

## Jerilderie Court House Constructed 1874



*Jerilderie Courthouse was closed on 1 August 1988.*

*Between 1989 and 2009 the building served as the town's public library.*

Towards 10.00am on Sunday, 9 February 1879, Mrs Devine, wife of Senior Constable Devine, advised Ned Kelly that Roman Catholic Church services were usually held in the Courthouse once a month, and it was customary for her to prepare the altar for Mass to be held at 11.00am that day.

Thinking that it may upset his plans to rob the Bank the following day if the usual procedure was not followed, Ned ordered Dan Kelly, dressed in police uniform, to escort Mrs Devine across the road to the Courthouse and assist her in making the necessary preparations.

Mrs Devine was a regular attendant at Mass, but those who noticed her absence also noticed the 'extra' police across the road at the police barracks, and so they dismissed her absence from the service because of extra household duties that she may have had to perform.

Fortunately for Ned Kelly, a relieving Priest, Fr Kiely, officiated on that day rather than the usual visiting Priest, Fr Slattery, who's usual practice was to go over to the barracks after Mass for a chat with the Devines, and if this had occurred Ned would have had

no alternative but to lock up the popular Priest, which certainly would not have gone unnoticed, and possibly thwarting Ned's plans for the following day.

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Jerilderie was gazetted as a place for holding Court of Petty Sessions on 23 July 1869. Prior to the erection of this purpose-designed courthouse in 1874, courts were held in privately owned buildings as required, and more than likely from 1872 in the Courthouse Hotel which was constructed in that year on the south-west corner of Jerilderie and Bolton Streets.

When originally built, the courthouse was a rectangular brick building with a hipped roof of corrugated iron. In 1889 the building was extended to the west (to the right looking from the main street) to provide a witness room. In the 1920s further extensions were made to include a porch off the Magistrate's room at the rear of the court house, and then further behind it some toilets, conversion of the witness room to an office for the Clerk of Petty Sessions, with an amenities room off it to the rear, and the enclosure of the western section of the front verandah as the new witness room.



*Photograph of Courthouse in 1963, showing section of verandah enclosed.*



*Much of the furniture in the Courthouse prior to its closure, is still housed within the building.*