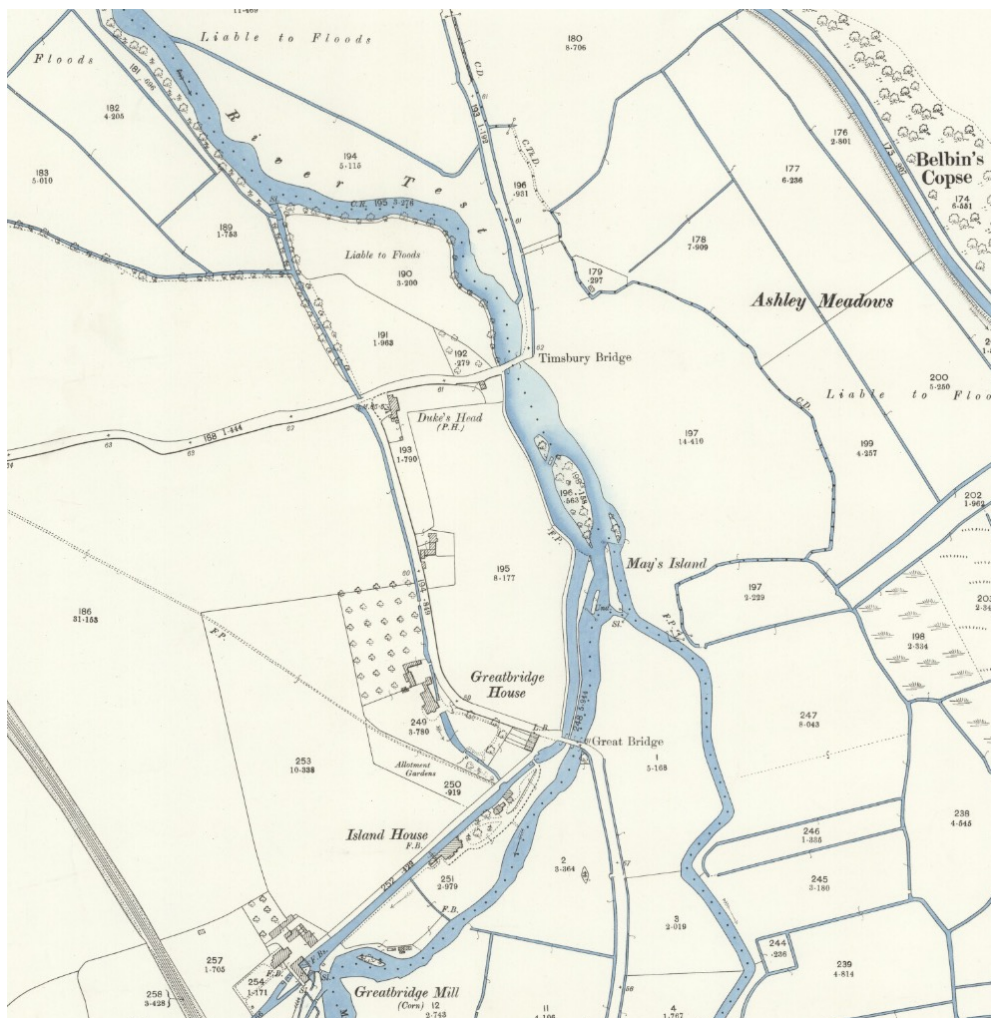
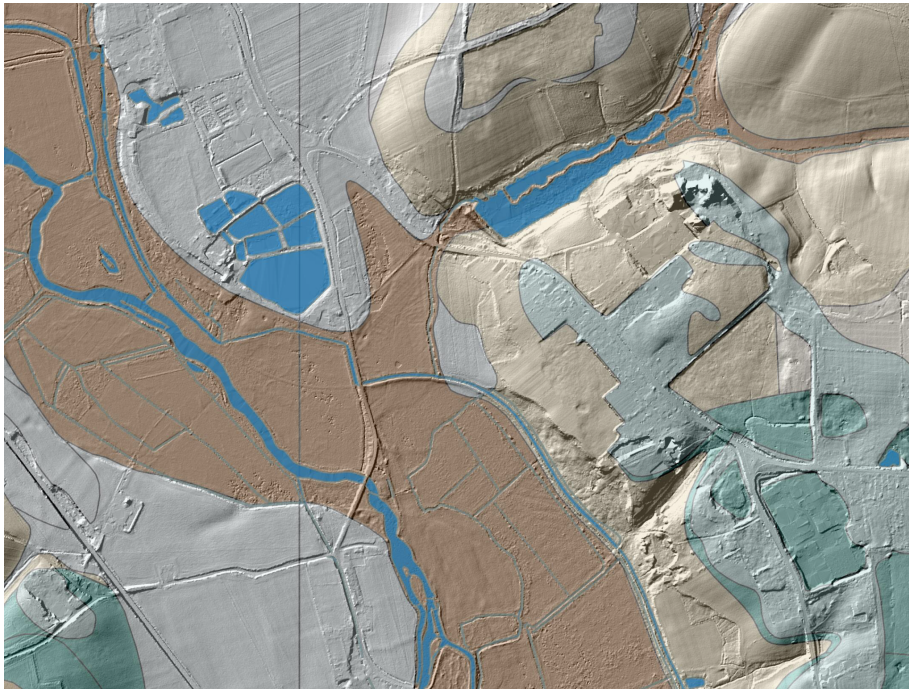


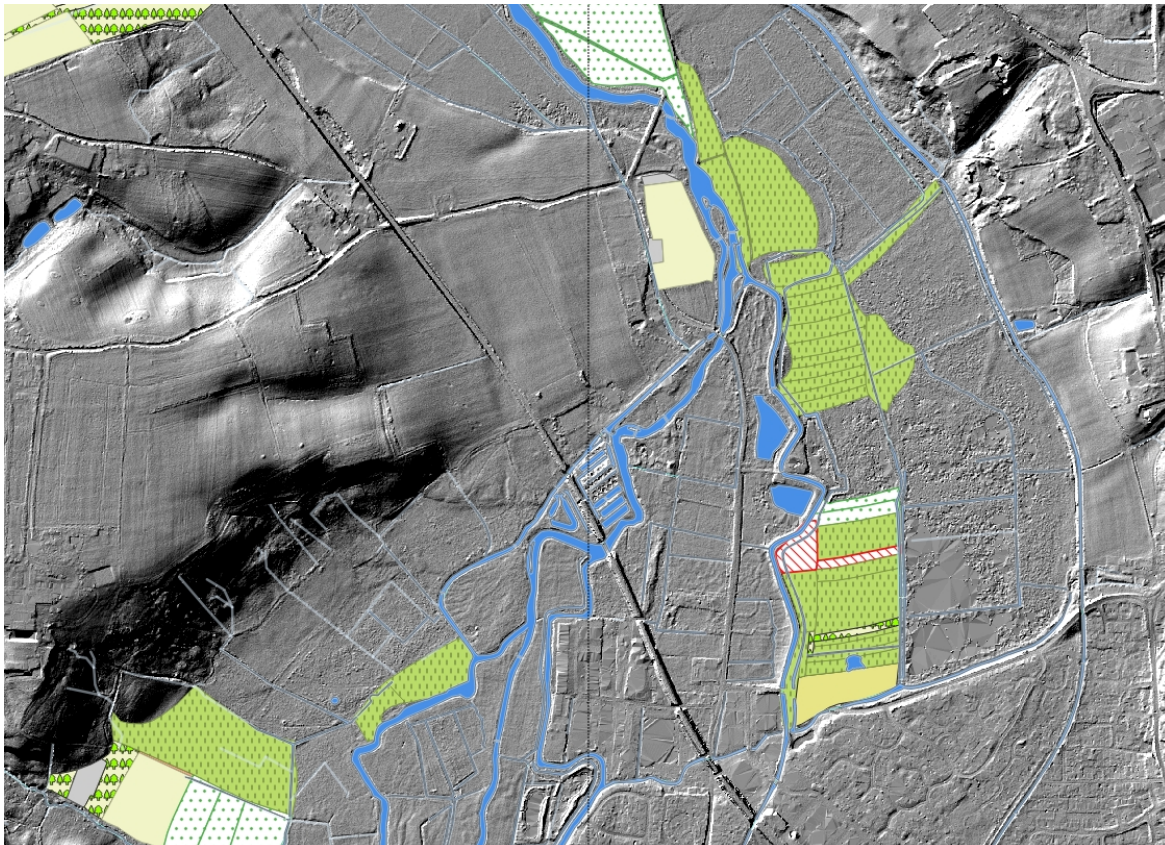
I have been thinking about the date and significance of Timsbury Bridge, particularly its relationship to Greatbridge. The earliest map evidence is the 1615 Corpus Christi map. This depicts Timsbury Bridge as the larger of the two. At this date Greatbridge crosses only a single channel. The leat to Greatbridge mill is not shown on the map, so it must be of a later date. There could not have been a mill in the vicinity of Greatbridge mill at Domesday. Note that the road that crosses Timsbury Bridge from the west turns sharply to the north after crossing the Test.



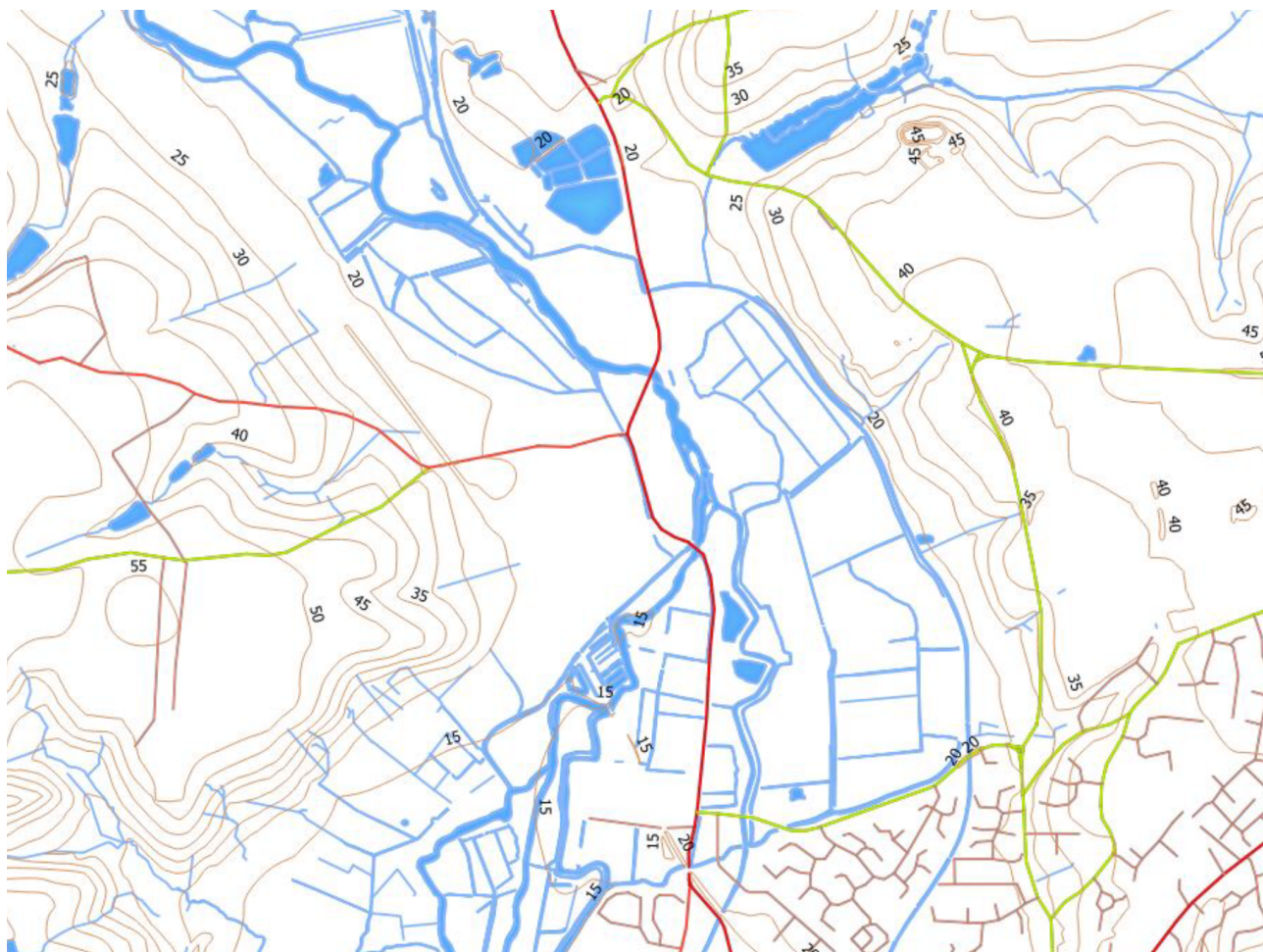
This is the 25 inch OS map surveyed in 1894-5. It shows the right-angle bend in the road east of the Test. The road runs for a short distance alongside the river. The bank here would undoubtedly have been strengthened by an artificial levee which would also serve as a causeway. The continuing roadway must have been raised. This map shows the leat to Greatbridge mill.



2  
 On the geological map, brown represents the alluvium of the floodplain and grey the river terraces. The present Timsbury crossing appears as a prominent causeway, cutting off the corner of the earlier road. Both aim for the terrace on the east side of the floodplain. The original bridge was built out from the terrace. I suspect that the Test was artificially channeled to run along the edge of the terrace. This provided both the first Timsbury bridge and Greatbridge with firm foundations on one side.

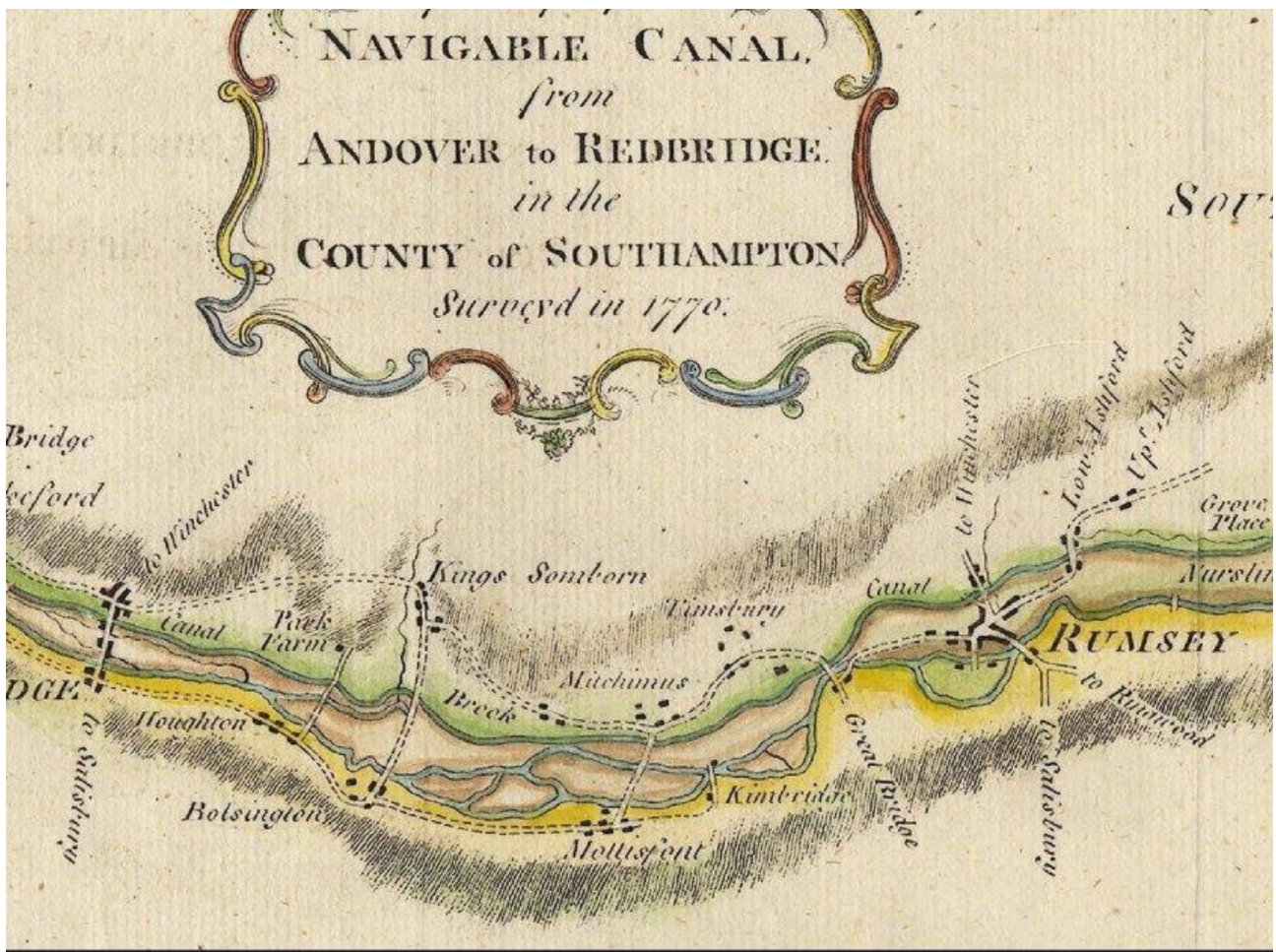
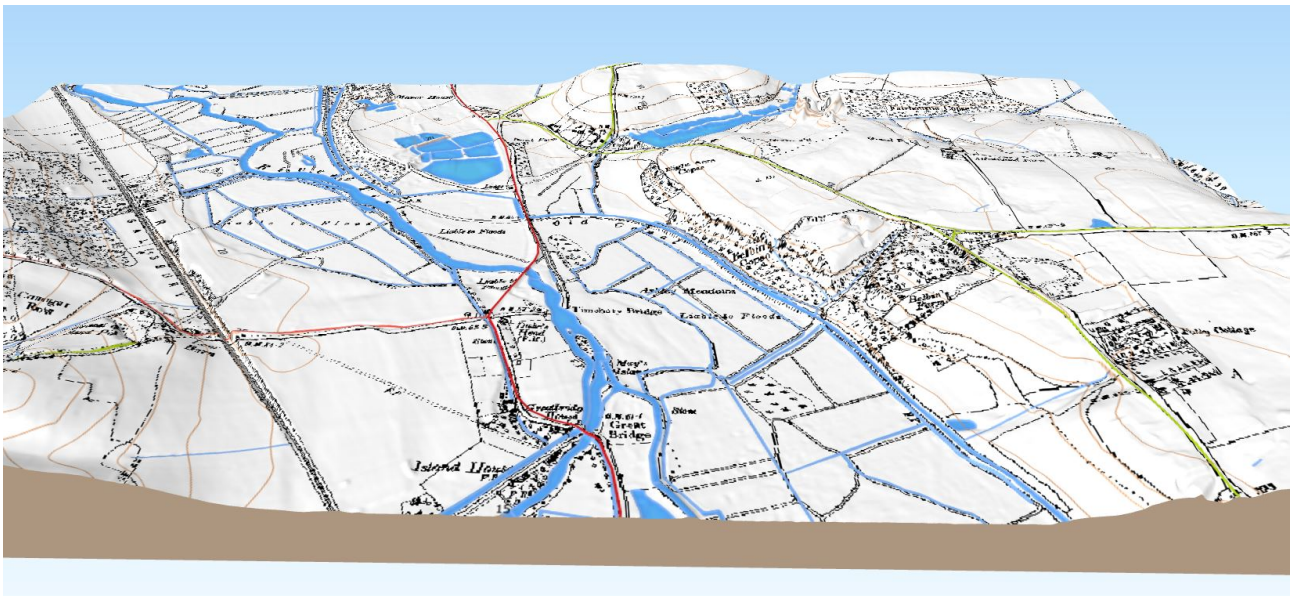


The map above combines tithes land use with LiDAR. The 'teardrop' suspended at the southern edge of Timsbury parish appears to the north. Land west of the Timsbury Bridge road was meadow and east pasture. A detached piece of land belonging to Michelmersh lies to the south, accessed by a droveway, also shown as pasture. Romsey's parish boundary runs between these two pieces of land and follows the Fairbourne around the edge of Timsbury. The course of this boundary seems to have been described in the boundary clause of the Romsey charter. The Fairbourne does not behave as a tributary should behave and flow into the Test. It has been diverted to run east of the Test. This would provide running water for the meadow land, now Fishlake Meadows. Diverting the Fairbourne would also protect the crossing via Timsbury Bridge from flooding. The altered course of the Fairbourne is followed by the parish boundaries. Is the Timsbury crossing as early as Greatbridge causeway, c. 972 or earlier?

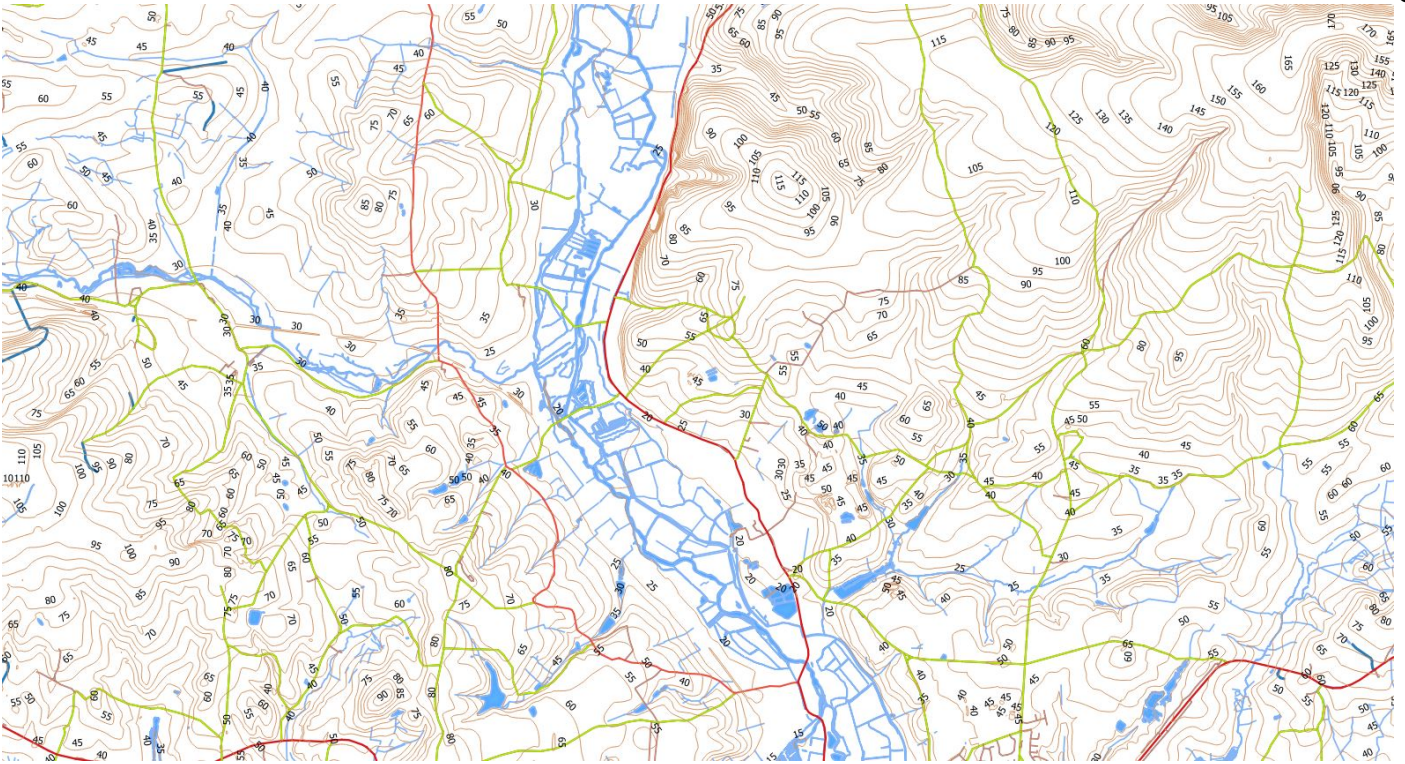


The map above shows the relationship of the modern roads with the topography of the Test valley. Contours are shown at 5 metre intervals. Greatbridge Road heads north along the causeway. Between the two bridges, it intersects with Old Salisbury Lane which leads into Stanbridge Lane. The construction of the Greatbridge causeway, in the 10th century or earlier, provided a crossing of the Test and a route west towards Salisbury/Old Sarum and Wilton. Adding this route to the road network would have justified the infrastructure investment. The modern road continues north over Timsbury Bridge. At the top of the map it meets the Cupernham Lane - Belbins - Yokesford Hill road.

It is possible to travel north from Romsey along the east side of the Test by crossing the series of river terrace on the east side of the valley. The section of road from Old Salisbury Lane crossing Timsbury Bridge is not required to travel north. Looking at the arrangement of the roads, I don't think Timsbury Bridge was built to provide a crossing of the Test as an alternative to Greatbridge. The bridge only makes sense as part of a route north. The road along the levee on the bank of the Test and across the floodplain would have been liable to flood, so could have been inaccessible part of the year. Even with this restriction, it would have been worthwhile to invest in building a bridge and causeway to the eastern river terrace. The contours show that the Cupernham route climbs from 20 metres in Romsey to a maximum height of 40 metres. The Greatbridge - Timsbury Bridge route is more or less level, an easier journey for a loaded ox cart. The image below is a 3D depiction of the terrain with modern roads superimposed on the 2nd edition OS map.



The 1770 map of the Andover to Redbridge canal depicts valley routes east and west of the Test. The route between Timsbury and Romsey (Rumsey) crosses the two bridges and follows Greatbridge Road into town. Old Salisbury Lane seems to have been replaced by the road beyond Middlebridge, now the A27. The bridge crossing the Test at this point is post-Conquest.



The map above shows the main roads in red. The road east of the Test runs along the river terrace through Timsbury, then skirts the edge of the chalk through Michelmersh parish. Near the north edge of the map, at Brook, it veers away from the river and up slope towards King's Somborne. The road up to this point has not crossed any contour lines. Compare this route with the road on the west side of the valley.

## Discussion

I have previously put forward evidence that the Fishlake and Greatbridge causeway were referred to in the Romsey charter. While it is possible that one or the other or both were built during the Roman period, I think it more likely that they date to the 10th century. There was probably a crossing of the Test at the northern edge of the river terrace since prehistoric times, but not on such a scale as to be referred to as a Street. The salient attribute of Greatbridge is that it provided a transport route suitable for wheeled vehicles to cross the Test. I had not considered its value as part of the route running along the east side of the river. This, of course, required a second crossing, from west to east over Timsbury Bridge. I suggest that this crossing is probably also 10th century.

We have discussed the route north out of Romsey in relation to Church Street. I think that the Fishlake ran along the line of Church Street, so I'm not surprised that it was not developed until after the Conquest. There might well have been a roundabout route through town for traffic heading north. What we haven't considered is inbound traffic heading for the Abbey. A considerable weight and volume of goods would have been transported to the Abbey. A population of possibly several hundred would require food, wood for cooking and heating and building materials. There must have been access into the Abbey precinct from the north, perhaps along the line of Church Road. Routes to the precinct from the north and the south would have been within the boundary of Romsey Infra.