

1826–1835. Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal, and Ellesmere and Chester Canal, Resident Engineer (construction)

1835–1851. Resident Engineer (maintenance)

EASTON, John (c. 1785–1826), road surveyor, was probably the son of Alexander Easton of Falkirk, and Mary Simpson, christened on 24 April 1785, and brother of Alexander, noticed above. He lived at Langholm, Dumfriesshire, before being employed by Thomas Telford (q.v.) on the Glasgow to Carlisle road from 1816.

By 1820 Easton was Telford's assistant-in-charge on the English part of the London to Holyhead road, superintending improvements and issuing instructions to the various Turnpike Trusts between London and Chirk regarding the selection of road-making materials and the breaking and placing of stone to the required shape and width. He prepared the drawing *Tools for Making and Repairing Roads* and probably much of the text in detail for Telford's important and widely circulated *Rules for Repairing Roads*, first published in a parliamentary report in June 1820. These *Rules* which were subsequently published separately in several octavo editions and also in Sir H. Parnell's *Treatise on Roads* (1833 and 1838), and later publications, were still being applied well into the twentieth century. Easton died in post in 1826. His salary was £200 p.a.

R. A. PAXTON

[T. Telford (1820) *Reports ... to the Commissioners for the Improvement of the Holyhead Road upon the State of the Road between London and Shrewsbury*, Holyhead Roads Commissioners (1820–1830) reports]

Publications

1822. Report ... Improvement and repairs of the road from Shrewsbury to London, in: *Select Committee on the Road from London to Holyhead*, 84–114

1823. Specification for Holyhead Road St. Albans and South Mimms, in: T. Telford (1838) *Life*

EASTON, John (1788–1860), surveyor, was born on 18 December 1788, the second of twelve children of Josiah and Hannah Easton of Hele, near Taunton, Somerset.

Josiah Easton (1761–1848) was well-known in Somerset as a surveyor and land agent who undertook civil engineering work such as canal, land drainage and road surveys in the area. Several of his sons followed him into engineering and surveying, perhaps the best known being **James Easton** (1796–1871) who, as part of Easton and Amos, practised as a mechanical engineer.

In 1794–1796 William Jessop (q.v.) employed Josiah to survey an early version of the Grand Western Canal scheme, between Taunton and Exeter via the Exe. This scheme, which marked the start of a long period of co-operation between the Jessop and Easton families, included a link

onward from Taunton to Uphill which Josiah first surveyed in 1793, and the same year Josiah suggested a further link to Axmouth, on the south coast.

From 1795 until 1797 he acted as engineer to the Ivelchester and Langport Navigation, which ran out of funds before it could be completed. Possibly John's first civil engineering survey was carried out for John Rennie (q.v.) when the latter was asked to look at the Bristol & Western Union Canal scheme (later called the Bristol & Taunton) in 1810. William White (q.v.) surveyed the section from Bristol to the river Parrett upstream of Bridgwater, and Easton from there to Taunton. Easton's survey included an aqueduct over the Parrett near Huntworth and a link down to riverside quays in Bridgwater. In 1811, he, or his father, drew up a scheme for a ship canal linking the Parrett at Combswich, downstream of Bridgwater, to a floating harbour in the middle of Bridgwater. The ship canal and floating harbour idea was revived by Henry Jessop, William's fifth son, in 1828–1829 but no action was taken. A further report by Henry Habberley Price (q.v.) in 1835 drew on this and Easton's work.

As agent to the Grand Western Canal in Devon c. 1814–1818, John was responsible for fifteen road bridges. Although he surveyed revived Taunton to Bridgwater scheme in 1822, it was in fact James Hollinsworth (q.v.) and Charles Hodgkinson who acted as engineers following the passage of an Act in 1823. The revised line terminated at a basin connecting with the Parrett at Huntworth. In 1841 the canal was extended 1 mile downstream from Huntworth to a dock basin against the Parrett below Bridgwater Bridge, again with advice from Easton.

While his work as canal and river navigation surveyor seemed doomed to frustration, Easton had more success with his work for Local Boards and Turnpike Trusts, where Josiah was already well established.

In 1813 Easton was appointed surveyor by the Trustees of the Hazelstone–Cullompton Turnpike which had just obtained its Act. The following year, at a salary of £50 p.a., he was put in charge of the works which he estimated at £2,000. The Trust got into financial difficulties and when he presented his final account of £8,000 in June 1817 he had to accept an arrangement whereby he would receive the final payment in two years. While this work proceeded Easton was engaged on other surveys such as a road from Rawridge to Chard and a railroad link to the Grand Western Canal. He was also acting as contractor for a number of bridges, the largest being that over the Culm on the Cullompton Turnpike. His various experiences were detailed in his unsuccessful application to the Somerset magistrates in 1818 to be appointed County Surveyor.

Among his brothers, **Josiah** (1790–1848) and **Edward** (1799–1898) were both involved in road surveying and county bridge maintenance and Abel (1807–1848) assisted him in surveys of