



The Falkland Society

Scottish Registered Charity SC017201

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Falkland Society Newsletter, December 2023

Dear <<First Name>>,

Our speaker for December is Victoria Perry, architect and historian, talking about *Slavery, Architecture, and the British Landscape, including its impact on the Scottish Highlands*. As usual this meeting will be held online only – please use the link below to join the meeting – and if you have friends who might be interested in the topic, please encourage them to sign up using the form at www.falklandsociety.org.uk/contact.shtml so they can receive their own invitation.

Ross Burgess (Secretary)

In this issue:

- [December Meeting](#)
- [Stories of Remembrance - a response from Charles Smith](#)
- [Cupar's Big Weekend](#)
- [Previous events](#)

December Meeting

Victoria Perry, architect working for one of the most celebrated London firms of architects highly skilled in the study and conservation of historic buildings, Donald Insall & Associates, will be giving the last lecture of the year on **Wednesday 13 December** at the usual time of 7 p.m.

Please join us by Zoom from 6:45 p.m. onwards on the 13th, at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81845413488>

You can also join by phone on **0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196**, or **0208 080 6591** quoting the meeting ID: 818 4541 3488

The title of Victoria's talk is the same as the title of her book, published in 2022, namely:

***A Bittersweet Heritage – Slavery, Architecture
and the British Landscape***



Drawn from her recent book, *A Bittersweet Heritage* shows how the profits from plantation slavery not only funded great country houses and gardens, but also transformed some of Britain's best loved and most celebrated landscapes – the Wye Valley, the Lakes, Snowdonia and the Scottish Highlands – and the way we relate to them. This aspect of Britain's colonial past, therefore, has left a much wider cultural legacy than is generally appreciated.

The talk shows how the patronage of an absentee Caribbean plantation owner – a ferry ride over the Severn from the Atlantic port of Bristol and the spa-resort of Bath, eighteenth-century Britain's most fashionable city – popularised the idea of 'natural scenery', the manner of viewing mountains, rivers and cliffs as three-dimensional landscape art.

Plantation owners, tobacco and sugar and rum merchants based in Liverpool, Lancaster and western Scotland, too, not only commissioned art and buildings that celebrated rugged western landscapes, but organised the construction of new road networks, as well. And, funded from the profits of slavery and the transatlantic trade, this in turn encouraged the 18th and 19th century fashion for landscape touring and appreciation, transforming hitherto poor and remote areas of Britain into much sought-after tourist destinations.

A Bittersweet Heritage also argues that planter families took the concept of 'natural scenery'

across the Atlantic, to the Caribbean and American mainland, ultimately influencing the way that that much of the 18th and 19th century English-speaking world was portrayed – and, indeed, designed

Dr Victoria Perry is a historian, architect and Practice Director at Donald Insall Associates, a company of architects and historic building consultants, whose clients include The Crown Estate, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, and The Palace of Westminster as well as other prominent national and international institutions.

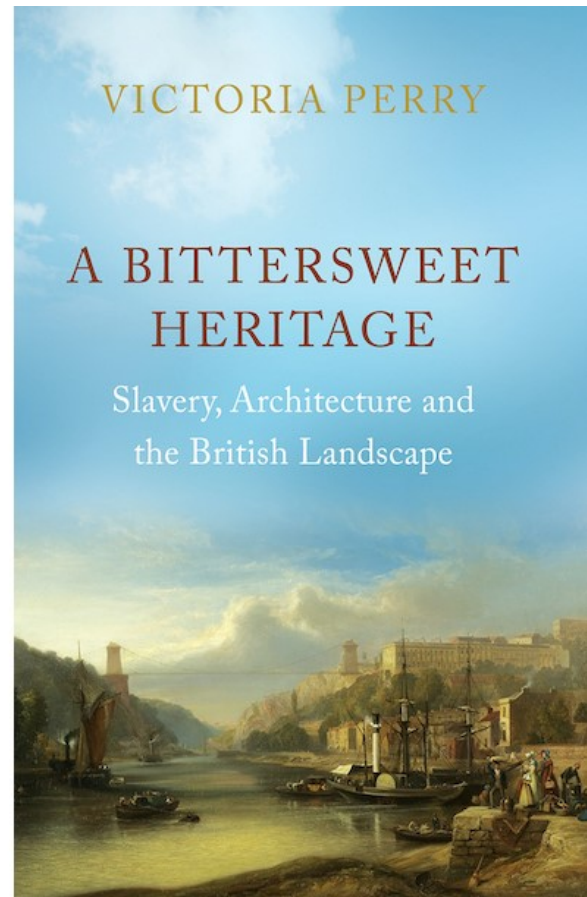
Her recent book *A Bittersweet Heritage: Slavery, Architecture and the British Landscape* is based on her Bartlett PhD which won the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) award for PhD research in 2010.

An external examiner on the MA in Historic Urban Environments at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, where she also lectures on the background to heritage protection legislation, Victoria has previously spoken about her research in the USA, the Caribbean and India, and contributed to the *Oxford Companion to Black British History* (2007) and to the English Heritage book *Slavery and the British Country House* (2014).

It is an extraordinary story and we shall greatly benefit from having it told by a great authority on the subject, and especially one who is so knowledgeable about the impact of slave trading and slave owning on estates (including Scottish estates), architecture and landscape. Please do come, and make a point of telling friends about it, and how to go about joining. (The only way is through visiting the Falkland Society website and signing up for this newsletter). It will be good also to tell our friends that if they cannot actually attend 'on the day' then they can quickly afterwards have an opportunity of listening to the recording of it, to be accessed through the Society's website.

Incidentally, I can most warmly recommend the book. See <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/a-bittersweet-heritage/>

Peter Burman



Stories of Remembrance - a response from Charles Smith, letter cutter

Dear Peter

Many thanks for sending the link to your video. I much enjoyed it. It is good that you champion memorials, their sculpture and lettering.

Quite a few years ago you did tell me about your ancestor, the sculptor Thomas Burman. It was very interesting to see his superb work. How wonderful to have such an ancestor. What conversations you and he could have!

It was pleasing to see that you included an inscription from Roman times. Here the lettering was freely carved with plenty of movement. Such work for me offers inspiration a great deal more than the formal inscription, however finely set out and cut. But I think you know this.

You mentioned that you liked raised lettering. I have never been asked to do much. But here is a work I made for Posterngate Surgery in Selby.



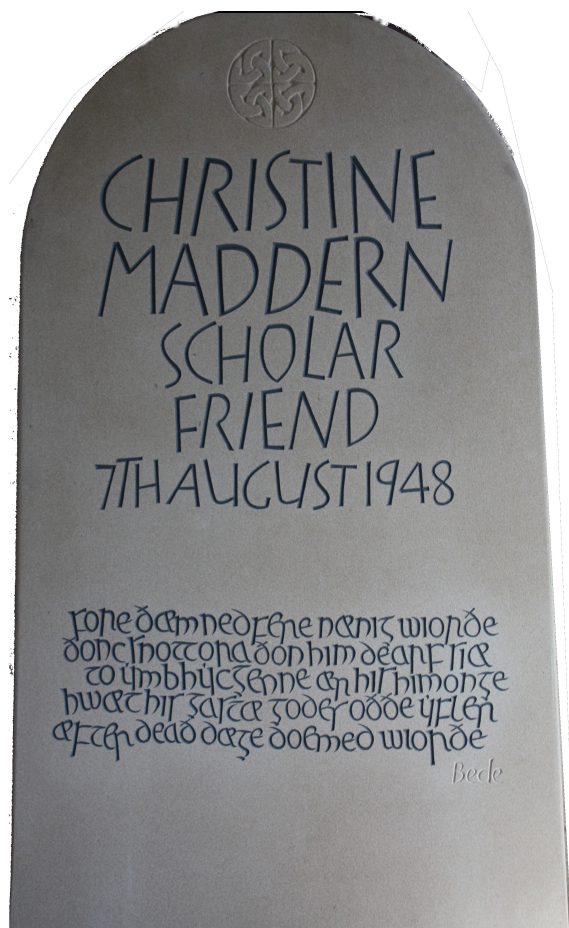
Recently I carved a letter S, both in relief and raised at the same time (left-hand image below) There is a lot of work in such a form of lettering but perhaps I will attempt an inscription in such an MO someday. I showed it to a client who commissions work from me: I think it is somewhere in Northumberland at present. The right-hand image from *Country Life* shows an absolutely wonderful memorial (James Cooper of Plaistow, died 1743, in All Saints Church, West Ham). I tore it out of the magazine when I came across it in the doctor's surgery some years ago. What a piece of work, it is marvellous. And yet the sculptor is not known.



Thank you for showing some examples of my work. The example with the flute and the pot (image below) was the Lewis and Louisa Creed memorial in Hopton Wood limestone. Lewis was the potter and teacher. Louisa is the flautist and teacher. And both were avid rag rug makers. A rag rug is depicted in the carving behind the pot and flute. Of course the rug it is not to scale, but the pot is, and the flute is at half scale. This memorial was commissioned over twenty years ago and when finished it was crated up and put into storage. Sadly, Lewis died last year so the memorial is now sited in an old part of York cemetery where Lewis now rests.



I thought you would be interested in the Christine Maddern memorial (below) which I made about four years ago and is in storage at present. Dr Christine Maddern is a scholar in Anglo-Saxon, a former Research Associate of the Centre for Medieval Studies, York University. The text in the left-hand image is from Bede and I have carved it in Anglo-Saxon, (Old English). I have written various manuscripts in Old English so this was a great help when I came to carve it on this memorial. The space left between the two inscriptions is for her final date. The right-hand image shows the face of her memorial with her name Christine, carved in Runic lettering above, and lettering from the Lindisfarne Gospels below. The centre carving shows a design based on her CM initials.



With best wishes,

Charles Smith

Cupar's Big Weekend

The following was sent to us by Raymond Young, Co-ordinator, Cupar's Big Weekend 2024.

Following on from the success of Cupar's Big Weekend, the steering group would like to involve more local clubs, groups and businesses. If your group or organisation would like to be involved, then we would ask you to decide on what you would like to do – and let us know.

It may be that you are doing something already around the time of the dates for next year's Big Weekend – 13–15 September 2024 – or you may be able to adjust the date to make it part of the

Big Weekend. If you would like to be involved, please let us know.

Further, if your organisation is holding events during 2024 which are open to the public, we would be interested to hear about them so that we can help to share with our Forum and wider community. Simply use this link to provide details. We look forward to hearing from you. Contact details via <https://www.cuparnow.blog/>.

Previous events

You can download any of our previous recorded talks at www.falklandsociety.org.uk/recordings.shtml.

[Back to top.](#)



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