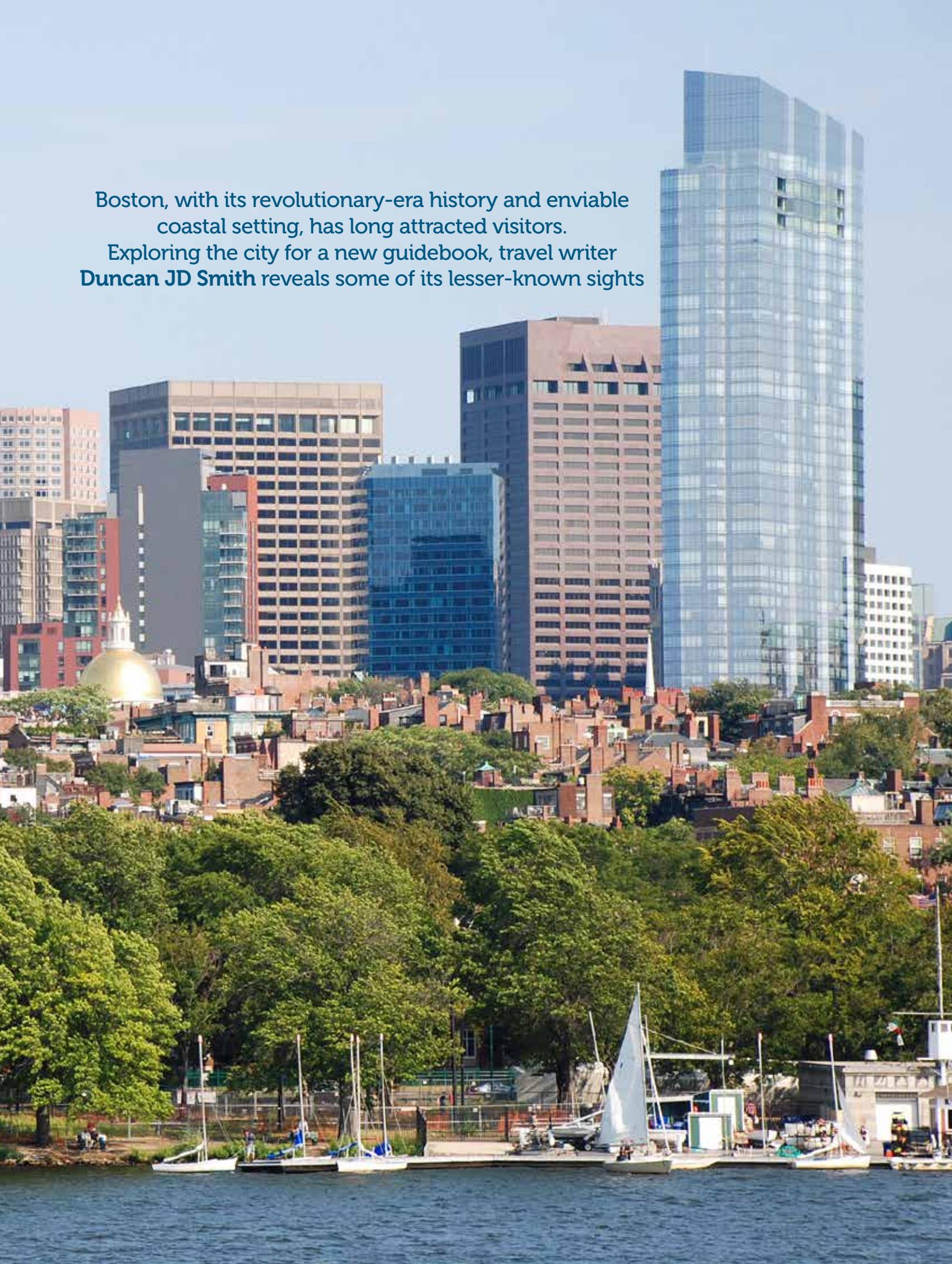


Only in...

Boston



Boston, with its revolutionary-era history and enviable coastal setting, has long attracted visitors. Exploring the city for a new guidebook, travel writer **Duncan JD Smith** reveals some of its lesser-known sights



**B**oston, state capital of Massachusetts, is America's oldest major city. It was founded in 1630, where the Charles River meets the Atlantic, by Puritan colonists from England. Visitors today are fascinated by the city's quaint Colonial-era remains, which coexist alongside soaring skyscrapers, prompting the observation that in Boston the past always sits alongside the present.

That is only a part of the Boston story though. Inevitably the colonists morphed into patriots determined to sever ties with their mercantile-minded British overseers. Accordingly Boston played a crucial role in the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), indeed the ousting of the Redcoats here in 1776 enabled the country to commence its journey to independence.

Since then Boston's fortunes have waxed and waned. Seafaring brought boom times, recession prompted the growth of home-grown manufacturing, and by 1820 the proximity of Harvard University placed Boston at the forefront of American intellectual and literary life. As the 'Athens of America', the city spawned Transcendentalism and the abolitionist movement.

The Great Fire of 1872 kickstarted the redevelopment of Boston's commercial heart reasserting the city's allure for immigrants: Irish, Jews, Italians, and Chinese. Together with African-Americans, they've added distinction and diversity to Boston's twenty three neighbourhoods. More recently, massive civic projects such as the Big Dig, the Waterfront renewal, and the facelift of world-class cultural institutions have resulted in a city trading as much on present-day energy as historic charm.

Armed with a decent street map, visitors can quickly get off the beaten track – and under the city's skin. They will discover the Boston of Colonial-era relics and heritage trails, industrial remains and ethnic enclaves, hallowed universities and contemporary art spaces. And they'll find plenty of unique, hidden and lesser-known sights, too, that speak just as eloquently of the city's colourful history.

**Molasses and morse**

Two such locations can be found in the North End,

a part of the original Shawmut Peninsula, where both Boston and the ambitious land reclamation projects that eventually doubled its size began. The first is a humble wall plaque on a wall fronting Langone Park on Commercial Street. Boston boasts hundreds of plaques recording episodes in Boston's history but none are like this one because it marks the site of the Great Boston Molasses Flood!

A hundred years ago, the old wharves backing onto Commercial Street were the place where immigrants arrived, bales of cotton were landed, and penny ferries docked from East Boston. They were also where cargoes of molasses and sugar were unloaded for use in making candy, alcoholic drinks, and even gunpowder. One of the companies benefitting from this was the Purity Distilling Company, which fermented molasses at their plant in Cambridge to produce rum. Before transporting the molasses to Cambridge, however, the company stored it in a huge, 2.3 million gallon steel tank standing in what is today Langone Park.

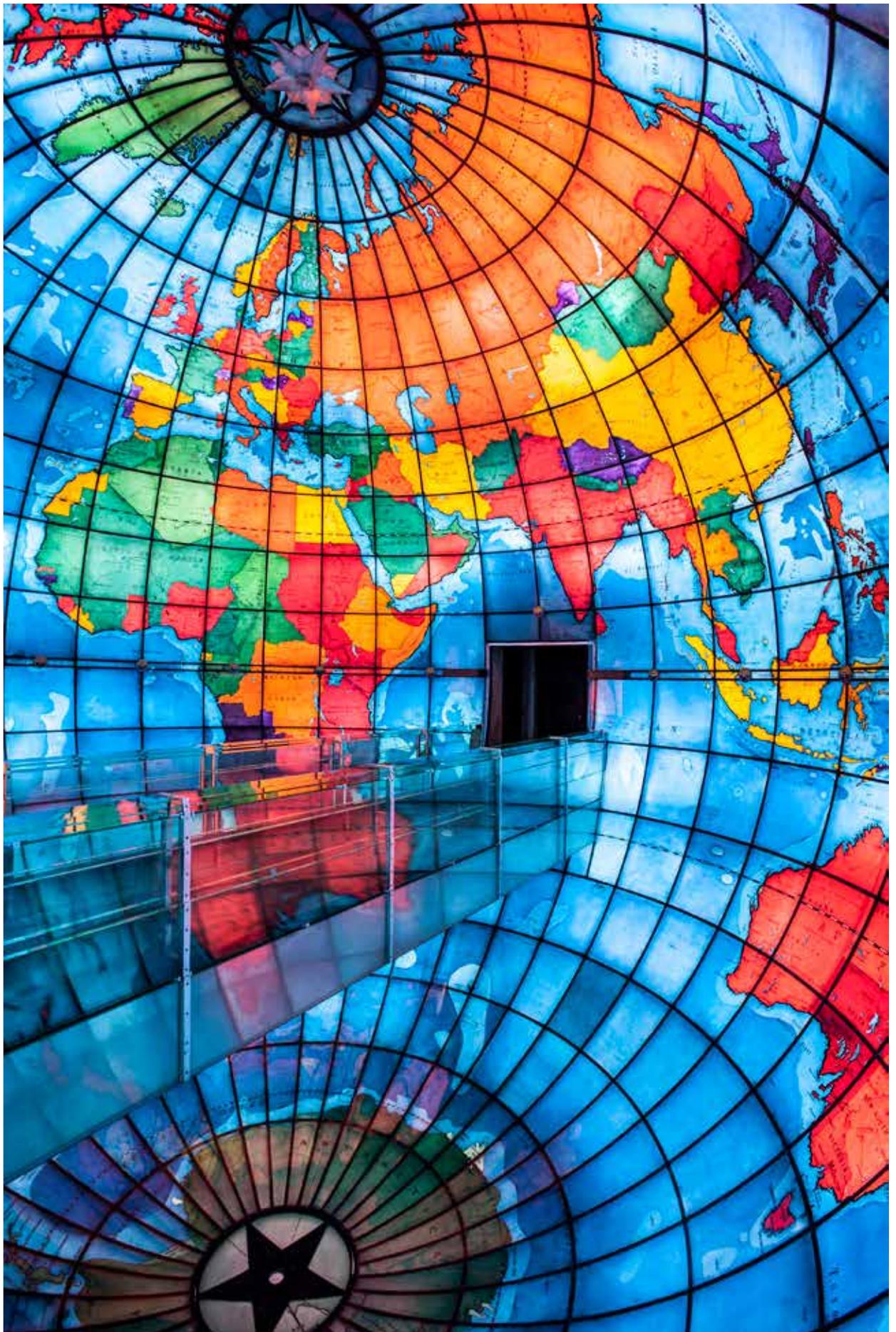
Disaster struck at 12.30 on the afternoon of January 15th 1919. Without warning and with "a thunderclap-like bang", the tank burst. A syrupy wave of molasses 25 feet high rushed out onto

**Previous pages:**  
Boston skyline with Beacon Hill and the Charles River in the foreground (Image: © Duncan JD Smith)

**Below:** Headlines reporting the Boston molasses disaster. Globe Newspaper Co.

**Right:** The Mapparium at the Christian Science Center (see page 17). The Mapparium is located at The Mary Baker Eddy Library, in Boston, Massachusetts USA. (Photo © The Mary Baker Eddy Library. Used by permission)





Commercial Street at an alarming 35 mph. As it did most of the surrounding buildings were engulfed, the elevated railway along Commercial Street buckled, and the domestic residences across the road flattened.

In the immediate aftermath, the streets were waist-deep in sticky molasses. First on the scene to help were cadets from the training ship *USS Nantucket*, which was conveniently moored nearby. They began plucking survivors from the sticky chaos until the Boston Fire Department arrived. The search for survivors went on for four days by which time 21 people were reported dead, either crushed or asphyxiated, and another 150 injured.

Afterwards, structural defects combined with climatic conditions were the reasons cited for the disaster. The families affected successfully brought one of the first class-action lawsuits in Massachusetts against the company and, in a twist to the story, it was later revealed that the company had filled the tank to bursting to outrun prohibition, which came into effect just one day later.

In Langone Park itself is another easy-to-miss monument. Consisting of a grey granite pillar topped with the sculpture of a sinking ship's stern, it was erected by the United States Marine Service in memory of 170 radio operators who went down with their ships during the Second World War. They were a few of the several thousand volunteer civilians trained as radio operators on Gallops Island six miles out in Boston Harbour.

Gallops Island is named after John Gallop, a Puritan settler and one of the first Boston Harbor pilots, who lived there in the 17th century. Like other islands in Boston Harbor, Gallops was subsequently used for defensive purposes. During the American Civil War (1861–1865), for example, it housed a military camp for 3,000 Union soldiers. Thereafter it served as a temporary quarantine station for immigrants to reduce the risk of disease entering Boston.

During the Second World War, Gallops took on a different role. In 1940 the United States Maritime Service opened the Gallops Island Radio Training Station, which by 1941 was graduating as many as



50 expertly-trained radio operators a week. Armed with their radio telegraph licences, which were granted after 20 weeks' training at Boston's Custom House, the graduates were quickly posted to active sea duty. There they helped safeguard vessels of the United States Merchant Marine, which were carrying food, clothing and munitions to troops around the world.

Gallops Island today is off limits to the public, so the bravery and dedication of the radio operators is recorded instead by the memorial in Langone Park. Around it is carved Morse code, a reminder that graduates were required to copy incoming code at a rate of 24 or more words a minute. The sides of the pillar carry various pertinent phrases, such as 'Message Sent', 'Country Served' and 'Duty Done'. One side is reserved for the seal of the United States Maritime Service and the words 'By Their Deeds, Measure Yours'.

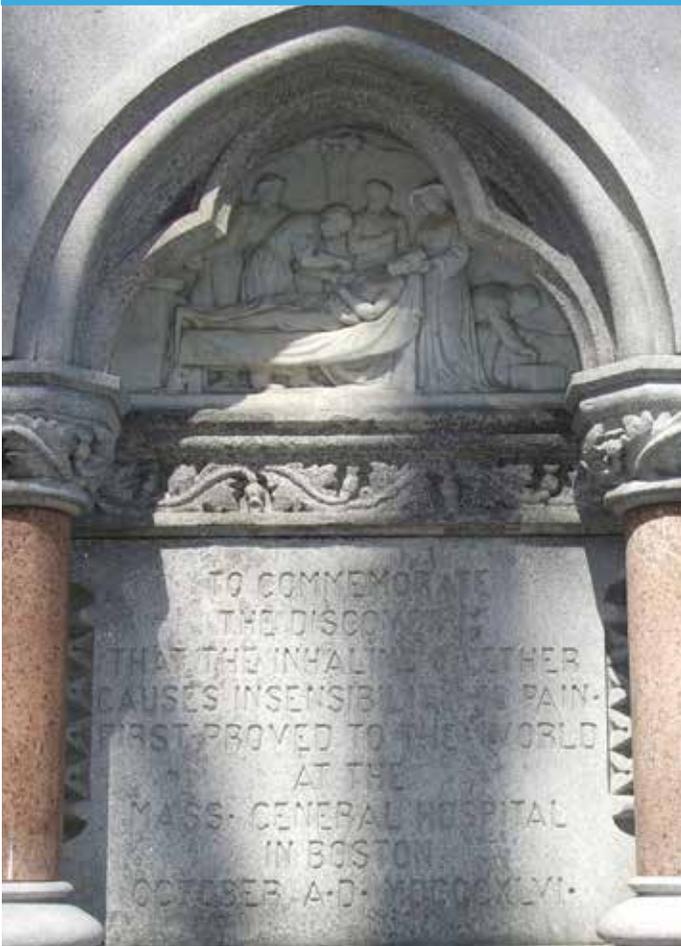
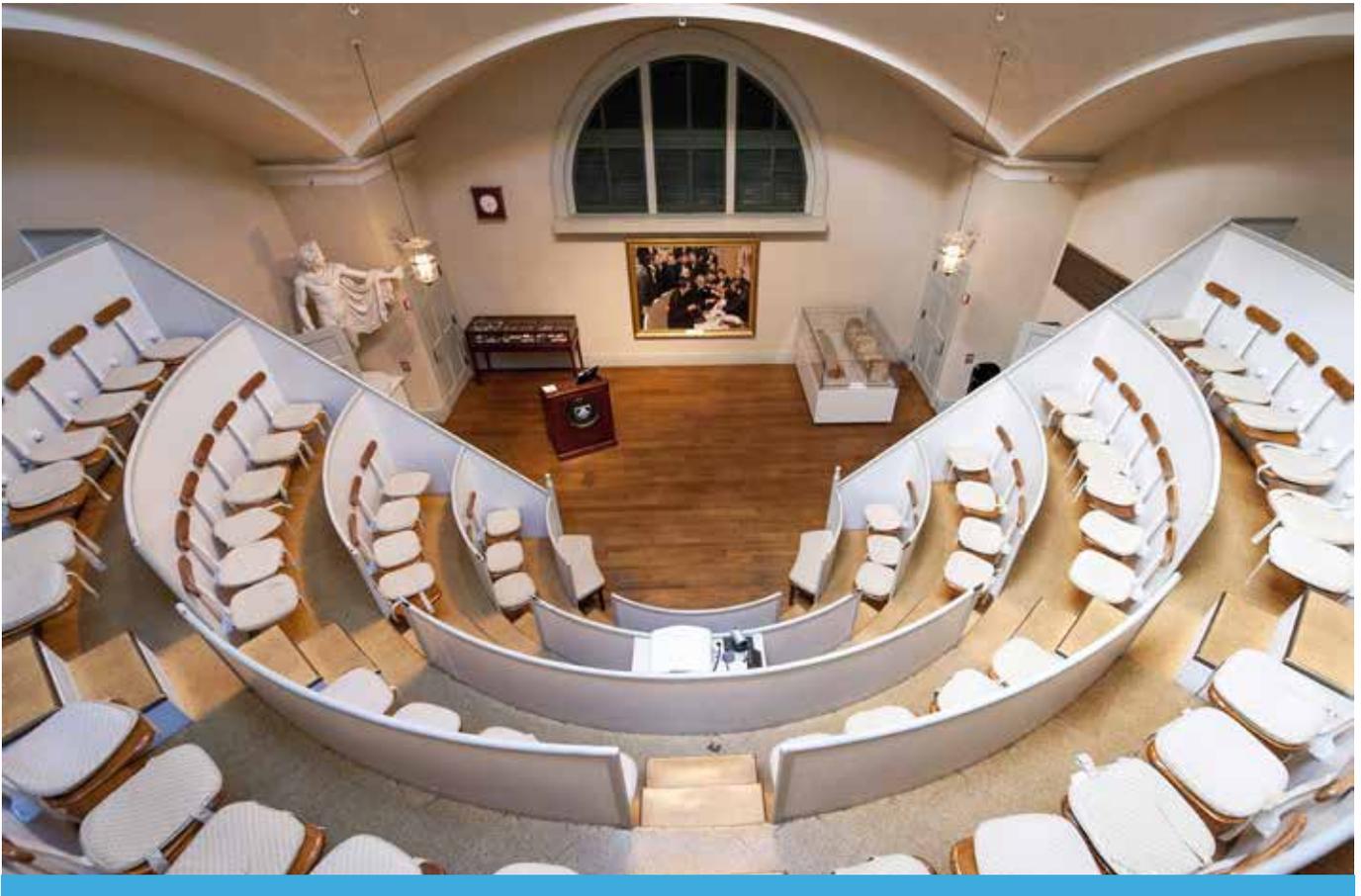
### West End memories

West of the North End is the aptly-named West

**Left: The easy-to-miss Radio Operators' Memorial in Langone Park. (Image: © Duncan JD Smith)**

**Right, above: The Ether Dome at Massachusetts General Hospital. (Photo courtesy of S. Riley, Massachusetts General Hospital)**

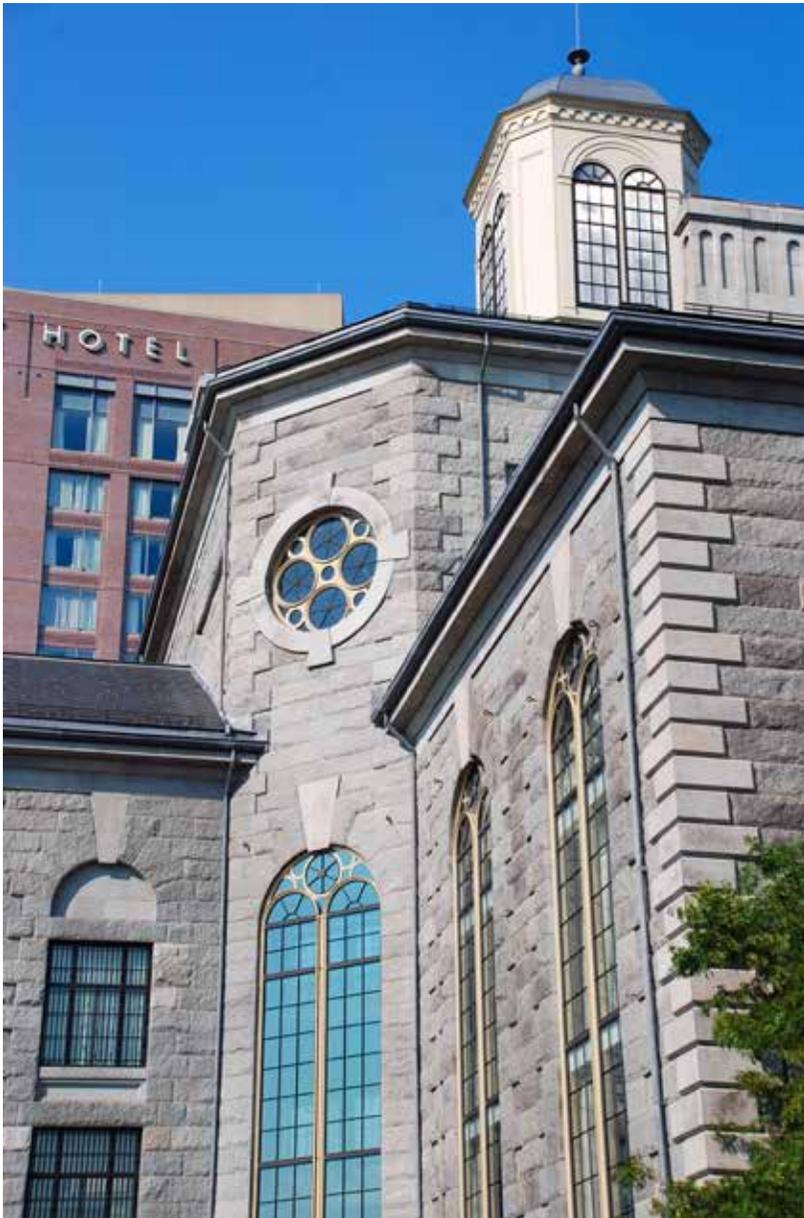
**Right: This monument in Boston's Public Garden commemorates the first successful use of ether as an anaesthetic**



End. Unlike neighbouring Beacon Hill, with its gas-lit streets and red-brick townhouses still remarkably intact, much of the West End, once the arrival point for seamen and immigrants, was largely razed in the 1960s in the name of urban renewal. One of the few historic buildings to survive is the so-called Bulfinch Building at 55 Fruit Street, part of the sprawling Massachusetts General Hospital, the country's third oldest.

Opened in 1821, the Bulfinch Building was designed by America's first professional architect, Charles Bulfinch (1763–1844). Rendered in the Greek Revival-style, it is built from white Chelmsford granite hewn by inmates from the Charlestown prison. It was a carefully considered structure, with novel features such as a central heating system and flushing water closets. A key element was the operating theatre. During the 19th century it was important to admit as much light and air to such theatres, so Bulfinch placed it at the top of the building. There it was illuminated from above by windows in a copper dome, which also admitted breezes blowing off the Charles River. The seats for onlookers were ranged precipitously along the theatre's south wall, affording the best view of the surgeries taking place below.

Another reason for placing the theatre at the top of the building was to muffle patients' screams!



This was certainly true in the early years, when surgery was performed without anaesthetic. That changed on 16th October 1846, however, when three men made medical history here. Dentist Dr. William T. G. Morton (1819–1868) was invited to perform a public demonstration of the use of ether to render a patient insensible to pain. The patient was Edward Gilbert Abbott, a local man with a tumour on his jaw. With the ether administered, Harvard Medical School surgeon Dr. John Collins Warren (1778–1856) removed the tumour without causing Abbott any significant discomfort.

The Ether Dome, as the operating theatre is known today, can be found on the 4th floor of the Bulfinch Building. Now used for lectures and meetings, this architectural gem has been declared a National Historic Landmark and is open to the public. Visitors will see where more than 8,000

operations were carried out between 1821 and 1868, and can sit where onlookers witnessed them.

A very different old West End building is the Liberty Hotel at 215 Charles Street. A singular example of architectural adaptive reuse, it served originally as the Suffolk County Jail. In this guise, it was completed in 1851 to a design by Boston architect Gridley J. F. Bryant (1816–1899), who conjured up a cruciform building made of Quincy granite, with four wings extending from a central, octagonal atrium. Notably Bryant collaborated on his plans with the pioneering prison reformer Louis Dwight (1793–1854), whose humanitarian approach to prisoners called for individual cells and larger rooms for communal work and exercise. Additionally the riverside location ensured fresh air and natural light.

Before its closure in 1990, when the jail relocated to new premises on Nashua Street, several famous inmates were incarcerated here, including the colourful but corrupt Boston Mayor James Michael Curley, African-American human rights activist Malcolm X, the Italian anarchists Sacco and Vanetti, and the captured crews of two German Second World War U-Boats. Thereafter the empty jail was spared demolition and instead cleverly converted into the 300-room Liberty Hotel, which opened in 2007. Original cell doors can still be found in the foyer and the bar!

### On the waterfront

South Boston (known affectionately as Southie) lies across the Fort Point Channel from Downtown. Annexed by Boston in 1804, this neighbourhood's historic infrastructure of piers and warehouses is currently being put to new uses, including office blocks and hotels, restaurants and cultural attractions. Two locations though still reek of Boston's longstanding relationship with the sea.

The first is the historic Boston Fish Pier. Unlike the nearby Commonwealth Pier, which once welcomed freight and passenger ships into the Port of Boston and is now a Conference Centre, the Boston Fish Pier still serves its original purpose.



Opened in 1914 and operated by the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), it is the country's oldest working fish pier and remains at the heart of Boston's seafood industry. Admittedly with New England fish stocks now strictly managed, cod, mackerel and haddock is no longer landed here in the quantity it once was. Instead the pier's seafood dealers and processors draw around 75% of their catch from more distant oceans, which arrive by truck from Boston's Conley Marine Terminal and Logan Airport. The rest still arrives by sea.

As high-end offices, apartments and attractions continue to encroach, the Fish Pier remains a defiantly blue collar place of work. The South Boston seafood industry supports more than 3,000 jobs and a good number of them are based in the buildings that run the length of the pier. Behind the anonymous doors, hard-working seafood processors wearing fish-stained slickers and filleting gloves work as hard as their fathers and grandfathers did before them.

Of course the seafood dealers on Fish Pier remain conscious of the fact that gentrification rarely takes living communities into account. Business is certainly up on previous years and the planned dredging of Boston Harbor will eventually allow large container vessels to land cargoes directly onto the pier. But still there is a need

for the pier and its community to be protected. With this in mind state politicians are pushing for the Fish Pier to be added to the National Register of Historic Places. This would preserve its industrial character and protect it from unsuitable commercial development. Fingers crossed this will come to pass.

For now the few public facilities on the pier are all related to the seafood business. They include the popular No Name Restaurant, which began life in 1917 as a seafood stall serving fishermen, and the Exchange Conference Centre, housed in the former fish exchange at the end of the pier. Additionally, each August since 2012 the Pier has hosted the Boston Seafood Festival. It is a great opportunity not only to enjoy seafood but also to learn about the sustainability of New England's fishing industry.

The second maritime location is situated in the Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park at the far end of the South Boston Waterfront. Seemingly of little interest to visitors, this area of marine activity dates back to the late 19th century, when an area of tidal mudflats was reclaimed for use as state shipping terminals. The terminals failed to materialise, however, and instead part of the area was acquired by the Boston Wharf Company for its warehouses and railyards. Then in 1920 the rest

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**Left: The Liberty Jail Hotel**

**Above: The Boston Fish Pier (Both images: © Duncan JD Smith)**



was purchased by the U.S. Department of Defence and used to build the South Boston Naval Annex and the South Boston Army Base.

During the Second World War the Army Base was used to warehouse and distribute military goods and supplies. The Naval Annex by this time consisted of seven piers north of Fid Kennedy Way, which were serviced by various dry docks, machine and paint shops, and a barracks. After the war the Annex was used to mothball aircraft carriers of the Atlantic Fleet, alongside numerous cruisers and destroyers. Active service vessels also continued to

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**The remarkable Isabella Stewart Gardner was America's first female art collector and her eponymous museum is the country's only public museum in which both the collection and the building containing it are the products of a single mind**

arrive for maintenance and repairs.

In 1974, the South Boston Naval Annex and Army Base were both closed. The land was then purchased in the 1980s by the City of Boston and earmarked as an industrial park. Like the rest of the South Boston Waterfront, it is slowly being redeveloped but the authorities have stated that they wish to preserve as much marine-related industry and fabric as possible. This includes the impressive but little-visited Dry Dock 3 on Tide Street at the far end of Northern Avenue. Although public access is forbidden, there is a viewing balcony that permits an overview of what is the largest working dry dock on the Eastern seaboard. Located seven miles from the open sea, it is used today by the Boston Ship Repair Company to repair navy and other vessels up to 65,000 tons, with vintage gantry cranes adding to the scene. The Cunard liner *Queen Elizabeth 2* was repaired here in 1992 after she hit an uncharted rock in Nantucket Sound.

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**Left: The courtyard of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. (Image: © Duncan JD Smith)**

**Two remarkable women**

Nowhere is Boston's remarkable legacy of land reclamation better represented than in the Back Bay and Fenway-Kenmore neighbourhoods. This former tidal basin of the Charles River was drained during the 19th century thereby helping to double the city's land mass – although the casual visitor would never realise it today. One of the most impressive buildings to be erected on the new land is the world headquarters of the Christian Science movement at the junction of Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues.

Once America's fastest growing religion, Christian Science was founded by New Hampshire-born Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910) on the premise that sickness is illusory and can be corrected by prayer. It took a lot of misfortune, however, for farmer's daughter Eddy to formulate her ideas into a faith. During the 1840s, she lost her brother, first husband and mother. Her only child was also taken from her. After sustaining injuries in a fall, she credited her recovery entirely to what she glimpsed in prayer.

Eddy relocated to Boston where in 1879 she established the Church of Christ, Scientist 'to reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing'. In 1894 she opened the movement's Mother Church with funds from members, which was built in the Romanesque style. In 1906, with Christian Science flourishing, a huge neo-Renaissance extension was added to the church, with a soaring dome, seating for over 3,000 worshippers, and a Boston-built pipe organ.

Another element in the headquarters' complex is the Christian Science Publishing House. Eddy founded the church's publishing division in 1898 and it began publishing the popular *Christian Science Monitor* when she was 87. So successful was the publication that in 1930 the little-known Boston architect Chester Lindsay Churchill (1891–1958) was commissioned to design the present neo-Classical building, with its magnificently-appointed foyer.

It is in Mary Baker Eddy Library, located in the Publishing House, that the unique Mapparium is located (see page 11). This extraordinary three storey-high stained glass globe was created as

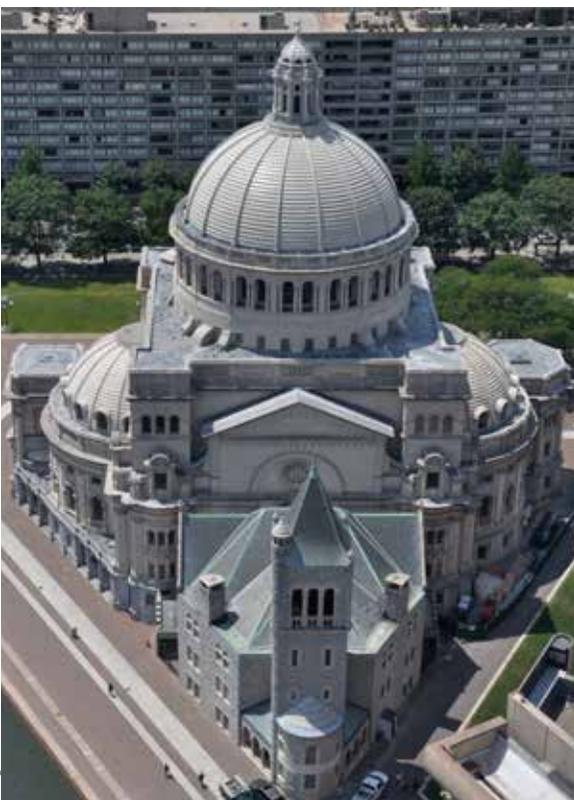


a symbol for the Christian Science Publishing Society's international character and worldwide activities. The 608 glass panels used in its construction were bought from a company in England and shipped to New York, where the maps were drawn onto them. It then took eight months to paint and fire them, after which they were brought to Boston, fitted into a bronze frame, and illuminated from the outside. By passing through the Mapparium on a footbridge, visitors are able to view the world from the inside, which provides a more accurate perspective of the world than is possible using traditional flat maps.

Equally impressive is the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on Evans Way. The remarkable Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924) was America's first female art collector and her eponymous museum is the country's only public museum in which both the collection and the building containing it are the products of a single mind.

The daughter of a successful linen merchant, Gardner was born in New York City, where her education exposed her to art and music. Aged 16 she moved to Paris, where two events changed her life: she became classmates with Julia Gardner, member of a wealthy family of Boston ship owners, and she experienced Renaissance art at the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan. She vowed that should she ever inherit money she would create such a museum, too.

In 1858 after returning to New York she visited the Gardners in Boston, and was introduced to Julia's brother, John 'Jack' Lowell Gardner (1837–1898). The two married in 1860 and moved into a spacious home on Beacon Street. In 1863 she gave birth to a son but he succumbed to pneumonia. She then suffered a miscarriage, and with no further children possible became depressed. She cured herself by travelling, and in 1867 spent a year with Jack exploring Europe. She returned to Boston reinvigorated and began establishing her reputation as a socialite. A dozen further trips followed, including the Middle East and Asia, and each time the couple returned with artworks. By the 1890s they had accumulated a world-class collection of paintings and sculpture, as well as



**Left: Portrait of Isabella Stewart Gardner by John Singer Sargent in 1888**

**Above, left: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Christian Science Center. The original Mother Church (1894) is in the foreground and behind it the Mother Church extension (1906)**

**Above, middle: Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science. Photo published in 1916**

**Above, right: Detail of the Christian Science Publishing House which houses the Mapparium (Image: © Duncan JD)**

ceramics, metalwork, tapestries, and furniture.

Fate stepped in again in 1898, when Jack suddenly died. Isabella dealt with the loss by realising her dream of building a museum. Accordingly she purchased land in the Fenway area of Boston and built Fenway Court. Plain from the outside, this four-storey structure looks inwards onto a magnificent glass-roofed courtyard inspired by the palaces of Renaissance Venice. She then spent a year arranging her collections around it (predominantly her beloved 15th and 16th century Italian Renaissance works), each according to her own aesthetic, with objects displayed to foster a love of art rather than their study. In her will she stipulated that the museum would only remain open after her demise if this arrangement was preserved, and with the exception of a new entrance this has been honoured.

### Calm in Cambridge

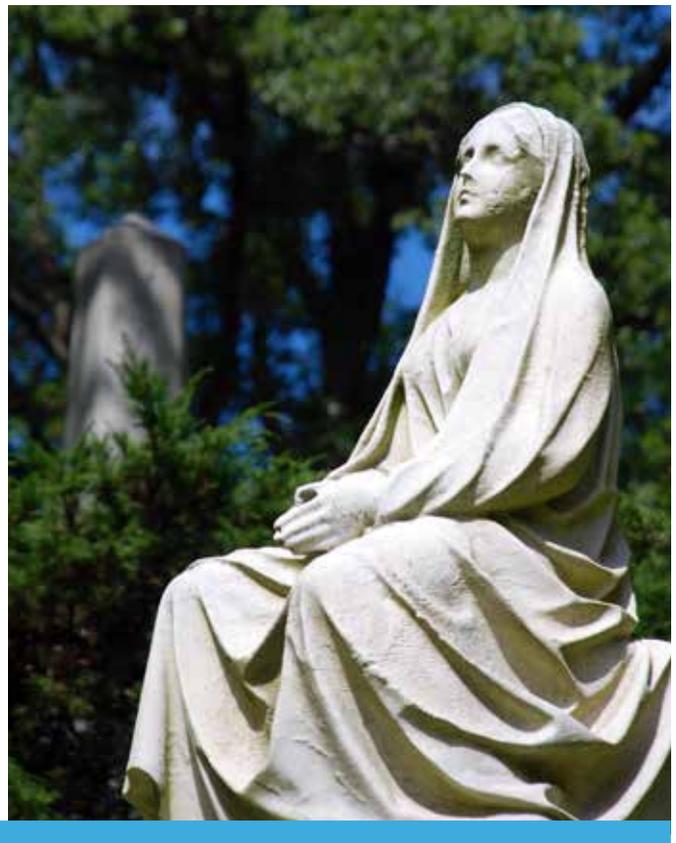
When Boston's bustle gets too much there is help at hand. Retreat across the Charles River to the separate city of Cambridge, where Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology stand at the forefront of academic and technical innovation. Though these academic centres are decidedly lively their bustle is offset by two relatively tranquil locations. One is the Society of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Monastery at 980 Memorial Drive. With its sturdy walls and Italianate arches, it might appear aloof but step inside and the monks here will

welcome you into an unexpected sanctuary.

The monastery's location so near to Harvard University may seem curious at first glance but it is intentional. The construction of the Society's first monastery in 1866 alongside Oxford University in England was aimed at providing spiritual guidance to the students, and the same rationale underpins the location in Cambridge.

The Society's North American congregation was established in Boston in 1870, as part of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Work on the Cambridge monastery commenced in 1924 to a design by Ralph Adams Cram (1863–1942), an architect renowned for his ecclesiastical buildings. Later in the mid-1930s, Cram designed new living quarters for the monks, and the original monastery building became a Guesthouse. At the same time he designed an impressive new monastery church dedicated to St. Mary and St. John, rendered in Cram's favoured French Romanesque Revival style. With its columns of Indiana limestone, marble floors and stained glass, it conveys the essence of an early Christian basilica.

The monks today are chiefly involved in local and regional ministries, preaching and offering spiritual guidance not only to students but also prisoners, the homeless, and the sick. They have also developed a successful line in hospitality, offering modest, short-term accommodation in their guesthouse to those in search of calm and



respite. With polite signs promoting quiet, and mobile phones banished to the perimeter fence, life at the monastery follows a gentle rhythm. The monks are always on hand for prayerful conversation and the sharing of meals. In so doing they have struck a successful balance, preserving a sense of old fashioned sanctuary, whilst also engaging energetically with the world outside.

Perhaps the ultimate expression of tranquillity can be found farther west, where Cambridge becomes Watertown. Mount Auburn Cemetery, with its neo-Classical monuments set in acres of beautifully landscaped grounds, is considered America's first landscaped garden cemetery. It couldn't be more different from Boston's stark Colonial-era burying grounds and did much to soften the country's traditionally bleak view of death and the afterlife.

It was Massachusetts-born Jacob Bigelow (1787–1879) who first proposed the idea of a garden cemetery. As a medical doctor he knew of the health risks attached to burying the dead in overcrowded church crypts, and as a botanist he saw virtue in spacious, out-of-town burial grounds such as Père Lachaise in Paris. With assistance from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and a design from its first President, Henry Dearborn (1783–1851), the cemetery was inaugurated in 1831.

As much a park as a necropolis, Mount Auburn quickly became a visitor attraction. Sixty thousand

people passed through the cemetery's impressive Egyptian Revival gate in 1848 alone. The cemetery sprawls for a glorious 175 acres. Ten miles of roads and paths wind through tranquil woodlands and dells, which provide a sympathetic backdrop to the graves of the 98,000 people buried here. Visitors can either wander at leisure or else sign up for one of several thematic guided tours.

Rightly much is made of the fact that there are over 9,000 trees at Mount Auburn, encompassing hundreds of different species. Additionally there are thousands of shrubs to add texture and fragrance to the scene. Such diversity attracts wildlife, with over 220 species of bird recorded by ornithologists, and a breeding colony of spotted salamanders in a pond in Consecration Dell.

It is no surprise that Mount Auburn has its fair share of resting luminaries. They include Isabella Stewart Gardner, Mary Baker Eddy, and Charles Bulfinch, as well as poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), author of *The Bostonians* Henry James (1843–1916), and polymath Oliver Wendell Homes Sr. (1809–1894). All would no doubt approve of their final resting place. ●

**Above, left: The Society of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Monastery**

**Above, right: A funerary monument in Mount Auburn Cemetery (Both images: © Duncan JD Smith)**



Duncan JD Smith's book *Only in Boston: A Guide to Unique Locations, Hidden Corners and Unusual Objects* has just been published by The Urban Explorer. For further details visit [www.ONLYinguides.com](http://www.ONLYinguides.com) and [www.duncanjdsmith.com](http://www.duncanjdsmith.com)

# Travel tips for visiting **Boston, USA**

## Flying

Numerous international airlines fly to Boston Logan International Airport, including British Airways, Lufthansa, Icelandair, Cathay Pacific, Delta, American Airlines, Turkish Airlines, TAP Portugal, Aer Lingus, Air Canada, Westjet and Emirates. The airport lies 3 miles from the city and offers a free bus service to the main railway station.

## Visas

The United States offers a Visa Waiver Program to citizens of some countries if they are travelling for business, pleasure or are in transit, and they meet specific requirements. You can apply for your ESTA at [www.esta-onlinevisa.com/#nbb](http://www.esta-onlinevisa.com/#nbb). See [www.uk.usembassy.gov/visas/](http://www.uk.usembassy.gov/visas/) for more information.

## Getting around

One of the great pleasures of Boston is that it is easily walkable, its original narrow streets winding their way amongst the skyscrapers. Unfortunately this also makes driving a nightmare. Fortunately the city's superb network of public transport run by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is at hand. This comprises subway lines (including the country's oldest subway tunnel), buses and ferries. Visitors planning on using public transport extensively should purchase a 1-day, 7-day or monthly travel pass known as a CharlieCard ([www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com)).

## Weather

Like other East Coast cities, Boston is most pleasant in spring (Apr & May) and fall (Sep–Nov), when cooler temperatures range between 5 and 23° C. Summer is the most popular time but can get busy and humid, with temperatures reaching the high 20s. Winters can be harsh though moderated by the Atlantic.

## The Essentials

**Time difference:** GMT - 5

**Water:** Tap water is safe to drink in America, although bottled water is readily available.

**Politics:** America is a democracy with a President as Head of State.

**Tipping:** Waiting staff in restaurants expect tips of up to 20%, in bars somewhat less. Hotel porters and housekeeping staff appreciate at least a couple of dollars a night.

**Electrical Current/Plugs:** Electrical current is 110 volts AC and plugs are standard American two or three round pins.

**Opening times:** It is best to check individual opening times beforehand but in general most cultural institutions close on Mondays and are open Tuesday to Sunday, and stores open Monday to Saturday, with some on Sunday afternoon, too.

**Insurance:** In view of the high cost of medical care in the United States, anyone visiting from overseas should take out reasonably comprehensive travel insurance. No vaccinations are required.

**Personal safety:** Boston is one of the safest American cities making both group and solo travel relatively stress-free. Needless to say, however, some suburbs at night-time demand common sense. If in trouble call the police on 911.

## Freedom Trail

Boston is home to perhaps America's most famous walking tour: the Freedom Trail. Created in 1951 as a way of linking 16 of the city's many Colonial-era sites, it runs 2.5 miles from Boston Common all the way to the site of the Battle of Bunker Hill in Charlestown.

Along the way it takes in various churches and cemeteries, as well as the Massachusetts State House, Faneuil Hall, and the USS *Constitution*, the world's oldest commissioned naval vessel afloat. Other thematic walking tours cover subjects as disparate as African-American history, Irish and women's heritage, and famous film locations.

## Money

**Currency:** The currency in America is the dollar (USD, symbol \$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of \$100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of 1 cent, 5 cents (nickel), 10 cents (dime) and 25 cents (a quarter).

**Credit Cards:** Are accepted widely. ATMs can be found almost everywhere.

## Beyond Boston

Many more scenic and historic treasures lie within easy striking distance of Boston. A fascinating day-trip westwards can be made to the revolutionary battlefields at Lexington and Concord, which helped kick-start the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783). The British Redcoats were driven from here all the way back to Boston, where on March 17th they evacuated never to return. Just outside Concord is Walden Pond, where author Henry David Thoreau sought tranquillity and penned his famous book.

Barely half an hour away from Boston's North Station is the quaint town of Salem, the setting for a series of notorious witch trials staged by the early Puritan settlers. Other towns along this part of the coast include Gloucester and Rockport, which can be reached by road, bus, and MBTA commuter rail.

South of Boston lies the Pilgrim village of Plymouth, where settlers famously landed in 1627. Beyond is the old whaling port of New Bedford, which provides the backdrop for Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, and from where ferries head out to Martha's Vineyard. Too far out for day-trippers but a must for lovers of sun and sand is the Cape Cod peninsula and the island of Nantucket.

## 1 Holidays

Most months in the United States include a public holiday, when banks, post and public offices, many shops and some visitor attractions are closed. The city's summer season, when many attractions offer extended opening hours, runs from Memorial Day (last Monday in May) to Labor Day (first Monday in September). Patriot's Day marking the first battles of the American Revolutionary War is on the third Monday in April.

### Don't miss!

Boston's maritime heritage can be experienced through its seafood, which includes clam chowder, mussel stew, and mouth-watering lobster rolls available in the city's numerous seafood restaurants. The Union Oyster House in Downtown is America's oldest restaurant still in business.