



*Honor Wyatt b. Feb 26 1910; d. 23 Oct 1998*

With the passing of Honor Wyatt, we have lost one of the last links to the Laura Riding and Robert Graves pre-war set in Deya. Many readers will recall Honor's remarkable performance at the Robert Graves Centenary Conference at St John's College, Oxford in 1995. Deaf and half-blind, she held us spell-bound as she regaled us with a well-crafted talk about the life in Robert and Laura's newly-built Canellun, the friends, the tensions, the laughs and the near-suicidal moments. The cast of characters included the poets James Reeves and Norman Cameron; the sculptor Len Lye; the painter John Aldridge; Tom Matthews, later editor of *Time Magazine*; Jacob Brownowski, mathematician, philosopher and author of *The Ascent Of Man*; Eirlys Roberts, founder of the Consumer Association and *Which* magazine; and Karl Goldschmidt, Graves and Riding's assistant.

Honor came to the island in 1933, with her then husband Gordon Glover. She was working as a freelance correspondent, sending back copy to England on local fiestas, charcoal burners, bus rides to Palma, and the like. These pieces surely deserve to be republished. Honor and Gordon unwittingly rented Can Pabo, which Laura and Robert were subleasing; they had recently vacated it when they moved into Canellun. Gordon put his big toe through a sheet, which was an excuse to visit the landlords, and a close friendship blossomed from there. At the time, Robert was working on *I, Claudius*, and Mary Burtonwood (wife of George Ellidge) was typing for him.

Honor looms large in the Robert Graves diary, which he began two years later. In it we read of the couple's second visit to the island in 1935, at Robert and Laura's invitation, with baby Julian; of the gramophone records she was asked to bring from England; of the preparations for their arrival (they stayed in the Viña Vieja); of how the baby was showed off to the village; of the birthday party for Gordon; of their initial marital difficulties; of the bangles Robert gave to Honor; of lending her the Posada, rent-free, for a year; of her work on her book *The Heathens* and Laura and Robert's editorial help; of how Laura tried to dissuade her of her friendship with George Ellidge; and so much else.

Although Honor's marriage with Gordon Glover was not entirely satisfactory, a second child, Prue, was born in 1939. Honor and Gordon later divorced and she married George Ellidge, with whom she had a child, Robert. In 1950, having lived with Honor since the early 1940's, George sadly contracted Multiple Sclerosis. He died in Italy in 1969, with Honor by his side.

For a while, she worked at the London Press Exchange, and when, in 1940, Robert and Laura's friend Mary Sommerville began the BBC Schools Broadcasting Services in Bristol, Honor was invited to collaborate and began her celebrated series of script writing for that organisation. This she enjoyed and soon, as a broadcaster herself, she became a household name, especially for her contributions to *Woman's Hour*.

After the Graves-Riding break-up, Honor continued to be friends with both. She and her family were frequent visitors to Deya, while at the same time she remained fiercely loyal to Laura. But she was not in

awe of either of them, something that came through so wonderfully whenever she told her version of the happenings at Canellun with her unique, dry wit.

William Graves