



CHARLES CAUSLEY AND THE CAUSLEY TRUST

Charles Causley (1917 to 2003) is recognised as one of the finest 20th Century English poets. He lived nearly all his life in Launceston in Cornwall following wartime service in the Royal Navy but did travel abroad on residencies including to Canada and Australia. Causley received the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 1967 and was made a CBE in 1986. He died on 4th November 2003, aged 86, and is buried in St Thomas Churchyard, Launceston. In 2017 there were many celebrations of the Centenary of his birth, culminating in a December visit from Dr Rowan Williams which finished with him reciting “Eden Rock” at Causley's grave. Causley's “Collected Poems, 1951 to 2000” and a new edition of “Collected Poems for Children” are currently in print. There is a short biography by Malcolm Wright (2013), available from the Trust, and a fuller biography by Laurence Green, “All Cornwall Thunders at my Door” (2013, Cornovia Press).

Just prior to the Poet's death, the Charles Causley Trust was established to keep the work and legacy of the Poet in the public eye. Since 2007, a main activity has been the rescue and preservation of No.2 Cyprus Well, Launceston – Causley's home for 50 years. The Trust now fully owns the House and a major capital project, largely funded by the Arts Council and Cornwall Council, was completed in July 2014 with an official opening by Sir Andrew Motion. The Trust became a registered charity in 2004 (No.1152107) as well as a Limited Company in 2012(No.08239130).

The Arts Council, with other partners, has also supported two revenue projects including the “Spark to Flame” project lasting 20 months until April 2017 which supported a full-time officer (Jen McDerra) as well as Writers in Residence, poetry competitions and a range of events both locally and nationally.

Just before Christmas 2017, the Trust was delighted to receive approval for a two-year project from the Arts Council, named “Fuelling the Flame”- to begin in February 2018 and with major support from Cornwall Council, Launceston Town Council, Literature Works(SW) and Plymouth University. This will enable the restoration of a Trust staff, the continuation of Writers in Residence, poetry competitions, publications, a Symposium and a wide range of other poetry/literary based activities.

Prior to 2005 there was a separate Charles Causley Society which organised activities and produced a twice-yearly Journal now entitled “St Thomas Water”. The Society merged with the Trust in January 2015. Another major move currently being made, and consequent upon the successful Arts Council bid, is the merger of the Causley Festival (annually in June) in to the Trust – with the proposed new Trust staff also supporting the Festival. Membership of the Trust is open to all for a modest subscription and members are entitled to vote at the Trust AGM.

The current Patrons of the Trust are Lord Tyler, Sir Andrew Motion and Patrick Gale. There are 10 current Trustees – David Fryer (Chairman), Dr Malcolm Wright (Secretary), Dr Barry Helme (Treasurer), Fiona Colville, Linda Emmett, John Hurst, Anna Maria Murphy, Rita Skinner, Kent Stanton and Dr Ian Tunbridge OBE. There are also two Honorary Trustees – Les Baker and Professor Ronald Tamplin.

The Trust is now looking forward to building on the excitement and activities of the Centenary Year and working with both established and new partners as well as newly appointed staff. The Trust does not intend to rest on its laurels but will endeavour to reach out to a wide audience across Cornwall and beyond, in partnership with others, in the promotion of Causley's legacy and literature and poetry in general.