Just like the old days

School reunion a time to reminisce

by SEAN McCONISH

SCHOOL reunions hold a special place in small communities.
Timboon was no exception yesterday, when generations of former students and fond memories filled the hall of Timboon P-12 School.

Victoria's first consolidated school, Timboon P-12, was created in 1956 by the merger of more than a dozen district schools.

They were the days of God Save the Queen and long before health food reached the truck shops.

Yesterday, former students recognised younger versions of themselves and teachers as they closely examined black and white photos pinned to the wall.

But what was clearer than anything was how little the school itself had changed.

One of the original pupils, Adrian Hoffman, spoke out his feelings clearly.

"I was here on the 26th of July 1949," he said. "It's a crying shame what's happening with the buildings. Somebody walked in today and said they had the same curtains."

Four of his own children have passed through the school since then. Former teacher and assistant principal Stuart Godkin taught at the school on three separate occasions between 1965-1969, often leaving for Melbourne but always driven back to the rural township.

"It was a very small community without any snobbery," he said.

At the school's height, close to 2000 students filled classes each day, while 35 buses were parked by 3.30pm.

"It's a good community. Timboon was always regarded as being off the beaten track."

But like others, Mr Godkin, 84, says that could be the reason successive governments have neglected the school.

"They have ignored it for years because it has been regarded as an isolated school."

Western Australian stone-fruit farmer Michelle Wellerman hadn't set foot in the yard since 1973, but found a more faded version of her school.

"I left props when they were just babies. They still wanted hugs and kisses," Ms Wellerman reflected.

ABOVE: Former students Anne and Morag Mclean. BELOW: Reside with Stuart Godkin at the reunion.

Principal Rosalie Moorfield (left) with former teacher Lois Deppeler. BELOW: Adrian Hoffman, Stuart Godkin, Alice Herenden and Mars Godkin at the reunion.

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