

The bridge at Evelix, on the trunk road between Bonar Bridge and the Mound is to be rebuilt and work on the scheme which includes a diversion of the main road, has just begun. Evelix bridge, narrow, hump-backed and set at a dangerous angle to the road on either side, will not be regretted by motorists and yet the old bridge is a landmark in its way for it was the first bridge to be built on that section of the road between Drumale and Criech, crossing by the Little Ferry in 1810, a hundred and fifty years ago. Before the bridge was built, the river had to be forded; the old road followed by travellers was merely a rough track shown by the greener appearance of the surface, and the course for a carriage to follow was marked out by tracing two narrow ruts along the ground. There was literally only one bridge in the whole county, that at Brora.

The present scheme is to cost £40,000, but in 1810, Evelix bridge and two other bridges on the road, one over the burn of Altgarve at Ospisdale and the other crossing the burn at Spinningdale, were all three erected

*Evelix-*

at a cost of £600. The masons who undertook the work were Robert Meikle, mason in Kilmuir, Donald MacKenzie, mason in Tain, and Hugh Murray, mason in Ospisdale, and their contract also included a small bridge of four foot span over the burn of Knockglass, near the little Ferry.

The first report of the Local Committee appointed by the County to superintend the making of the road from Druimale to Criech, is dated 16th May, 1810. The report says that the Committee met at the " site of the intended new bridge over the river Evelix." They were joined there by a Mr Cowie, whom, they say, they understood was employed as Overseer for the Parliamentary Commissioners, by Mr Hope, W.S. and important member of the Parliamentary Commission for "Highland Roads and Bridges. Their report goes on to say that so far no work had been undertaken between the Little Ferry and Evelix and the contractors for the bridge had got no further than the quarrying of stones for it. The specification for the bridge, drawn up and signed by David Wilson, Surveyor, in 1807,



states that it is to be " placed a little to the westward of the present house, where Rock appears on both sides of the river. It is to consist of one arch of forty feet span and thirteen feet rise from springing." The plan accompanying the specification for the whole road and the bridges shows a number of buildings at Evelix, on the site of the present farm buildings.

The road was in various stages of construction and the Committee particularly noted the excellent quality of the soil in general as adapted for road making, a comparatively simple business in 1810, for The specification laid down that "on dry bottomed ground, gravel, out of which all stones above the size of a hen's egg shall have been previously taken, shall be laid at a depth of fourteen inches in the middle and nine inches at the sides; but the stones which are taken out of the gravel may be laid for four inches in thickness below the gravel and in that case ten inches only of cleansed gravel will be required."

The comment of the Committee on the usefulness

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