



Four centuries of pilgrims' progress

Retrace steps of settlers to New England on a fascinating coastal road trip

By Graeme Croser

IT started with a marathon and ended in a sprint, yet in between came something to savour at leisure – a spring drive round New England, the corner of America where it all began. Around Cape Cod they are getting ready for next year's 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower at Provincetown.

We would retrace the steps of the pilgrims, but not before we'd looped north, touching the coastline of Maine before climbing into the White Mountains of New Hampshire and back down through the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island.

But first we had business in the city. My better half's qualification for the Boston Marathon fired the starting gun on this trip and I'm not too embarrassed to admit that as she powered through her run I sat, beer in hand, savouring the spectacle of baseball on Patriot's Day.

Conveniently, the route passed Fenway Park at mile 25 and so, with the Red Sox losing to the Orioles, I ducked out to cheer as Gill breezed past.

We'd booked accommodation across the river in Cambridge and, after a spa session, we headed to Harvard Square to celebrate at Henrietta's Table, a restaurant in the Charles Hotel which promised and delivered fresh and honest cooking in a refined setting.

The next morning we embarked on the drive north, defiantly ignoring the satnav to take I-95 towards Maine. This was important. The US highways may offer the path of least resistance but would have denied us the potholed charm of Route 1 as it swept through small North Massachusetts and New Hampshire country towns. The Nubble Lighthouse offered our first and perhaps most picturesque

stop of the journey. Blessed with a

deep blue sky, the Atlantic backdrop was stunning.

The postcard vista sustained us through the seaside town of Ogunquit up to Portland where we ended our day with a divine pot of lobster stew at Eventide, a star of the town's burgeoning dining scene.

We spent the next morning pottering around the boutiques and record shops of the Old Port before making our way to the White Mountains.

Our next stop was the Glen House Hotel, nestled in the foothills of Mount Washington and offering a spectacular view of the peak from both its indoor saltwater pool and bar. Sipping post-dinner cocktails, we were glad of our comforts so close to a place that has recorded some of the world's fiercest weather.

The next day we drove round the mountain for a tour of the Mount Washington Hotel, an imposing building that looks like it might have inspired the movie adaptation of *The Shining*.

It did not, but its storied past lays claim to a significant piece of world history. In its gleaming Gold Room, documents were signed to set up the World Bank in 1944, the result of an international summit that helped form a global post-war economic plan.

On the Sunday we headed towards New Haven, Connecticut, for some education.

A tour of Yale was provided by Josh, one of three Scots matriculated at America's fourth oldest university. Laid back and dry of humour, this former basketball

player from Ayr delivered an entertaining walk-round that revealed secrets of an institution that has nurtured many of America's finest minds – among them five future US presidents.

Our Connecticut wind-down recharged us ahead of a wonderfully hectic jaunt to Rhode Island, which may be the US's smallest state but delivers big adventure.

The drive into Newport across the Pell Bridge carried us into a 24-hour whirlwind that included the International Tennis Hall of Fame, the Newport Vineyards and the city's fabled mansion houses. The Rosecliff and Marble House mansions both featured in the 1974 movie of *The Great Gatsby* and are now museums. For an outside perspective the 3.5 mile Cliff Walk offers a chance to combine gawping at the buildings' majesty with the shoreline's natural beauty.

Our legs stretched, we returned to four wheels for our trip to the far tin of Cane Cod. However, our

two-and-a-half hour drive to Provincetown was nothing compared to the journey endured by the passengers of the *Mayflower*.

The Pilgrims Monument stands as a testament to the endeavours of the puritans of 1620 but the cold granite tower is at odds with the liberal and colourful vibe of the town.

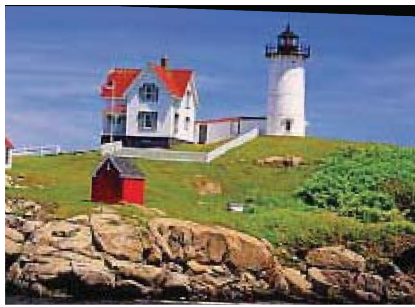
We stayed at the Lands End Inn, which describes itself as 'a view with a room' but undersells its quirky interiors.

The *Mayflower* Consent led to the establishment of a first colony in Plymouth, our own final stop. At the Pilgrims Museum, we learned about plans for next year's quatercentenary.

No trip to the States is complete without a spot of retail therapy, so we indulged in a dash round

the Wrentham Village shopping outlet south of Boston. After 900 miles of road, the athlete among us set a bargain-bagging pace I simply could not match.

● *Delta flies non-stop from Edinburgh to Boston. Fares start at £353 plus £146.28 taxes. Visit delta.com. We stayed at the Marriott in Portland and Newport (www.marriott.com); Glen House in Goreham (www.theglenhouse.com); Garden Gables Inn in Lenox (www.gardengablesinn.com); Homestead Inn in Madison (www.homesteadinn.com); Lands End Inn in Provincetown (www.landsendinn.com); and Hotel 1620 in Plymouth (www.hotel1620.com). For more information visit www.discovernewengland.org.*



POSTCARD FROM THE EDGE:

The pretty Nubble Lighthouse in York, Maine. Top, the waterfront of Provincetown, Massachusetts

