**Charles Causley – Influence and Legacy**



**Symposium**

**Saturday 6 December 2014**

**Falmouth University**

**in conjunction with Charles Causley Trust and Literature Works (South West)**

**WELCOME PACK**

Readings, scholarship and debate from poets, film-makers and academics. Evening reading with

**BRIAN PATTEN**

<http://conferences.falmouth.ac.uk/charlescausley/>

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**Charles Causley Influence and Legacy Symposium**

**Saturday 6 December 2014 Falmouth University**

**Penryn Campus**

**Programme**

**9.00-9.30**

**Coffee and Registration – Exchange Seminar Blue**

**9.30-9.45**

**Welcome talk Professor Jason Whittaker and Dr Kym Martindale – Exchange Lecture Theatre**

**10.00-11.30 Panel 1: Friendship, Faith and Childhood**  **(Chair Kym Martindale) – Exchange Lecture Theatre**

1. Luke Thompson (University of Exeter): ‘Meeting-Points: Jack Clemo and  Charles Causley’

2. Rob Smith (University of Exeter): ‘The Hopeful Believer: Causley, Faith  and Seeing’

3. Jim Kelly (University of Exeter): ‘Causley’s Haunted Launceston: Locating  a Gothic Childhood’

**11.30-12.30 Jane Darke and Andrew Tebbs – Angel Hill (Chair Jason Whittaker)**   **Exchange Lecture Theatre:**

Jane and Andrew will talk about their current project, a film about Charles  Causley, and show selected interviews with Andrew Motion and Simon Armitage.

**12.30-1.30 Lunch in Exchange Seminar Blue**

**1.30-3.00 Panel 2: Facing East: Causley in the Wider World**  **(Chair Luke Thompson) – Exchange Lecture Theatre**

1. Mike Cooper (Independent Scholar): ‘A spatter of scarlet poppies: Causley  and the Great War’

2. Laurence Green (Independent Scholar): ‘Charles Causley, Ira Levin, Selina  Wadge, and Dr Seuss’.

3. John Hurst (University of Exeter [ret’d.]): ‘Charles Causley’s Wider World’

**3.30-4.00 Coffee**

**4.00-6.00 Panel 3: Influence and Legacy  (Chair Niamh Downing) – Exchange Lecture Theatre**

1. Alan Kent (Open University): ‘Celticity, Mystery and Poetry: The Theatre  Works of Charles Causley’

2. Christine Faunch (University of Exeter Special Collections) and Charlotte  Berry (Alfred Gillet Trust): ‘Discovering Charles: curatorial reflections on  the papers of Charles Causley at the University of Exeter’

3. Charles Causley – Poet-in-Residence – Alyson Hallett  (Causley Trust Writer-in-Residence) and students from Falmouth  University – Alyson will read her work alongside students who have been  attending her workshops at Cyprus Well, and offer thoughts on the experience of writing and living in Charles Causley’s house.

**Students reading**: Sarah Cave, Sarah Purnell and Lucy Carney

**Students represented**: Anna Cathenka, Jessica Hawes and Lucy Linford

**6.00-6.55 Pasties (in the Stannary); Book sale in Exchange Seminar Blue**

**7.00 pm: Guest Poet – Brian Patten – Exchange Lecture Theatre**

**Charles Causley: Influence and Legacy**

**One-day Symposium Falmouth University**

(with the Charles Causley Trust and Literature Works)

**Abstracts, Biographies and Contact details**

**Keynotes**

**Artists and filmmakers Jane Darke and Andrew Tebbs’s film in progress, ‘Angel Hill’** follows an earlier collaboration, ‘About the Land’. ‘Angel Hill’ focuses on Charles Causley through those people of Launceston who knew him, and well-known poets who knew and respected his work. These include Simon Armitage and Andrew Motion. The film is due for completion in July 2015, but Jane and Andrew will discuss the film, its subject and show clips of interviews with Armitage, Motion and others.

**Poet Brian Patten** will conclude the day’s events with a reading of his work, which has been variously praised as ‘wonderful, tender, daft’ (the Telegraph of the 2012 re-issue of *Thawing Frozen Frogs* for children) and by Causley himself as ‘revealing the ever-present possibility of the magical and the miraculous as well as the granite-hard realities’. Finally, the Times described one of his performances as having ‘a magic ability to turn radiant imagination loose.’

**Panel 1: Friendship, Faith and Childhood**

1. Luke Thompson (University of Exeter): ‘Meeting-Points: Jack Clemo and Charles Causley’

Causley was Jack Clemo’s best man and one of his longest-serving friends. Their relationship began when Causley wrote a fan letter in 1951, following the publication of Clemo’s first volume of poetry, *The Clay Verge*. Causley went on to introduce Clemo to television and radio, as well as to literary friends and contacts. Both men wrote for and about one another, Causley notably writing ‘Homage to Jack Clemo’, as well as providing the introduction for Clemo’s best-known collection, *The Map of Clay*. In response, Clemo dedicated *The Echoing Tip* to Causley and wrote ‘Meeting-Points’ for Michael Hanke’s celebratory *Poems for Charles Causley.* Clemo’s work shows many points of contact with his old friend, as well as influence. Sometimes this expresses itself covertly in the poetry, in shared subjects and experiments in form. Other times it expresses itself more directly, especially in Clemo’s diaries, which hint at a slight occasional jealousy and antagonism.

This paper examines the impact of Causley on Clemo’s life and writing as well as their relationship; it draws on their lengthy correspondence, Clemo’s diaries, Clemo’s published works and an unpublished poem written by Causley to mark Clemo’s wedding.

2. Rob Smith (University of Exeter): ‘The Hopeful Believer: Causley, Faith  and Seeing’

Through a close reading of ‘A Local Haunting’ and ‘Demolition Order’, this paper will examine will and faith in Causley’s work. Causley doesn’t so much ‘negotiate’ the border areas around agnosticism as address them directly, facing up to and perhaps even embracing these junctures between observation and spiritual awareness as a primary mode of analysis. This paper will attempt to read Causley as a thoroughgoing hopeful believer, positioning him therefore closer to poets like Jack Clemo.

3. Jim Kelly (University of Exeter): ‘Causley’s Haunted Launceston: Locating a Gothic Childhood’

Causley’s poems and ballads deal with both literal and figurative hauntings, often figuring childhood as leaving psychic traces on the later poetic self, and children as particularly receptive to haunting figures. His body of work is filled with traces of local superstitions and traces of an oral, communal tradition. Into this Causley brought an interest in lyric subjectivity, autobiographical introspection, and uncanny projection. For Causley, childhood mystery could easily slide into unsettling haunting, and his work combines folk motifs with modern psychological concerns gleaned from, among others, poets such as Louis MacNeice. The Cornish landscape and Cornish locality of his childhood is rendered mysterious and gothic in Causley’s work, with his poetry often investing in what might be termed a Cornish Gothic: a variant of Gothic literature connected to folk superstition, local rites, and oral tales. This paper will look at a number of Causley’s poems to consider whether Cornish Gothic might be a useful hermeneutic phrase when approaching Causley, and to consider whether his work might be re-read within wider traditions of folk-horror within the post-War British literary scene.

**Panel 2: Facing East: Causley in the Wider World**

Mike Cooper (Independent Scholar): ‘A spatter of scarlet poppies: Causley  and the Great War’

This paper will discuss the impact of the Great War on Causley, as a child, family member and adolescent/student; as a resident of Launceston; as a soldier of the Second World War; and, of course most importantly as a poet. By tracing these influences through family and local connections, and through Causley’s own reading of poetry from the 1914-18 conflict, we will re-consider his poetic themes, form, tones, and voice, with particular reference to two poems from the Great War, and two by Causley himself.

2. Laurence Green (Independent Scholar): ‘Charles Causley, Ira Levin, Selina  Wadge, and Dr Seuss’

Causley’s sonnet ‘Infant Song’ (1967) is one of his most disturbing poems. This paper examines the background and influences that prompted its writing, including Hollywood, Selina Wadge, last woman hanged in Cornwall (for infanticide), and more surprisingly perhaps, the good Dr Seuss of La Jolla, San Diego. The common thread joining these disparate characters reflects Causley’s vast interests in both local and international culture and events.  The poem that emerges reveals Causley’s humour, irony and compassion.

3. John Hurst (formerly Asst Director Continuing Education [ret’d]: University of Exeter): ‘Charles Causley’s Wider World’

‘There is a sense in which every poem I’ve written has been a Launceston poem […] My home town is Launceston … on the border of Cornwall… I’ve always felt like someone who lives in a border town. My eyes have always east towards London than west towards the Isles of Scilly.’

There is an obvious danger that Causley might be seen as an essentially provincial and parochial writer – and some critics have been tempted to see him in this light. Yet Causley served throughout WW2 in the Royal Navy, which brought him both loss and vivid, new sensations; his adult life was marked by extensive travel in Europe, the East, Australia, and Canada. The argument of this paper is that the singular strength and character of his work lies in the dialectic between his deep local rootedness and his continual and ever varying experience of the wider world.

**Panel 3: Influence and Legacy**

1. Alan Kent (Open University): ‘Celticity, Mystery and Poetry: The Theatre Works of Charles Causley’

In this paper, I propose an examination of Causley's theatre works,

following my extensive examination of the University of Exeter archive

and recent edited collection. I will present a consideration of

Causley's work in the context of wider British post-war theatre, as

well as a detailed look at how Causley's work may be seen as a

continuation of the classic medieval canon in Cornwall. Works examined

will include his earliest plays, his interest in mystery play culture, and

his liaison with Kneehigh Theatre as well as his operatic endeavours.

Comparison will also be made between his theatre works and the rest of

his poetic output. I aim to show that his theatrical output has been

neglected in Causley studies and that his verse drama is comparable to

the quality of his other poetry.

1. Christine Faunch (University of Exeter Special Collections) and Charlotte Berry (Alfred Gillet Trust): ‘Discovering Charles: curatorial reflections on the papers of Charles Causley at the University of Exeter’

The University of Exeter has a long and fruitful collaboration with Charles Causley, dating back to the purchase of a small batch of literary papers with the aid of the Arts Council in 1970 and a year he spent at the University in which he worked on his *Collected* Poems, published in 1975. In 1986 Causley donated his literary papers to date to the Library and bequeathed the remainder of his books and manuscripts in 2003, along with those of Frances Bellerby. This presentation explores the curatorial work ongoing behind the scenes of Special Collections to make Causley’s archive available to researchers, both scholarly and otherwise. Charlotte will outline the history of Causley’s long-standing associations with the University and the history of the Causley archive. She will also discuss the project to bring the remainder of the collection to Exeter and the curatorial processes involved in sorting, re-arranging and cataloguing the archive between 2005-2006. Christine will address the subsequent project to catalogue the personal papers and the broader project to widen access to the literary papers in Special Collections. She will consider the significance and interconnectedness of Causley’s collections alongside the other literary papers held by the University.

1. Charles Causley – Poet-in-Residence – Alyson Hallett  (Causley Trust Writer-in-Residence) and students from Falmouth University

As part of the work towards this symposium, Alyson ran three workshops with Falmouth writing students, one at Penryn Campus, and two at Cyprus Well itself. The students wrote in response to a series of exercises set by Alyson, which asked them to engage with the poetry, the house, and the surrounding area of Cyprus Well, focusing on specific objects once belonging to Causley, and/or found objects on a short walk to the River Kensey. This work is also viewable on the symposium website and a selection of it is being published in *With*, the journal of writing published twice yearly by the English and Writing programmes, in the School of Writing and Journalism, Falmouth University. Alyson will also read her work and offer thoughts on the experience of writing and living in Charles Causley’s house.

**Biographies**

**Berry, Charlotte -** Charlotte was the first full time Archivist at Special Collections, University of Exeter, 2003-2007 and is currently Head of Collections at the Alfred Gillett Trust. She has specialisms in literary and publishing archives and wrote her PhD thesis at the University of Edinburgh on British translations of Nordic children’s literature.

**Cooper, Mike -** Mike Cooper grew up in America, graduating high school in Manhattan with Frank McCourt (*Angela’s Ashes*) as one of his teachers. Mike first encountered Charles Causley as an undergraduate at Exeter University in the 1970s, when Causley was poet-in-residence. He regularly used the poet’s work in his school and college teaching career in England, corresponding occasionally with Causley up to the 1990s. Mike now works freelance, writes for the education press, and is currently publishing a series of articles on Causley’s war poetry for the Causley Society’s Newsletter.

**Carney, Lucy** – is in her first year of the BA (Hons) Creative Writing degree here at Falmouth University.

**Cave, Sarah** – is in her second year of the BA (Hons) English with Creative Writing degree at Falmouth University.

**Darke, Jane –** Jane lives on, paints, films and writes about the North Cornwall coast, and has a special fondness for the littoral zone, that special moment and place between high and low tide. Her work has been broadcast, exhibited and shown widely, and she is a highly visible figure in relation to Cornwall and contemporary arts, as a practitioner, and as one who is dedicated still, as she once said, to ‘pulling up people short in front of LIFE.’ Her current project on the life of Causley, with artist Andrew Tebbs, is their second collaboration, following their film ‘About the Land’ (Boatshed Films) which screened at the Charles Causley Festival this year; both further develop Jane’s own fascination with Cornwall, its landscape, people and stories.

**Faunch, Christine** - Christine took over from Charlotte as Archivist at the University in 2007 and is now Head of Heritage Collections on the Streatham Campus. She was responsible for the first online archive catalogue at the University and is former Chair of the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts (GLAM) Working Party to create guidelines for cataloguing literary papers (available from the GLAM website).

**Green, Laurence –** Laurence is a retired teacher and Westcountry historian who gained an MA in Anglo-American literary relations from Exeter University. He is the author of *All Cornwall Thunders at My Door* (Cornovia Press, 2013) the first full biography of Causley, commended by Sir Andrew Motion as "clear, sympathetic, appreciative and shrewd." He has also written two collections of ghost stories, a novel, and a biography of his grandfather who survived the Great War and the Great Escape from Stalag Luft III in 1944.

**Hallett, Alyson –** Alyson is the current Charles Causley poet-in-residence. Her latest book of poems is *Suddenly Everything* (Poetry Salzburg) and in 2015 she will be publishing a pamphlet of poems from the residency with Atlantic Press.  Alyson has a practice-based PhD in poetry, her research area being Geographical Intimacy. Collaboration is also been an important part of her working practice. One of her poems has been carved into Milsom Street pavement in Bath by letter carver Alec Peever and there is an installation of granite boulders with words carved into them by sculptor David Paton here on the Falmouth campus.  Alyson has also published short stories and written drama for Radio 4 and Sky Television. More details of her work can be found at: [www.thestonelibrary.com](http://www.thestonelibrary.com)

**Hurst, John –** now retired, formerly Deputy Director of Continuing Education at University of Exeter, John is well-known for his tireless work for the Charles Causley Trust, as one of their trustees.. He was one of the contributors to Michael Hanke’s collection of critical essays on Causley, *Through the Granite Kingdom* (2012), a major intervention in scholarship on Causley; he also undertook the initial study of the Causley archive.

**Kelly, James –** Jim is Lecturer in English, University of Exeter since 2012, and his research interests include the Romantic period, amongst other areas, with a particular reference to Irish and Scottish writing. Prior to teaching at Exeter, he won a post-doctoral fellowship in 2006 at University College Dublin, and has since taught at the National University of Ireland, and University of Sheffield. Jim is author of *Charles Maturin: Authorship, authenticity, and the nation* (Dublin 2011) and editor of *Ireland and Romanticism* (London 2011). He is interested in regional and national variations of the Gothic in literature, and has written a number of essays in this area.

**Kent, Alan M** - Dr Alan M. Kent is Lecturer in Literature for the Open University in the South West of Britain, and Visiting Fellow in Celtic Studies at

the University of Coruña. He has published extensively on Causley,

Cornish Literature and Anglo-Cornish Literature, and has just published, as editor, a collection of new Cornish writing, *Wave Hub* (Francis Boutle, 2014).

**Patten, Brian –** the famous anthology published by Patten, Henri and McGough as the Liverpool Poets, *The Mersey Sound* (1967) remains one of the most important collections to hit the poetry scene in the 20thcentury and is now in Penguin Modern Classics. Arguably, this anthology returned poetry to the people, some decades after high Modernism removed it into the esoteric realm! Like Causley himself, Patten is a master of rhythm, and uses it to powerful effect in poetry for both children and adults; he also edits anthologies, is widely translated, is equally at home being serious and/or absurd. In every sense, he is an excellent choice to round off a day of celebration of Causley’s legacies.

**Purnell, Sarah** – MA Professional Writing at Falmouth University

**Tebbs, Andrew -** a freelance artist and filmmaker based in Derbyshire, Andrew has years of experience in the arts, and in enabling participation by many in the creative process. Not only that, his work is informed by the sharing of technical skills, so that others can develop their creativity. Identity and place, community and belonging are themes important to Andrew. The piece he and Jane will discuss today is their second collaboration, and collaboration is really a term that sums up his work and creed. For more information, pictures and projects go to: <http://www.andrewtebbs.com>

**Smith, Rob -**  Rob Magnuson Smith is a novelist, short story writer and investigative journalist. His debut novel *The Gravedigger* (UNO Press, 2011) won the William Faulkner award, and will be followed by *Scorper* (Granta) in 2015. His short fiction has most recently appeared in the *Guardian*. A dual citizen of the US and the UK, Rob teaches English and Creative Writing at the University of Exeter’s Penryn campus in Cornwall.

**Thompson, Luke –** Luke is a research student in the Department of English at University of Exeter, the subject of his doctorate being Cornish poet Jack Clemo. Luke recently published a piece on Clemo in the prestigious journal *Archipelago Nine* (Clutag Press), while his research has uncovered previously unpublished poetry by Clemo. One of these was presented in *PN Review* earlier this year. Luke also worked with the Wheal Martyn Park Museum to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Clemo’s death, and has edited a new collection of Clemo’s work for Enitharmon.

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**Dr Kym Martindale and Professor Jason Whittaker**