

The Robert Graves Society promotes interest in and research on the life and work of Robert Graves (1895–1985), poet, classical scholar, novelist, and critic, who was one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. He was author of some 140 books of poetry, fiction, biography, criticism, anthropology, social history, mythology, biblical studies, translation and children's books. He is perhaps best known for his early autobiography and account of the First World War *Goodbye to All That* (1929), the novels *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God* (1934–35), his complex study of poetry and mythology *The White Goddess* (1948), and *The Greek Myths* (1955).

Robert Graves was born in Wimbledon, South-West London. His father, Alfred Perceval Graves, was a school inspector and writer involved in the Irish Literary Revival; his mother, Amalie von Ranke, was a great-niece of the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1866). Graves was educated at Charterhouse, and earned a B.Litt. at St John's College, Oxford, after his return from the First World War, in which he served alongside Siegfried Sassoon. In 1929 he moved to Mallorca with the American poet Laura Riding. Forced out by the Spanish Civil War and Second World War, he returned to Mallorca in 1946 with his second wife Beryl.

Graves wrote in *The White Goddess* that 'poetry has been my ruling passion' but that 'prose has been my livelihood'. His first volume of poems appeared in 1916; in the five decades that followed he consolidated his reputation as one of



the finest poets writing in English, whose influence has been far-reaching and profound: in 1962 W.H. Auden called him 'England's greatest living poet'. He was also a war poet: in 1985 he was one of only 16 poets commemorated in a memorial in Westminster Abbey to the Great War poets, and was the only one of them still alive at that time. Love poet, war poet, novelist, mythographer – Graves lived many lives in one lifetime. A prolific letter writer, he corresponded with many of the other leading figures of the twentieth century. As a public figure, his controversial views on literature, politics and religion always generated lively debate.

Robert Graves died in Mallorca on 7 December 1985, aged 90, and is buried overlooking the Mediterranean in the hilltop churchyard at Deià, the Mallorcan village he had made his home.



The Robert Graves Society was launched in 1995 to mark Robert Graves's Centenary. The first President of the Society was Professor Patrick Quinn. Professor Dunstan Ward was President 2000–2010, and Dr Fran Brearton was elected President in July 2010. The first Honorary President of the Society was Beryl Graves. She was succeeded by the eminent political scientist and anthropologist Sally Chilver, who is Robert

Graves's niece. The Honorary Vice-President is Professor John Kelly, of St John's College, Oxford

The Society's membership of experts and interested lay people forms the core of an international research community which includes literary scholars, historians, classicists, archaeologists, biblical scholars, bibliographers, editors, writers and translators, and general readers of Graves's published works.

The Robert Graves Society holds biennial conferences on aspects of Robert Graves's life and work. The conferences are held alternately in Mallorca in co-operation with the Fundació Robert Graves and University of the Balearic Islands, and at St John's College, Oxford, home of the St John's College Robert Graves Trust. The Society also organises other events such as joint conferences with other institutions, one day symposia, and lunches.

Gravesiana, the Journal of the Robert Graves Society, is a peer-reviewed journal which is dedicated to making available scholarly articles concerning Robert Graves and members of his circle. The journal also contains reviews of the latest studies about Graves or related publications. For further information see: www.robertgraves.org

Twenty-five years after his death, interest in Graves's life and work continues to increase. His library and papers were bequeathed to St John's College, Oxford; his *Complete Poems* appeared as a Penguin Classic in 2003; and his home Ca n'Alluny (*La Casa de Robert Graves*) has been opened to the public.

JOINING THE SOCIETY: RATES (DUES)

Annual or life membership subscriptions are payable as below. Annual subscriptions run from 6 April each year. Payment of these after 1 January in any year provides membership to 5 April of the following year. Subscriptions include electronic access to *Gravesiana*.

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