think Council should have been willing to pay for a more thorough Heritage Study in the first place. If my very limited experience of the arcane world of consultants’ reports is anything to go by, you seem to only get as thorough a report as you’re willing to pay for and, if memory serves me correctly, the Greater Wollongong Heritage Study only eventuated because of a measly $10,000 grant!

Joseph Davis

QUOTE OF THE MONTH
Humphrey McQueen - in my view Australia’s greatest historian - has excelled himself in a review of Patrick Kinross’s *Ataturk: The Rebirth of a Nation* published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on April 22nd, 1995.

While sagely pointing out that “today’s concern with Islamic militants, Kurdish revolutionaries, Hellenic revanchists and our own Anzac Legend cannot be understood without an appreciation of Ataturk”, McQueen includes the following delightful paragraph (unfortunately bowdlerised in the Herald’s usual coy employment of the dash for expletives):

“Ataturk could have given Stalin lessons. An appeal against a jail term imposed by his special courts brought not a second hearing, but the executioner. He liquidated key opponents, including a few of his erstwhile best friends. As a personality, Ataturk was as nasty a piece of work as any leader this century. His sex life was like his political style - f____ing anyone who moved until they stopped.”

PUCKEY’S NON-EXISTENT NORTH BEACH SALT WORKS
Some readers will no doubt have noted my scepticism with regard to the likelihood of Courtenay Puckey ever attempting to produce salt in Wollongong.

As I have stated in this journal before, I suspect that what Puckey was trying to distil at his Seafield residence was not salt, but water. And that any salt pro-
duced was just a by-product of this quest and that he would never have had any intention of attempting to produce it in commercial quantities.

Nevertheless, I was almost won over by Brian Roger’s highly entertaining address to the Society last year when he used the existence of some man-made channels cut into the rocks at North Beach as support for the sole piece of existing evidence of Puckey’s putative North Beach Saltworks - one very hazy photograph in the WCC Local Studies Collection inscribed ‘Puckey’s North Beach Saltworks’.

On reading Michael Organ’s excellent edition of Old Pioneer’s Reminiscences of Illawarra (Illawarra Historical Publications, Woonona, 1989, p. 20.) while searching for information on my latest local hero, Patrick Lahiff, I found the following passage:

“Some 56 years ago the late Patrick Lahiff had two salt pans cut out of the peaks of the rocks near where the men’s baths (Wollongong) are now situated, for the purpose of producing a commercial salt. Under the cliffs and close to the Mount Pleasant line was erected a pumping and condensing plant. Years later Mr Puckey, chemist of Wollongong, took over the plant as a chemical laboratory and carried on work there for years.”

This, in my view, explains both the photo in the Local Studies Collection and the cutting in the rocks. I humbly submit, therefore, that there was no Puckey’s North Beach Salt works.

As for the supposed Seaview works, all we have in the way of evidence to suggest their existence is a copy of a sketch by an unidentified artist in the Local Studies Collection along with a handful of in situ artefacts which are as likely to have been used for obtaining fresh water as commercial salt. I personally think it’s time Wollongong City Council took down its misleading Heritage signs from the Puckey’s Estate, but I’d be delighted if someone could prove otherwise. I look forward to some lively debate.
Old Pioneer's only other mention of commercial salt-making in the Illawarra is of "George Brown - the father of the late John Brown of Brownsville...producing a commercial salt on Gooseberry Island [in Lake Illawarra], which salt was used by settlers for salting butter." (p.67) According to Old Pioneer, this occurred "About the year 1830...".

RACHAEL HENNING'S UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Those who attended my address to the 1995 March Meeting of the Society will already know that I abandoned my advertised topic to report on my delight at finding not only that the microfilm of Rachel Henning's letters held by the Mitchell Library contains many unpublished letters from Illawarra but also that many of the other letters also contain much unpublished material about our area.

What is even more astounding is that not a single one of Rachel Henning's letters has been published in full. Some of these letters extend beyond 20 handwritten pages.

Henning's letters are the most fulsome record of nineteenth century rural life in Illawarra and therefore deserve very serious attention.

Once I have gained permission from the Mitchell I will begin to publish my transcription (with detailed historical notes) of all those letters which make reference to Illawarra. I will also begin a serious scholarly edition of Henning's Letters. It's a mammoth project, much bigger than my work on D.H. Lawrence, but I feel I can't not take up the opportunity to work on the second of the two greatest whingeing poms ever to set pen to paper in Illawarra.

Joseph Davis