportation.

Notably, the convict ship exhibition seeks to create an awareness of this embodied movement *within* the vessel and achieves this by a number of design techniques intended to



simulate movement. As the visitor navigates the linear passage of the exhibition they are taken to the hold of the vessel. Visual and material cues are used to signal the place of the visitor in the hold of the ship. Bars and shackles are present and the tourist is urged to consider the conditions in this moment of the journey through accompanying information boards that describe the food, the seasickness and the scurvy. These are mostly from a first-person perspective. The curator told us how archive records were used to piece together the convict narratives of life on board, (Interview November 2013). Most importantly, however, curators have used a variety of lighting techniques to create an impression of life on the ship. The relative darkness of the exhibition space as the journey progresses represents the unlit, dank conditions faced by those in the hold of the prison ship. Likewise, the slave ship exhibition at Merseyside Maritime Museum, which re-tells the horrific history of the middle passage from the West African coast to the plantation, uses lighting (or a lack of lighting) to create an atmosphere that elicits a sense of the sheer terror in the visitor that those on board would have faced, crammed in the bowels of a ship, tossing and turning in a violent sea.

Whilst the lighting is used as a method of moving visitors closer to the history portrayed, lighting in the convict exhibition at Nottingham is, most significantly, used to make the visitor feel they are in motion. Given the exhibition is firmly on dry land, flickering lighting (used to mimic an effect of light creeping into the ship's hold between the wooden planks from outside, to the inside of a ship moving on the ocean) creates an oddly motionful effect even with the visitor standing still. As we described when making sense of our own experiences of movement:

We were still, but oddly (we were) moving. The light was only slight in the dark corridor but it was dancing on the walls and on the floor making the dark space seem

as though it was moving or we were moving, or both. It was bit nauseating. We both said our balance felt off. (Ethnographic diary, November 2013)

In this case, the lighting techniques affect the vestibular system creating a mismatch between the eyes and the network of nerves and fluids in the ear, which gives the brain a sense of motion and balance. This recreates a feeling of motion akin to being on a ship at sea (where seasickness and a lack of stability are also a result of imbalances in the body's vestibular system). This technique, used in the Galleries of Justice is arguably a way in which the museum attempts to make known the mobile nature of incarceration on the convict ship, and its motionful realities for those on board.

### **Towards conclusions**

This chapter has interrogated how prison histories are mobilised (through museum display techniques, routing of visitors and so on) and furthermore, has demonstrated how the use of mobile methods (mobile autoethnography and time-space diaries) can enhance data collection by researchers in prison tourism sites, such as the museum. By engaging as *mobile researchers* with the convict ship exhibition at the Galleries of Justice prison museum, we have explored how mobility is used by curators to help build understandings of this era of penal history. Scholars have argued that paying attention to movement is essential for understanding the social, cultural, political and economic relations central to life (see Cresswell 2010, Merriman 2014). Our interest in using mobility as a framework builds upon the important work of Moran et al. (2012) and others, in mobilising studies of incarceration. Whilst recent work has taken steps to *unlock* carceral studies from their fixed frames of understanding, this has been mainly through mobilising studies of carceral life past and present (see Gill 2009; Moran et al. 2012; Ong et al. 2014; Peters and Turner 2015). In sum,

in this chapter, we have argued that the focus on mobilities in penal spaces could be productively extended through their application to prison *tourism* – both in terms of how tourist experiences are mobilised, and in terms of mobilising or journeying towards mobile methods in prison tourism research.

Indeed, whilst we have focused here specifically on the use of mobilising techniques in the transportation exhibition at the Galleries of Justice, Nottingham, UK, we would argue that studies of prison tourism adopt the lens of mobility more broadly as a way of making sense of how prison tourist experiences function. Scholars might consider the use of mobility and routing in an array of former prison sites, and also sites of holding, detainment and detention – not just those like the convict ship, which are defined *by* movement. Indeed, given the tensions between mobility and immobility in more conventional ‘landed’ prisons, considering how mobility is explained and used by curators, and embraced by visitors in these settings, offers much potential for making sense of how history is made known (following Morin and Moran 2015). Moreover, adopted by prison tourism researchers, there may also be scope in the future to further develop mobile methods as a way of making sense of tourist engagements that invariably involve multiple movements (from the ordinary to extraordinary; outside to inside).

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