

Town with Nicholas Crane

Between the sprawling city and the isolated village, lie our homes of the future.



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Programme running: 4 x 60 mins Production: Tern TV/BBC



Perth

A town that thinks it should be a city, Perth was a Mecca for traders during the Middle Ages. Becoming unusually cosmopolitan as a result, Perth was a marketplace for goods and ideas alike – not least John Knox’s fiery speech which launched the Reformation in Scotland. The town’s expansion onto flood plains has created real problems. Like New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, the urban poor were hit hardest – 400 people were evacuated by the army and navy when the river last burst its banks.

Scarborough

Scarborough has a chequered past. Originally a Roman signal post, relaying threats from the sea to garrisons inland, it became a proper town after Viking raiders established a castle on a craggy outcrop. Although the town was immortalised in Gilbert and Sullivan’s song “Scarborough Fayre”, its isolation fostered a darker business; caves in the cliffs made Scarborough a famous haven for smugglers. Yet this seaside resort, declined rapidly in the face of cheap air travel. Can Scarborough find a new niche?

Ludlow

‘It is probably’ said the poet John Betjeman ‘the loveliest town in England.’ A vibrant market town with two Michelin-starred restaurants and a fairy tale castle, Ludlow’s modern identity is a tourist town steeped in history. With its perfect, bread-basket location, Ludlow was the natural birthplace for a foodie renaissance. Gourmets flock to its produce market in search of new tastes and the town is supplying the growing demand for halal meat. But is Ludlow really as perfect as it seems?

Totnes

Totnes is home to one of the greatest social experiments of the 20th century and today it’s the test bed for an ambitious new idea that aims to change town life forever. Totnes has long had a reputation as an ‘alternative’ haven for the arts and green living, and was once called ‘the country’s funkiest address’. This urban laboratory is experimenting with its own currency to try to keep spending local and has hundreds of homes equipped with solar panels.

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