

October 23rd 1987.



Excavator driver Fraser MacIennan of Rearquhar uncovers what may be the Old Manse Well in Dornoch's Meadows Road. Dornoch Heritage Society are grateful to him, fellow driver Gary Maclean and all Edward Mackay's men for their consideration in the search.

Well, Well — an Old Well at Dornoch!

When redevelopment work on Dornoch's Meadows Road began, members of Dornoch Heritage Society alerted Brora contractor Edward Mackay's men to keep a watchful eye out for evidence of the town's past.

As Iain Bremner's picture shows

such evidence was forthcoming in the form of what is believed to be the Old Manse Well. A map of 1832 of the Royal Burgh shows that the well was within a few feet of the manse.

The well, over three feet in diameter and more than thirteen feet deep, is walled with Dornoch sandstone. Perhaps it was the work of John Sutherland who, in 1760, was paid £126 by Dugald Gilchrist,

then factor of Skelbo, "for building the office and garden dykes of the manse of Dornoch" according to evidence in the Skelbo accounts as noted by Miss A S Cowper of Edinburgh. From the same source we learn that "rebuilding of manses of Dornoch and Rogart were the main items of expense in 1775." The Old Statistical Account of 1791 says that a manse had been built 16 years previously but had not been completed.

Following the discovery of the well discussions have been taking place between Mr Ron Munro of the divisional roads department, Mr David Polson, the planning officer, and Mr George Durrand of Sutherland District Council to see how best the well can be fitted into the attractive plans for the corner of Castle Close and Meadows Road.

Mr Robert Rennie's excellent slides of the well will be shown on Tuesday, October 27, to members of Dornoch Heritage Society. The speaker that evening will be Mrs Bridget Mackenzie, whose specialist knowledge of Dornoch place names will form an important feature of her address on "Dornoch Place Names".