

# *Celebrating* Ten Years of Cultural Tourism (2000-2010)



**Boston Irish Tourism Association**



**BOSTON IRISH TOURISM ASSOCIATION  
(BITA)**

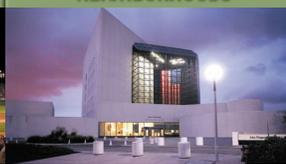
# Ten Years Of Cultural Tourism

(2000-2010)

## *Irish* Heritage Trail



BOSTON



NEIGHBORHOODS

The Boston Irish Tourism Association is a year-round marketing campaign launched in summer 2000 to promote the state's rich Irish culture, heritage and history.

We target visitor groups (meetings & conventions, business travelers, tourists, educational tours) coming to Massachusetts, and the state's large Irish-American population, which accounts for 24% of all residents.

Working directly with state tourism agencies that promote cultural tourism, we have been successful in branding Boston as "the Capital of Irish America" and Massachusetts as "America's most Irish state."

BITA has created a unique body of tourism literature on the Irish in Massachusetts. We publish cultural and culinary magazines, a genealogy guidebook, walking maps and brochures, while operating four web sites. Since 2000 we have distributed nearly one million pieces of literature through in-state tourist centers and out-of-state to prospective visitors.

We are a membership group with about 100 members and sponsors. Our long-term sponsors and partners include the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum, the Glynn Hospitality Group, Live Nation, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau and Tourism Ireland.

BITA helps drive the creative economy by working with artists, performers, graphic designers, web designers, writers, printers

and publishers, while promoting small businesses such as pubs, gift shops and art galleries alongside mainstream hotels and restaurants, cultural groups, concert venues, museums and colleges.

We serve as a clearinghouse for thousands of visitor inquiries each year, providing details on festivals and parades, music and dance events, literary and theatre productions, art exhibits, sports, genealogy, educational courses and culinary celebrations.

Our program has worked to strengthen tourism industry ties by cross-marketing cultural opportunities between Massachusetts and other New England states, Canada, Ireland and Northern Ireland. We work with out-of-state government agencies like Prince Edward Island Tourism, Nova Scotia Tourism and Quebec City Tourism, Tourism Ireland and New Hampshire Travel & Tourism.

BITA is the only organization in the United States that specifically markets Irish-American culture and heritage year round to the tourism industry.

If you would like to get involved as a sponsor, advertiser, or member, please contact us at 617 696-9880 or [irishmassachusetts@comcast.net](mailto:irishmassachusetts@comcast.net).

Sincerely,

**Michael and Colette Quinlin**  
Founders,  
Boston Irish Tourism Association

## BITA PROJECTS

### BOSTON IRISH HERITAGE TRAIL

Just as Boston's Freedom Trail recounts the city's colonial period, and the Black Heritage Trail tells the African American story, Boston has its own Irish Heritage Trail, capturing the illustrious tale of the Irish in Boston from the 18th century to the present.

BITA launched the Irish Heritage Trail in 2000 as a way for visitors, local residents, and student groups to appreciate the Irish-American experience.

The trail begins along the city's waterfront, and winds its way through downtown Boston, over Beacon Hill, into the Back Bay and ends at the Fens. Twenty stops along the way include parks, memorials, statues, cemeteries, government buildings and even a baseball stadium.

In addition, BITA has identified dozens of landmarks in Boston's neighborhoods, and is taking an inventory of Irish landmarks across the state.

To date, BITA has distributed 45,000 free copies of the Irish Heritage Trail map to visitors, teachers, and school groups.

### GAELIC GOURMET WEEK

In 2005 BITA teamed up with Tourism Ireland and other partners to create Gaelic Gourmet Week, a joint celebration of Irish and American cuisine leading up to St. Patrick's Day each March.

Over 20 master chefs from Ireland, Northern Ireland and Canada have participated, coming to Boston to share cooking and culture with over two dozen American chefs.

In addition to creating gourmet meals at leading hotels and restaurants in Boston, the visiting chefs have given classroom lectures and cooking demonstrations at Boston University School of Hospitality, Endicott College, Johnson & Wales Uni-



versity, the New England Flower Show and the John F. Kennedy Library.

Partners include Tourism Ireland and Canada's Consulate in Boston, as well as Hotel Commonwealth, Omni Parker House, Back Bay Hotel, and Seaport Boston Hotel. The program has raised funds for local charities like South Boston Community Health Center and Fisher House Boston, which provides housing for families of veterans in Boston for medical attention.

#### **BITA'S TRAVEL & CULTURE GUIDE**

BITA publishes the Travel & Culture Guide, a full-color travel magazine issued in June and October. Each issue has a selection of feature stories, profiles and news items about Massachusetts's Irish. It lists over 100 Irish cultural groups, pubs and restaurants, gift shops and travel agencies, as well as hotels, museums, concert venues and other items of interest to tourists.

The Guide encourages visitors to participate in cultural activities and to patronize small businesses and cultural venues.

The Guide also offers travel opportunities outside of Massachusetts, including the New England region, eastern Canada, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

These magazines are distributed for free at visitor information centers throughout the state, at local hotels, gift shops, pubs, and cultural venues, and mailed outside the state to tour groups, travel agencies, travel media, and Irish-American groups across the United States.

#### **BITA'S IRISH FOOD & CULTURE GUIDE**

Each March, to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Massachusetts, BITA issues a full-color magazine devoted to Irish cuisine and culture in Massachusetts, and offers advice on where to find authentic Irish-American culture, such as the annual Chieftains concert at Symphony Hall.

The Irish Food & Culture Guide includes Irish food recipes, profiles of Irish and American chefs, and a variety of parades, concerts, commemorations, and cultural gatherings taking place in Massachusetts.

The Guide is the official publication of the city's Gaelic Gourmet Week.

#### **GENEALOGY**

BITA has worked closely with local genealogy groups such as The Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA), New England Genealogical Society (NEGS) and the Massachusetts State Archives to publicize the many family history resources in Massachusetts.

In 2003 BITA issued a booklet, Finding Your Irish Roots in Massachusetts, a compilation of federal, state and local genealogical resources, and has distributed over 25,000 copies of the booklet free to visitors, students, and genealogy groups.

BITA has participated in a number of genealogy conferences, including the international conference of The Federation of Genealogical Societies, held in Boston in 2006. The event drew over 7,000 visitors from around the world.

## **BITA WEB SITES**

### **IrishMassachusetts.com**

This is BITA's flagship web site, launched in summer 2000. It provides up-to-date information on the state's cultural activities, including both Irish/Celtic and mainstream cultural activities.

It includes descriptive and contact information for nearly 100 hotels, restaurants and pubs, gift shops, concert venues, travel and tourism agencies, and cultural organizations, plus an archive of press releases, feature stories and profiles of Irish-Americans from Massachusetts.

BITA has developed a successful contest promotional program where cultural groups and concert venues can publicize upcoming events to a list of over 7,000 email subscribers.

BITA also maintains a blog, [irishmassachusetts.blogspot.com](http://irishmassachusetts.blogspot.com)

### **IrishHeritageTrail.com**

This is the official web site for the Boston Irish Heritage Trail, a popular resource for online visitors, researchers, students and educators. The site focuses on the history and heritage of the Boston Irish and depicts 20 landmarks in downtown Boston. It includes 20 additional landmarks in neighborhoods such as Charlestown, South Boston and Dorchester.

The site has a resource guide for educators who require more details on the history of the Irish in Boston. BITA is currently researching an additional 40 landmarks of Irish significance across Massachusetts.

### **Boston.com/famine**

BITA maintains the official web site of the Boston Irish Famine Memorial, a monument unveiled in Boston in June 1998 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Irish Famine. The web site contains a complete history of the memorial process, including architectural and landscaping plans, statements of the artist, Robert Shore, a list of committee members, and a memorial to the late Thomas J. Flatley, chairman of the Famine Memorial committee.

### **PSGilmore-Society.org**

BITA maintains the official web site of the Patrick S. Gilmore Society, a non-profit group dedicated to the musical works and life of Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, who emigrated from Ireland to Boston in the 19th century. Gilmore is known as the Father of the American Band, and composer of the popular anthem, When Johnny Comes Marching Home. He was Union Bandmaster in the American Civil War, and organized two peace jubilees in Boston in 1869 and 1872.

# BITA'S

## *Marketing Collaborations*

### (2000-2010)



#### 2000-2002

##### **Boston History Collaborative**

Provided research, content, design and printing for Immigrant Trail of Boston, a collection of immigrant landmarks in Boston; provided content for BHC's web site.

#### 2000-2003

##### **Dreams of Freedom Immigration Museum**

Handled media relations; organized an immigration educational supplement in The Boston Globe; formed an Immigrant Advisory Council of local ethnic communities; and designed, added content and launched the Museum's web site.

#### 2002-2008

##### **Irish Foundation of Lawrence**

Created a marketing campaign to publicize the Irish Collection at the Lawrence Public Library; handled media outreach for the Robert Frost Foundation's poetry event with Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney, and publicized the unveiling of the Irish Famine Memorial in Lawrence.

#### 2003-2004

##### **Irish Immigration Center**

Handled media relations and marketing; organized a video on IIC with WCVB-TV Channel Five, and worked with U.S. Congress on funding and publicity for the federally-funded Walsh Visa program.

#### 2004-2007

##### **Irish Cultural Centre of New England**

Developed a full-flight marketing and PR program for ICCNE, encompassing year-round media outreach, web site development, publication of three newsletters per year; and marketing ICCNE's annual festival, including media buys, advertising, design, media outreach and publication of program newspaper.

#### 2005-2006

##### **ACT Roxbury/Madison Park Development**

Consultant on National Endowment for the Humanities Grant application for a Hibernian Hall exhibit on Boston's Irish and Black communities.

#### 2005-2006

##### **John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum**

Worked with Library officials to publicize the Library's special exhibit entitled President Kennedy's Visit to Ireland.

#### 2006

##### **Ordnance Survey Ireland, Dublin**

Represented Ireland's governmental map and genealogy agency in Boston for national genealogy conference at the Hynes Convention Center.

#### 2009-2010

##### **Tourism Ireland & Volvo Ocean Race**

Created an eight-page supplement for Tourism Ireland to promote the Volvo Ocean Race three-week stopover in Boston, April-May 2009.

## BITA AWARDS

- Cultural Tourism grants from Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism
- White House Millennium Commission Award of Boston Irish Heritage Trail as an official Millennium Site
- "Best Creative Execution of Special Events Marketing," awarded by Mass. Office of Travel & Tourism
- The "Edward Riley Award" issued by the Massachusetts Ancient Order of Hibernians
- Alicia Monti Fellowship at Boston Public Library to research 19th century Music Catalog
- Top 100 Irish Americans, Irish America Magazine
- National Finalist in the Bushmills Twin City Competition in the United States

## BITA AFFILIATIONS

- Boston Athenaeum
- Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce
- Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann
- Boston Irish Famine Memorial
- Irish Cultural Centre of New England
- Eire Society
- Charitable Irish Society

## BITA SERVICES

- Writing and Research
- Design and Print Production
- Project Management
- Web Site Design and Management
- Media Outreach Strategy



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