Clive James in Mildura
The Mildura Writers’ Festival, held over a weekend in late July, consolidated its reputation as one of Australia’s most pleasurable literary festivals. When, we wonder, will tout Melbourne and Sydney realise how good it is, and make the journey. Clive James opened the festival with a memorable lecture on questions of celebrity and the poetry of Philip Hodgins. We have much pleasure in publishing his 2003 La Trobe University/Australian Book Review Annual Lecture in this issue.

Brisbane Highlights
The 2003 Brisbane Writers’ Festival (October 1 to 5) looks promising, too. The theme is the ubiquitous ‘Place’. Guests will include Peter Porter, Rachel Cusk, David Marr, John Marsden, Elliot Perlman and Eva Sallis. For more details go to www.brisbanewritersfestival.com.au.

Patrick McCaughey at fortyfive downstairs
If you want to know what happened to Picasso’s Weeping Woman, or the secrets of the Kremlin on St Kilda Road, or what it was like dealing with Australian artists, first you should read Patrick McCaughey’s memoir, The Bright Shapes and the True Names (just published by Text), then you should buy a ticket to our next ABR Forum, on September 25, when Patrick McCaughey, a regular contributor to ABR, will be in conversation with its Editor, Peter Rose. Full details appear on page 29. ABR subscribers, as always, are entitled to a discount.

Get out Your White Gloves
Garden history enthusiasts are invited to a White Gloves evening at the National Library of Australia on October 3, when they will be able to hold as well as see some of the library’s abundant collection. Bookings are essential: (02) 6262 1698, or e-mail friends@nla.gov.au.

Writers Wanted to Win Prizes
Aspiring writers are invited to enter the Boroondara Literary Awards. To be in the running for the first prize of $2000 in the Open Short Story Award category, entries should be between 2000 and 3000 words. The Boroondara Literary Awards also reward young writers who live, work or go to school in Boroondara. Poems or prose pieces on any subject are invited for the Young Writers Awards category. The closing date is September 19. For further information and an entry form, visit www.boroondara.vic.gov.au, e-mail bla@boroondara.vic.gov.au or call the City of Boroondara on (03) 9278 4444.

Whose Event?
The Australian Centre for Youth Literature, as part of its popular ‘Booktalkers for Adults’ series, will be hosting ‘Absolutely Joke! Books That Make You Laugh’ on October 14 at the Vision Australia Complex in Kooyong. It will feature Nick Earls, Adam Ford, and James Moloney. On October 28 the Centre will present ‘Whose Story? Whose Place? Whose Voice?’ at The Age Library, Broadmeadows. Authors Isobelle Carmody, Scott Gardner and Jim Schembri will be joined by Age journalists John Kilner and Linda Pearce. For details and bookings, contact the ACYL on (03) 8664 7014.

Mentoring in Darwin
The Northern Territory Writers’ Centre is calling for applications from young and emerging Territory writers for the first stage of its 2003–04 mentorship programme. The aim is to provide professional development for five writers. Jared Thomas, Stephen Gray and Kim Caraher are the appointed mentors. Entries close on September 26. Information can be found at www.ntwriters.com.au; otherwise, e-mail ntwriter@octa4.net.au.

Insecurity at Griffith
Quarterlies don’t have the easiest time in the hectic new millennium, but here’s a new one that is worth a look: the Griffith Review, which is published by Griffith University in association with ABC Books. The theme of the first issue is ‘Insecurity in the New World Order’. Contributors include John Birmingham, Frank Moorhouse, Irris Makler, Chalmers Johnson and the ABC’s own Geraldine Doogue and Norman Swan. An annual subscription costs $66. For details, write to Griffith Review, Griffith University, Kessels Road, Nathan QLD4111.

Highlights of PoeticA
PoeticA, Radio National’s poetry programme, is always worth listening to on a Saturday afternoon, however clement. Coming highlights include programmes devoted to the work of Robert Adamson and Alex Skovron, on September 20 and October 25, respectively.

Welcome and Thanks
Special thanks to the record number of new subscribers who joined us over winter, and to the many existing subscribers who have been faxing us the cover sheet telling us when they received the issue. This information is most useful as we go on monitoring the postal service and endeavouring to reach our subscribers as early in the month as we possibly can.
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Letters

ABR welcomes letters from our readers. Correspondents should note that letters may be edited. Letters and e-mails must reach us by the middle of the current month, and must include a telephone number for verification.

**Santamaria absolved**

Dear Editor,

As one who was both active in the Labor Party at the time of The Split and also a Catholic, I agree with almost everything in Heather Nash’s review of *The Pope’s Battalions* (*ABR*, August 2003). But there are serious omissions.

The most important one is the reviewer’s neglect of a matter of history that is evident early in the book and that goes to the heart of the cause of The Split. This is the now proven fact that B.A. Santamaria aimed to control the ALP, secretly and from the outside, and to promote legislation through a Labor government in keeping with his own religious/political fantasies. Bemused, if not blinded, by his own enthusiasm and self-righteousness, Santamaria was confident that he would be able to do so. *The Pope’s Battalions* makes this clear, and provides firm evidence. This is not the first book to do so, but its early chapters also show how these less-than-realistic aims were the outcome of ideological theories of society that Santamaria absorbed from several different sources during his youth. They crystallised in his heart and mind, despite the impracticality of such dreams in the twentieth century, especially in Australia.

It may be conventional to make near-saints of the deceased, but the book provides evidence that planned, deliberate deception was part of Santamaria’s stock-in-trade. A major example was his premeditated assertions, repeated over several years, that he had no serious interest in politics other than opposing communism. And there are countless individual instances of deliberate deceptions.

These two matters of substance — namely, Santamaria’s far-reaching political ambitions, and his deliberate falsifications — should be prominent in any review of Fitzgerald’s well-researched and valuable book.

Robert Corcoran, Edithvale, Victoria
The subject of this month’s cover is the highly accomplished poet Philip Hodgins, who was born at Katandra West near Shepparton, Victoria, in 1959. He was an observant and prolific writer, interested both in quotidian reality (his descriptions of farming life have a telling and visceral accuracy) and in larger metaphysical issues. His work explores many of the formal resources of poetry, including metre and rhyme.

In 1983 Hodgins learned that he was suffering from chronic myeloid leukaemia, and this illness, along with his experience of being treated for it, became one of the important subjects of his poetry. His work won numerous awards, including the Wesley Michel Wright Prize, the NSW Premier’s Award for Poetry, the Grace Perry Prize, the Prairie Schooner Readers Choice USA Award and the NBC Turnbull Fox Phillips Poetry Prize. He died in Maryborough, Victoria, on 18 August 1995.

Alec Bolton’s 1993 photographic portrait of Philip Hodgins is one of a collection of portraits of Australian authors, including many novelist and poets, taken by Bolton, mostly in the 1980s and early 1990s. The collection comprises approximately 1500 negatives, the majority of which are reproduced on contact sheets. Approximately 275 images have been printed separately.
Contributors

**Patricia Anderson** is the Sydney art critic for *The Australian*. Her book, *Art in Australia: Debates, Dollars and Delusions*, will be published later this year.

**Karen Brooks** is a fantasy author and a senior lecturer in popular culture at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

**Alisa Bunbury** is Curator, Prints and Drawings, at the National Gallery of Victoria.

**Madeleine Byrne** is a journalist who writes regularly on literature and politics.

**Brent Crosswell** played for three AFL clubs in the 1960s and 1970s and has written much journalism. He now lives in Hobart.

**Dianne Dempsey** is a Victorian reviewer.

**Stephen Edgar**’s poetry collections include *Lost in the Foreground*. He lives in Hobart.

**David Gilbey** is Senior Lecturer in English, Charles Sturt University and President of Wagga Wagga Writers Writers.

**Gideon Haigh** is a Melbourne author and journalist.

**Nathan Hollier** is co-editor of *Overland* magazine.

**David Hutchison** is a West Australian reviewer.

**Mark Johnston** is Head of History at Scotch College, Melbourne, and the author of four books. He is currently writing a history of the 7th Australian Division.

**Clive James**’s many collections of essays include *Reliable Essays: The Best of Clive James*. In July 2003 he attended the Mildura Writers’ Festival, where he delivered the 2003 La Trobe University/Australian Book Review Annual Lecture (published in this issue) and received the Philip Hodgins Memorial Medal.

**Stella Lees** is co-author of *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*.

**David McCooy** lectures at Deakin University (Geelong) and has written extensively on Australian autobiography.

**Brian McFarlane**’s *Encyclopedia of British Film* (Methuen/British Film Institute) will be published in Australia in October.

**Michael McGirr** is the author of *Things You Get for Free* and the fiction editor of *Meanjin*.

**Pam Macintyre** is the editor of *Viewpoint: on books for young adults*.

**John Martinkus** is writing a book on Aceh.

**Brian Matthews** is Chair of the International Institutes at Victoria University. His books include *A Fine and Private Place*.

**Justin Oakley** is Director of the Monash University Centre for Human Bioethics, and is the author of Morality and the Emotions and (with Dean Cocking) Virtue Ethics and Professional Roles.

**Mick O’Regan** is presenter of ABC Radio National’s *Media Report* programme.

**Mark Pecl**’s latest book, *The Lowest Rung: Voices of Australian Poverty*, is reviewed in this issue.

**D.T. Potts**, born in New York, came to Australia in 1991 as the Edwin Cuthbert Hall Professor in Middle Eastern Archaeology at the University of Sydney, having previously taught at the Free University of Berlin and the University of Copenhagen.

**David Reeve** has been visiting Indonesia since 1969 as a diplomat, researcher, historian, language teacher and project manager. He coordinates Asian Studies and Indonesian Studies at the University of New South Wales.

**Owen Richardson** is a Melbourne reviewer

**John Rickard** is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at Monash University and the author of *Australia: A Cultural History*.

**Judith Ridge** is a Sydney writer and editor.

**Guy Rundle** is co-editor of *Arena*.

**Peter Steele** has a Personal Chair at the University of Melbourne. His most recent poetry collection is *Invisible Riders*.

**Shirley Walker** is the author of *Roundabout at Bangalow*.

**Rob Watts** is Professor of Social Policy at RMIT University and the author or co-author of a dozen books including *Foundations of the National Welfare State*, *Sociology Australia* and *Discovering Risk*. He is currently finishing a study of state crime in the twentieth century.

**Wendy Were** has taught in the areas of contemporary narrative and theory, women’s studies, cultural studies and professional writing. Since 2002 she has held the position of literature programmer of the Perth International Arts Festival.

**Robyn Williams** has presented *The Science Show* on ABC Radio National for nearly thirty years. He is a visiting professor at the University of New South Wales and a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, as well as of the Australian Academy of Science. His latest book is the novel *2007: A True Story About To Happen*. 