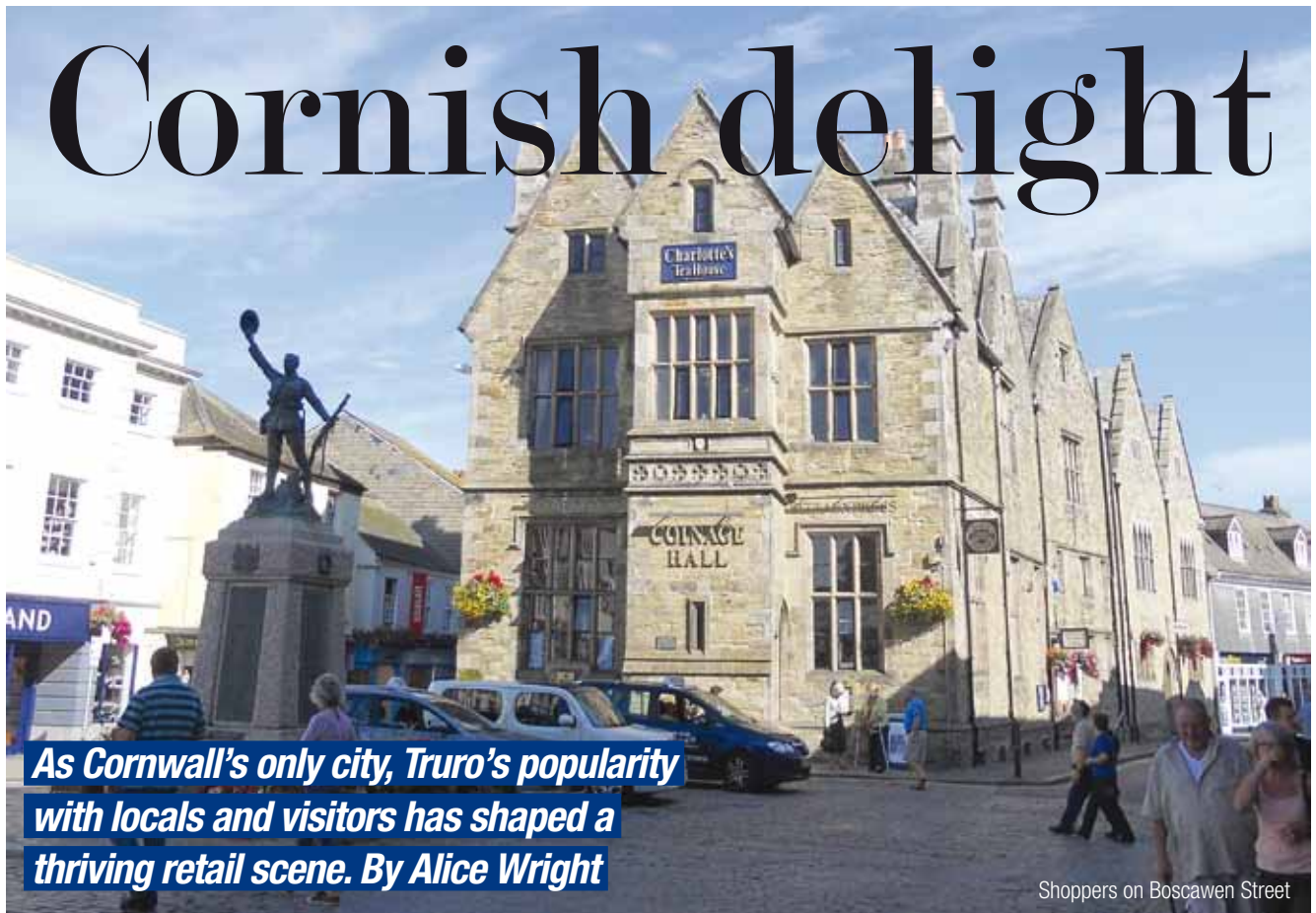


Cornish delight



As Cornwall's only city, Truro's popularity with locals and visitors has shaped a thriving retail scene. By Alice Wright

Shoppers on Boscawen Street

Cornwall is probably best known for its spectacular scenery and laidback lifestyle. However it's also home to Truro, a gem of a shopping destination, where big name multiples mix with quirky boutiques to create a unique retail experience.

While its shopping centre is compact, there are plenty of lanes and mews to explore. These, along with cobbled streets, leats – ancient systems of transporting water around the city – and stunning architecture make for an appealing shopping experience. And with a combination of multiples and intriguing indies – which make up around 55 per cent of its retail portfolio – Truro offers something truly special to rival its larger neighbours Plymouth and Exeter.

Cornwall has a rich mining heritage and Truro benefited from a flourishing industry in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. As one of the county's stannary towns where locally produced tin and copper was assayed and stamped, wealthy miners built the elegant townhouses which are still part

of its beautiful backdrop today.

As the mining industry declined the city's role as the administrative and commercial centre of Cornwall cemented its continual prosperity. Average earnings are now higher than the rest of the county while houses are more expensive: in 2006, Truro was named as the UK's top small city for burgeoning property prices.

With a population of around 22,000 and another 14,000 commuting into the city everyday, Truro rakes in much of the £300 million spent in Cornwall annually. And it isn't difficult to fathom its appeal. The city's Gothic-style Cathedral dominates the skyline above the popular shopping areas Pydar Street and Boscawen Street where popular multiples have congregated. Intertwined with these are smaller streets speckled with unique independents. A wander down Pydar Mews will uncover gifts, jewellery and edible treats while Victoria Square leads onto Kenwyn, River and Little Castle Streets where shoppers can pick up original fashion and home wares.

Lemon Quay, where the city's port once sat, is now a lively and attractive public space where many activities and events are held including a twice-weekly farmers' market. Food and craft markets set up their stalls throughout the Christmas season. Meanwhile the quay is within easy reach of the Pannier Market and Lemon Street Market, which boasts traditional stalls from fishmongers to haberdashers along with a choice of restaurants and indies selling food and gifts.

Neil Scott, manager of the Truro Business Improvement District (BID), is proud of the city's unique environment. "You can walk along some really attractive little streets and go from an independent boutique to a coffee shop – it's a great experience," he says. "Increasingly people can sit at home and buy online, but to me the essence of shopping is the actual experience; there's nothing that can beat wandering through the shops." He adds that the majority of Truro's retailers are indies and the BID is doing everything it can to encourage them to thrive.

Images courtesy of the Truro Business Improvement District



Truro Cathedral

Built in the Gothic Revival architectural style that was fashionable in the Nineteenth Century, Truro Cathedral is one of only three in the UK with a trio of spires. It contains the world's largest stained glass project ever made and Cornish saints can be found depicted in wood, glass and stone throughout the building. The cathedral receives around 200,000 visitors a year.



The Drummer

A 15ft statue of a naked figure standing on a sphere beating a drum was unveiled in Truro earlier this year by Queen's Roger Taylor. The bronze sculpture, which has become a focal point in the city, contains Cornish tin and copper. Artist Tim Shaw says it portrays a sense of "celebration" and Cornwall's "steely determination."



The Pannier Market

The indoor market has been trading on Back Quay for 30 years and offers 40 independent retailers all under one roof. The vibrant atmosphere, friendly service and competitive prices make it a great place for keen shoppers to hunt out bargains, gifts and fresh, local produce.



Pydar Street

At the bustling heart of Truro's main shopping district, this wide, attractive street is where many big high street names can be found including the likes of River Island, East, Lush and The Body Shop.