

Editor's Introduction

Patrick Quinn

This new journal has its origins in the two Robert Graves centenary conferences held in Oxford and Palma last year. With the organisation of the Robert Graves Society, the executive committee felt it necessary to have a literary organ to publicise its activities.

Now, for the last nine years, I have been editing *Focus on Robert Graves and His Contemporaries*, and the last three I have co-edited the journal with my former colleague at the University of Maryland's University College, Richard Schumaker. When the centenary conference organising became rather fraught, I asked Richard if he would shoulder the lion's share of the journal's production. Richard was willing, and I turned my attention elsewhere. At the conclusion of the conference activities, I felt that it was logical that *Focus* would become the organ of the Graves Society. Richard had other ideas, and as a result, we reached a compromise which seems in retrospect, almost enlightened. Richard will continue to edit *Focus*, but the journal will concentrate more on the literature of the Great War and Modernism whereas *Gravesiana* will be dedicated to the works of Robert Graves and those who were directly in contact with him or influenced by him.

This first issue of *Gravesiana*, demonstrates how much scholarly interest has been generated by the centenary conferences. Further, it serves as an introduction to the Robert Graves Society and the various projects associated with the new organisation. Throughout this first issue, you will discover information about the Society, the St. John's College Robert Graves Trust, and various delights on offer through society membership.

Gravesiana, however, is first and foremost a forum for scholarly articles concerning the writings of Robert Graves. In every issue the editorial staff guarantee to bring to its readers high quality articles and essays by the most original and interesting academics and professional writers in the literary field. This issue should confirm this promise. Miranda Seymour, Graves' biographer, offers a fine article on the contentious issue of Graves' and Laura Riding's literary relationship. John Presley's fascinating article on Graves' *The Owl* offers insights into the often overlooked journal which Graves edited just after the Great War. Andrew Painter's essay examines Graves' use of metaphor in his early

poetry and shows Graves' eccentric, and often contradictory stances, on other writers. The essay will no doubt generate some critical comments from scholars studying Graves' attitudes towards his peers. Hyam Maccoby looks at the influence Joshua Podro had on Graves between the writing of *King Jesus* and the lengthy *Nazarene Gospel Restored* while Anne Powell compares the war writings of Graves and Charles Sorley, whose centenary passed by without notice last year.

Gravesiana will also feature a regular section for biographical articles and sketches about Graves. This edition contains a number of reflections by people who have been involved with Graves and his family. Joan Fiol writes from Majorca about how Graves was accepted by the locals of Deya when he first arrived and how his presence helped change the character of the village forever. Catharine Wells' glimpse of the Graves' children in the 1930s presents a unique insight in to his family life while he was living with Laura Riding in Spain. Finally, Michel Pharand, takes a look at the relationship between the founder of *Georgian Poetry*, Eddie Marsh and the youthful Robert Graves.

The Review Section offers detailed critical discussion of two new biographies which have appeared in the last twelve months about Robert Graves as well as the first four volumes of the Carcanet Robert Graves Programme. Harvey Sarnier's bibliography is examined closely by a fellow collector, and the review of Adrian Gregory's *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919-1946* makes observations on the historical construction of the image of the Great War.

Throughout the journal, we hope to offer a few poems, letters to the editors, news briefs, information about the Robert Graves web-site, and updates on Society & Trust news. This issue, for example, contains a nostalgic look back at those heady, warm days and evenings in Oxford last August and Palma in November, when over 150 people met to enjoy Robert Graves and discovered so much more. Finally, Stephen Pike confronts the issue of literary piracy in an open letter to members of the Society.

Finally, let me convey my thanks to my new editorial and production staff. No academic journal can get off the ground these days without generous financial and human support. Nene College has come up with a very substantial starting-up grant so that *Gravesiana* could see the light of day. This grant has enabled an idea to become a reality. But money isn't everything! When I and thought of this project in the abstract, two people were there to bring it to life: William Graves, the

fifth business behind all things Gravesian; and Ian Firla, my computer whiz and right-hand man. Without these two people, nothing would have happened. But once the ball was started rolling, the support was fantastic. Patrick McGuinness and John Presley agreed to be my assistant editors, the ever faithful and well-travelled Michel Pharand took the responsibility of doing a feature article every issue, and Caroline Zilboorg, accepted the offer I told her she couldn't refuse and became the Reviews Editor. Everyone I approached to join the editorial advisory board happily agreed to vet incoming manuscripts, so I am happy to welcome Dunstan, Steve, Ian, the Bob's, Frank and Alice, the John's, and Joan to the team!

I hope *Gravesiana* is up to your expectations and that you will subscribe to what I hope will become an integral part of Gravesian studies. At this developmental stage, I welcome all suggestions for the journal's improvement. Feel free to contact me with ideas and thoughts about matters Gravesian.