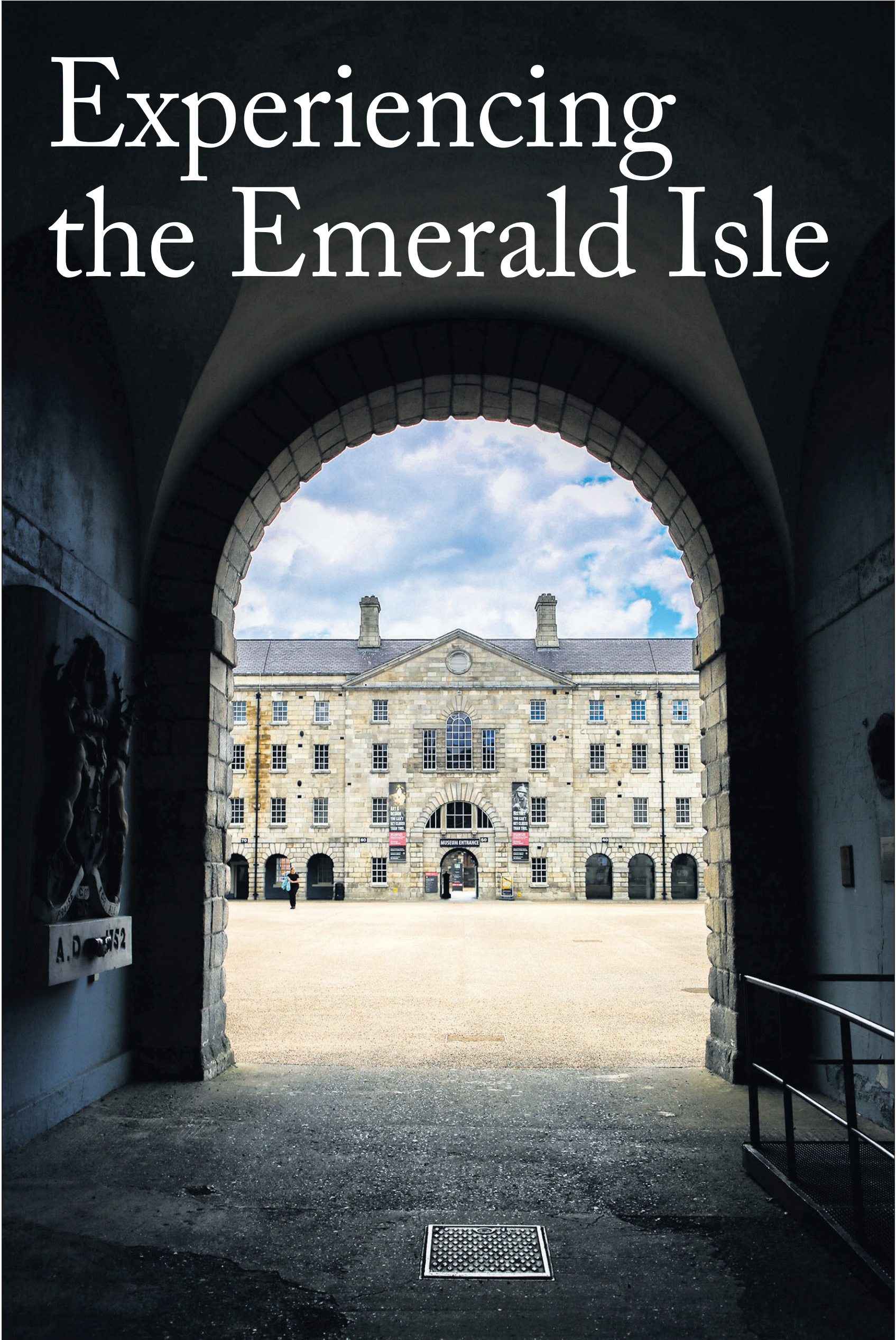


Experiencing the Emerald Isle



This former army base now houses the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Stay left, my friend

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Dublin, Ireland’s largest city, grabs your senses and hangs on tight.

On our first day there, we boarded a hop-on, hop-off double-decker tour bus to get the lay of the land. Tour guide Gerry McDonald stood on the upper deck clutching a microphone, keeping up a comical monologue that broke through the jet lag.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A couple of sheep wander a country road in Ireland’s County Wicklow.

Tongue firmly in cheek, he proclaimed the pint as “the unofficial currency of Dublin.” To punctuate the remark, our coach cruised past the Guinness brewery, where a crowd of tourists waited at the brewery’s gate and a yeasty aroma filled the air. The most common method of suicide, he said, is “drowning in a vat of Guinness.”

McDonald, an Irishman with red hair and impish blue eyes, said religion and the city’s most famous purveyors of whiskey and beer are strangely bound together. Irish whiskey mogul Henry Roe paid to renovate the ornate Christchurch Cathedral. The Guinness family funded a full-scale restoration of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in the 1800s.

The bus rolled past St. Patrick’s Cathedral a few moments later. St. Patrick, he said, was not an Irishman. He was born in Wales, kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. Legend says the patron saint rid Ireland of snakes by chasing them into the sea. In reality, McDonald said, “Ireland does have



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A singer performs on a pedestrian mall in Dublin.

snakes, but they have two legs and live in Parliament.”

We disembarked from the bus laughing, ready to explore Dublin. We wandered in and out of museums, bookstores, pubs and Trinity College, which has an Oxford-Cambridge vibe and

houses the famed Book of Kells.

Dublin is a city of rebels and writers. Famous residents include the likes of James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Jonathan Swift and Bram Stoker.

See TRAVEL/4C

