

Plotting your backscene with Generate a Panorama



When I'm contacted by participants in the Missenden Abbey Modellers Spring weekend backscene course, I nearly always include a 'Generate a Panorama' image in my reply. It's all part of seeking information from as many sources as possible, and when I'm researching the surroundings of a railway model, it's one of the first things I include in a project file.

A digital contour panorama is essentially an outline drawing of the topography which surrounds the real location of your layout and it's generated by visiting a website resource on the internet.

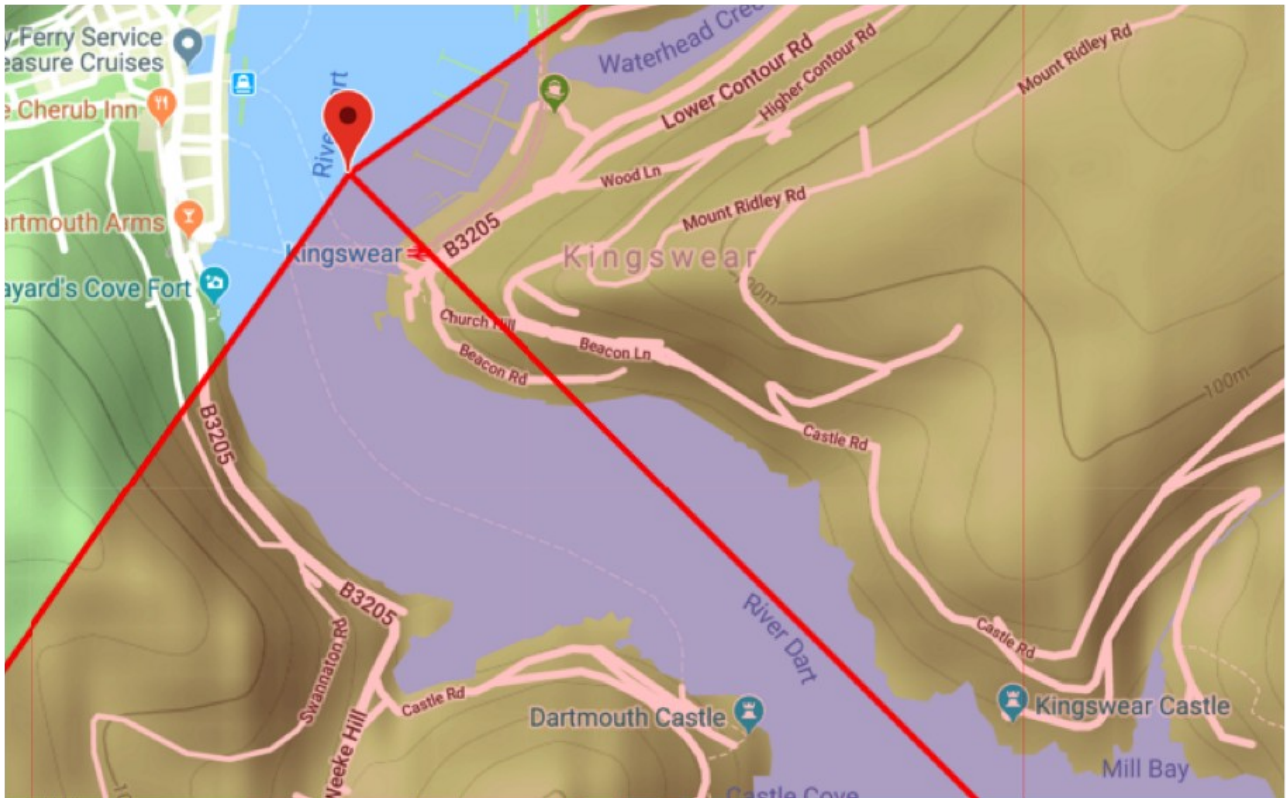
the programme will then generate a panoramic drawing depicting the horizon and skyline surrounding your model. This can then be printed off at full size and used as an outline for painting your backdrop.

The one I prefer is that provided by Ulrich Deuschle and a link is provided here to access the resource. The site can be used without charge, but there is a facility for making a donation to assist with web hosting costs and possible future development.

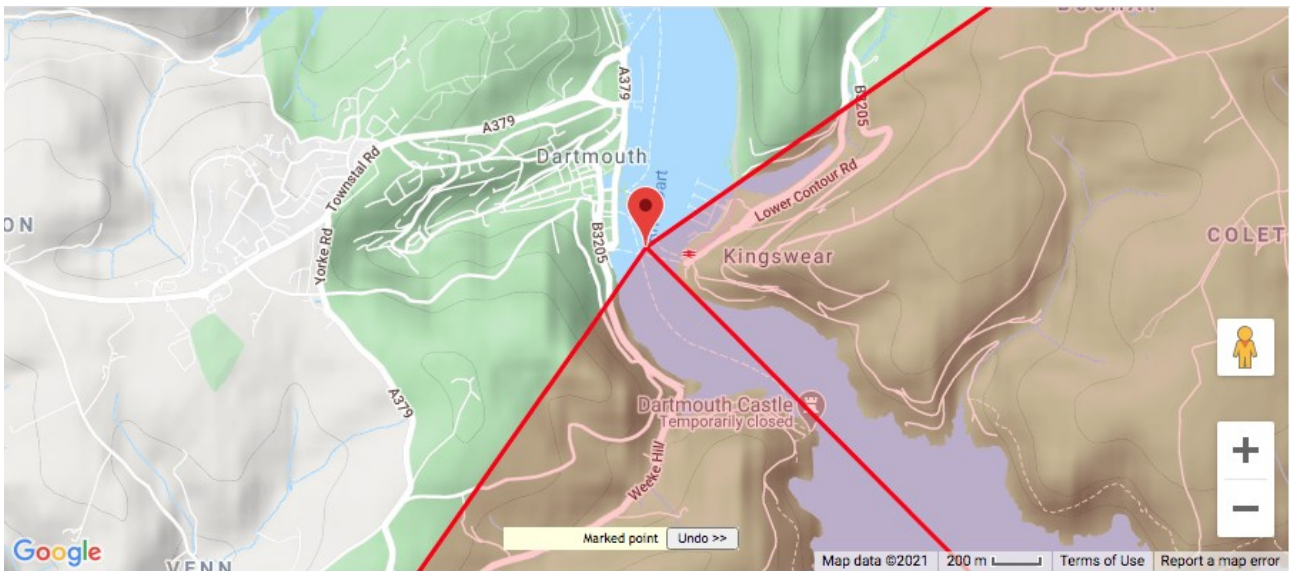
https://www.udeuschle.de/panoramas/makepanoramas_en.htm

Essentially the website provides you with an embedded Google map and you can use this to search for the viewpoint of your chosen model location, by moving the map canvas with the mouse and zooming in, the general viewpoint location can be established fairly quickly.

The following sequence shows an example of the landscape plotting process, and this view looks over Kingswear station on the South Devon coast



The first step is to input the location of your layout viewpoint which is done by clicking on it onceand judge the extentvisible angle of the using a south east view with a 160 degree sweep.



Second option: Select viewpoint from a list

Name of the summit begins with contains (* as wildcard)

View direction N NE E SE S SW W NW 360°

Third option: Set viewpoint data directly

Latitude (°): Longitude (°): Altitude (m): + Camera height (m): Look for summit point automatically

Set panorama data directly

View direction (°): Left edge (°): Zoom factor: or Resolution (pix/deg):

Horizontal extension (°): or Right edge (°):

Tilt (°): Optimize part by part (for e-mail only) Range of sight (km): Elev. exaggeration: Colored display:

Generate panorama:

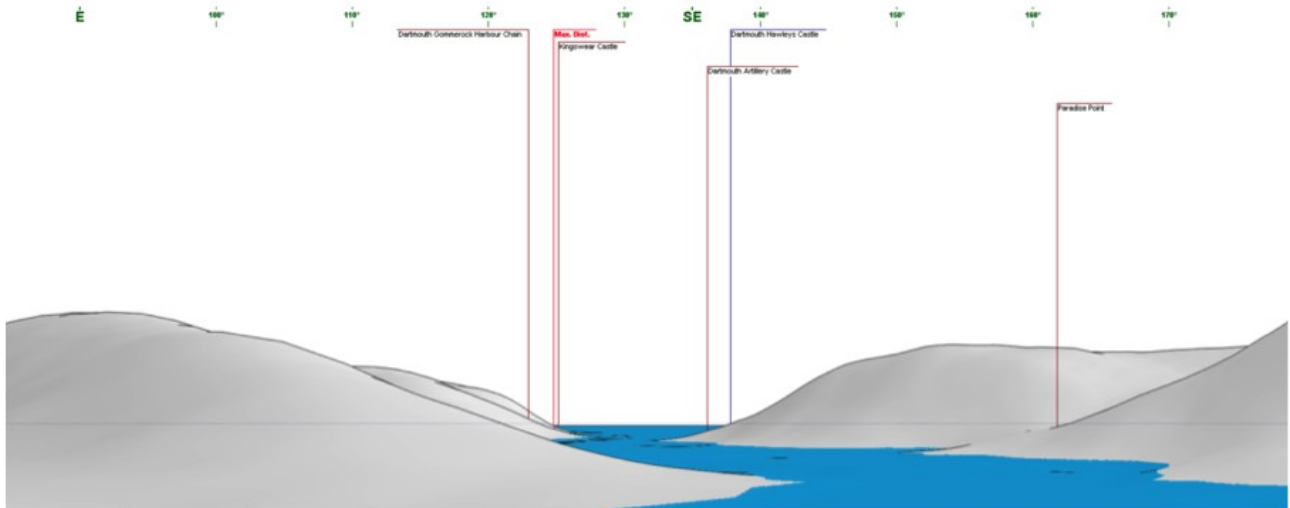
Panorama title: Description:

E-mail address (for e-mail delivery only):

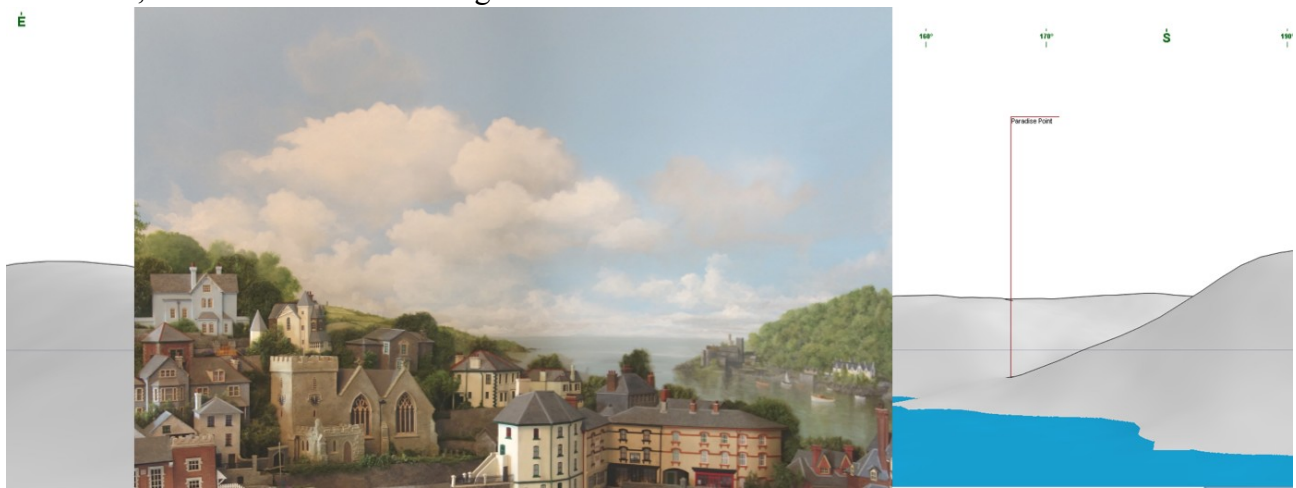
[Recently requested panoramas](#)

Below the map is a control panel which enables adjustments to be made to the panoramic view and these include compass direction, included view angle, viewpoint altitude and by experimenting with these and deriving scale measurements from your layout the angle and perspective of the panorama can be successfully adjusted.

Each new setting produces a fresh preview depicted in a small thumbnail preview in the bottom right hand corner of the control panel, and once you are satisfied with this, it's a simple matter to click the show panorama button and the entire detailed image will then open in another browser tab. This can be saved as an image such as a jpg or pdf file and printed out into sections ready for attaching to your rear panel as an initial guide for tracing out the skyline and subsequent layers.



The digitally plotted contour rendering of the land masses on either side of the River Dart looking South East, with a view out to the English Channel.



In a similar manner to fitting a pre printed or photographic backscene to a rear panel, the top and bottom borders of your printout must always be ignored when adjusting the height of the image, what is important is to set the height of the panorama prints to the existing horizon datum.

Applying the programme is quick, easy and fun to do, it plots the topography in an instant no matter how complicated it may be. Painting and layering all this, of course, is another story, but we make every effort to cover all the aspects of prototypical backscene painting and 3D work during the spring weekend residential course.

This small sequence shows one aspect of the landscape plotting process, starting with a look from the viewpoint to confirm the correct contour profile in 'Generate a Panorama', using a south east

view with a 160 degree sweep.





In addition, if there are several layers within the panorama, ie foreground, middle distance and far distance, each layer can be cut out individually painted and then laminated against the rear sky panel to create a degree of relief within the scene.

Moreover, one or more of the separated layers of surface undulation can be projected out towards the 3 dimensional model to help gradually introduce the landscape from a 3D model to a 2D distance image.

