

## Graves Society News and Information

Ian Firla

### Announcement for All Members of the Robert Graves Society

There will be a general election of new officers for the Society on Friday, 4 September 1998 at 6.30pm in Hulme Hall. The election will be open to all paid up members of the Society, and the election will be for the Society President, Vice-President (American Branch) and Vice-President (European Branch). There will also be elections for a new post of Secretary-Treasurer.

The major task of the new officers will be the writing of a Constitution for the Society and the organisation of continuing financial support for the publication of *Gravesiana* and international conferences.

*Patrick Quinn, President of the Robert Graves Society*

### Robert Graves and *The White Goddess*:

A FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

Venue            **The University of Manchester**

Dates            **September 3-5, 1998**

1998 is the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The White Goddess*, Robert Graves' celebrated 'historical grammar of poetic myth'—a text now widely recognised as seminal in the formation of modern literary culture.

The Robert Graves Society in co-operation with *Gravesiana*, the journal of the Robert Graves Society, The Robert Graves Trust, the University of Manchester and Carcanet Press wishes to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of *The White Goddess* with a major international conference to be held at the University of Manchester from September 3-5, 1998.

The conference will see to develop a series of important themes arising out of *The White Goddess* and its reception from 1948 to the present day, including:

- the origins and constructions of the text
- the anthropological and historical roots of Graves' key ideas for

the text

- the influence of *The White Goddess* on subsequent generations of writers and poets
- its value as a work of scholarship and imagination
- its impact on contemporary feminism and women's studies
- its place in modern interpretations of myth and ritual

All proposal for seminar topics and papers are being considered.

Proposal should be received by 1 July 1998. Proposals should be less than 500 words in length. Papers delivered at the conference will be considered for publication.

## Conference Update

At the beginning of last summer, several of us convened to begin planning a conference to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The White Goddess*. During this meeting it was decided that we would each set out and attempt to find a venue suitable for the occasion. We set ourselves a deadline to complete this task: September, 1997.

Patrick Quinn, with the help of Michael Schmidt and Penny Jones of Carcanet Press, decided that Manchester, as the home of the co-sponsoring Press, seemed as good a location as any. Penny scouted the University and drawing upon memories of her undergraduate experiences thought that Hulme Hall might serve well. A small Gravesian entourage met with the conference organisers at Hulme Hall and were, in short order, convinced Penny's hunch had been right.

September 1997 came and Manchester and Hulme Hall were agreed upon. Promptly, the hardest parts of any conference planning were upon us. The first step was to recruit the speakers, poets and sponsors whose involvement would come to shape the proceedings. Grevel Lindop, to our great relief, accepted the task of opening the conference with a talk on his experiences as *The Book's* most recent editor. A number of poets were contacted and are now considering our offer of being readers of both scholarly works as well as poetry in an effort to integrate the academic side of the conference with its more performative and entertaining aspects. Our old collaborator from the Mallorca conference of 1995, Patrick Villa, has extended an offer to lead up the thrust for funding from the British Council to assist in the recruitment of scholars from across Europe. Michael Schmidt and Patrick Quinn have begun applying to various funding councils in the United

Kingdom for assistance whilst our American officers are doing the same there. The hubris from which conferences emerge, in other words, seems suitably ordered.

In the next few weeks we will be finalising figures for conference fees, residential costs and so forth. To receive further conference information please write to us either via email, post or fax:

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***We look to receiving your proposals and to seeing you in Manchester!***