

Ben Timmins and the School Tuckshop

Not only the teachers were remembered with affection. Ben Timmins, his wife Margaret, and his mother will all hold a place in the heart of every Boys' High student, and a sudden place in their memories when they get hungry.

The Timmins family followed old Tuttle's pie cart at the School on the Hill, catering to the enormous appetites of the young, when Harvey decreed that a tuckshop would be set up in that area known as 'under the arches.' When Ben left school, he helped his mother in the tuckshop until she retired, and then Ben and his wife moved to Waratah in 1934 to establish the tuckshop at the new Boys' High site which, like the new school itself, lacked a few 'mod cons' ... "just an old cubby house with no refrigeration and no electric lights", as Ben put it.

But quality wasn't lacking, and it was for this Ben and Margaret were remembered. When they retired in November 1981, they didn't expect to end their 50 year association with the schools - they are constantly running into students and ex-students they have served from their canteen.

WHEREVER he goes, Ben Timmins is more than likely to run into an old school friend.

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It's hardly surprising. After all, he has been going to school for more than 50 years.

Mr Timmins and his wife Margaret will retire at the end of the current school term as proprietors of the canteen at Waratah High School.

Their retirement will end a long family association with the school canteen business in Newcastle.

However, they do not expect to lose touch completely with the school and its students.

Not surprisingly, considering the many thousands of children who have passed through the school, the couple are frequently meeting students and ex-students they have served in the canteen over the years.

'I've run into them everywhere from here to Queensland,' said Mr Timmins.

Mr Timmins is the second generation of his family to cater to the

appetites of children in the Newcastle area.

His mother, Agnes Timmins, ran the school tuck shop, as it was then termed, when the school was located on The Hill in Newcastle.

After Mr Timmins left school he helped his mother in the tuck shop until she retired, then continued to work with his wife at the school which moved to Waratah in 1933.

Formerly a boys' school, it became co-educational three years ago.

'When I started the tuck shop was just an old cubby house with no refrigeration and no electric lights,' Mr Timmins recalled.

When he retires he will leave a well-equipped canteen which was added to the school about three years ago.

The school's Parents and Citizens committee will appoint a supervisor for the canteen.

Tuck shop, late 70s

