

**'Poets in their Place': A look at the hugely appealing poetry of Philip Larkin and Charles Causley, in relation to their life, location and times.**



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A study morning with  
**Dr Richard Moore**  
Friday, 3 May 2019  
from 10-1 p.m.

William Elder Building,  
56-58, Castlegate, Berwick,  
TD15 1JT

This session will cover the life and works of two regional poets whose English identity is bound up with their geographical location. Causley's popularity is especially associated with Bodmin Moor and the Cornish sea-coast, as, for instance, in the late poem *Eden Rock*.

Larkin is famous for accuracy about places, emotions, and relationships, and for "lowered sights and diminished expectations". Nonetheless, there is more to him than his public persona of the no-nonsense, solitary Englishman, and on this study morning we shall try to get to the heart of his – and Causley's - mystery. Both poets are very much regional writers, though, as with all great art, the particular has aspects of the universal and the time-bound of the timeless.

Charles Stanley Causley, (24 August 1917 – 4 November 2003) was a Cornish poet, schoolmaster and writer, his work being noted for its simplicity and directness and for its associations with folklore, especially when linked to his native county. Causley was born at Launceston in Cornwall and was educated there and at a teacher training college in Peterborough. His father died in 1924 from long-standing war injuries. Largely because of this, Causley had to leave school at 15 to earn money for the family, working as an office boy during his early years. This and his subsequent career in the Royal Navy had a big impact on his poetry.

In studying Causley we shall also look at his county, with its history of smugglers, wreckers and pirates. We shall also examine poems such as "Eden Rock", an elegiac reflection on childhood, family and mortality, of which there is a recording on the Poetry Archive website. This presents Causley himself reading it aloud, shortly before his death. Perhaps because of a widespread perception of Causley as a poetic outsider, academia has paid less attention to his work than it warrants.

Larkin (9<sup>th</sup> August 1922 – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1985) also eschewed the limelight but is much better known. After graduating from Oxford in 1943 with a first in English language and literature, he became a librarian, working for thirty years with distinction at the Brynmor Jones Library at the University of Hull. Although Larkin was undoubtedly of a melancholy temperament, in the study morning we shall try to find a wider range to his moods and achievement. Looking at some of his most famous pieces such as *An Arundel Tomb*, *The Whitsun Weddings* and *Here*, we shall compare and contrast him with Causley, examining what each thought of English life, the English countryside, English traditions and the poet's craft.

**The cost of the lecture is £9, including refreshments.**

**All are welcome and no previous knowledge is assumed.**

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(*Larkin and Causley*)

