

The History of the Town Windmill



In March 1908 the Jerilderie Municipal Council purchased a Windmill and installed it by the water pumping station. It was believed that during the winter months at least the windmill would lift sufficient water from the creek into the town water supply tank, and thereby save on fuel costs which in 1907 amounted to £130. The windmill, weighing almost 7 tons was constructed by Steel Wings Windmill Co., of North Sydney. The height of the tower was 80 feet with the diameter of the wheel being 40 feet. It worked a pump 9 inches in diameter with the suction and delivery pipe being 5 inch. The windmill's life was to be short-lived however, because in the Jerilderie Herald and Urana Advertiser of Friday 11 November 1910 the following article appeared:

"About 10 o'clock on Wednesday night the big windmill erected by the local Council near the waterworks, calmly folded itself together and gently laid its huge frame down to rest near the engine shed, and 'though calm and peaceful be its sleep', it seems a most ungenerous thing to do, seeing that the summer is fast approaching, its services were required during the next few months. About 9.30 p.m., Engineer Chapman who was in the engine shed, heard a grating noise, and on going out noticed that the frame was slowly bending about 15 feet from the ground; he tried to throw the machine out of gear, but it had become jammed. Shortly after, it buckled right in, and the huge wheel fell towards the creek, flat on, the frame being twisted in all shapes, though strange to say, the wheel itself was very little damaged. Nevertheless it is a complete wreck, and not likely to be erected again.

The cause of the collapse is thought to be the weight the frame had to carry - about 6 tons or more - and the constant strain on a weak frame was the cause of the trouble. When the mill lurched, one of the guy ropes pulled out near the top, and another pulled the post that it was fastened to out of the ground. For several months past it had been working splendidly and giving every satisfaction, averaging a saving of about £7 a month in wood."

Cr L J Henery

Local Historian

March, 2007