

REPORT ON MARCH 2004 MEETING

Speaker: Brian Rogers

Topic: Snippets from early Clifton.

Brian this time enlightened the members with Snippets from Clifton. He showed many plans and photographs on an overhead viewer to give us all an overall view of what the village of Clifton once looked like.

Clifton was a small settlement north of Coalcliff which began when Coalcliff Colliery commenced in about 1878. One of the mine ventilation shafts was constructed next to the main road above the Coalcliff Jetty. This air shaft was lined with timber. It eventually collapsed taking with it most of the roadway.

A school was constructed with an adjoining teacher's residence. The only access to this steep site was via a goat track. Because of the seepage from the escarpment and the dampness around the school building a decision was made to construct a new building closer to the village. The old schoolhouse ceased around 1892.

During the 1880s nearly half of the building in the little town were removed for the construction of the Illawarra rail line under the guidance of Alexander Stuart.

The mine manager's residence overlooked Coalcliff Jetty. Perched on an overhanging cliff was a summer house.

It was during the 1880s that a large number of buildings were lost in a major land slip with further land slips occurring in the 1890s.

A Public Hall was constructed with cladding of corrugated iron walls. This building was used for various forms of meetings and entertainment and did not show any financial returns for many years.

The Church of England and the Roman Catholics established churches in the village; both have been moved elsewhere or demolished many years ago.

In 1911 orders were given for the first School of Arts to be demolished to make way for a new building. This building has recently undergone a restoration program.