

# Ulster Is the Land of the Green Third Report From United Kingdom

By Judy Longenecker  
IFYE Ambassador

After a delay of two hours in Edinburgh on August 26 I was well on my way to a delightful two weeks in Londonderry County, Northern Ireland. After crossing the Irish Sea I saw below me the vast beautiful pattern of green green fields in dividually outlined by hedge rows.

During my stay here, I soon learned that the landscape was quite varied from rocky, steep coastlines to highland terrain (similar to Scotland), other parts almost barren and rocky, and of course, the green green fields of farmland.

As during all of my exchange, I was hosted by a member of the Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster. I was also given my first opportunity to show my slides from the States.

Before going into much detail, I should introduce you to my host family, the John Knipes. The Knipes live just south of the town of Kilrae in Londonderry County. The family consists of six children, aged 14 to 7 years (including a set of twins). One can imagine there was never a dull moment!

Mr. Knipe specializes in egg production with battery hens. When the new houses are completed and filled they will house 120,000 hens. This is the largest hen operation I've seen and I do understand this is the largest in Northern Ireland.

While living in Ulster, I found my days filled to the brim, visiting many points of interest.

The first weekend after arriving, I found myself traveling to another part of Ireland, the Republic. We traveled 85 miles to Portlough in Donegal County. The Port is a very small seaside village, consisting of holidaymakers (vacationers). Donegal is mountainous, rocks most everywhere, and many of



Judy Longenecker  
'I'll Remember Irish Nite'

the farmers don't have more than several good arable fields, the remainder is grazing land. Life is very slow, one even loses track of the time of day, not to mention days of the week. Donegal is internationally known for their Donegal Tweeds, which are really beautiful woolsens.

Enroute to Donegal, we passed through the city of Londonderry, which I must admit doesn't leave one with a real sense of security. While I was in Derry I didn't see any riots but like elsewhere one really doesn't realize the pressure while staying in the county. Of course, in the city there was the ever presence of soldiers in their sandbag barriers on the street corners. To me, it was almost like seeing a movie but then one realizes — I'm right here seeing it for myself.

Since I'm really covering fine distinct areas of countries on my exchange, I've found museums a great aid in learning the culture. In Ulster, I visited the Falk Museum and here houses and workshops are mov-

ed from their original location to the Falk Park stone by stone. Included in the Falk Park were an eighteenth century laborer's house, a spade mill, a farm house with thatched roof, a flax mill, weaver's shed and house, a forge and another eighteenth century farmhouse. Here in the Museum, I learned the method of bricking peat, drying it and using it for winter's feed. Peat bogs are ever present in Ulster and today peat is still used for fuel.

While living here, I had the opportunity to visit a domestic science (home economics) college. The college was the Domestic Science College in Belfast. I learned that they offer four certificates. The teacher's diploma in domestic science, post graduate catering teacher's certificate, national diploma in institutional management, and the cook-caterer's certificate. Two of the certificates are three-year courses, and the others are one year courses. When comparing these certificates to the innumerable areas offered in home economics in the States, I was rather surprised. But I wasn't the only one. For my guide too was quite

amazed when I told her some of the areas in which our home economic girls can major. She said she never heard of well over half.

Ulster is a relatively small county having a total of 3,332,000 acres with 2,750,000 acres in agricultural use. There are three main industries: ship building, textiles (linen) and agriculture. There are approximately 37,000 farm businesses, with half of these involved in dairying. The remainder specialize in cropping, intensive hog or poultry units or mixed farms with no predominate single enterprise.

Ulster, like the remainder of the United Kingdom, has a great deal of government support in agriculture. The government sets up marketing boards which buy the agricultural commodity and if the market price isn't up to the standard price, the farmer is compensated for the difference.

Marketing boards are on the local level for milk pigs and seed potatoes. In the areas of eggs and wool, the board is for the whole of the United Kingdom. Fat cattle and fat sheep are marketed under the Fatstock Guarantee Scheme.

There are also other schemes to encourage farmers to enlarge farms and have bigger herds or flocks as the case may be.

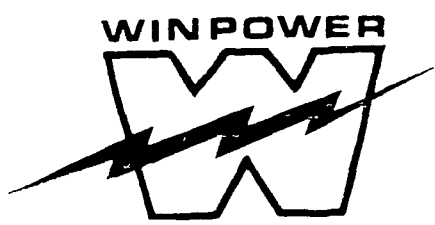
One good illustration is the Hill Farming schemes, to encourage more cattle. A subsidy is paid to the farmer for each breeding cow kept. Another pays a subsidy for each hilly hill ewe. These subsidies are to help with the cost of winter feed.

The value of the agricultural output in 1968-69 was 135 million pounds (or \$330 million). This accounted for seven per cent of the total of the United Kingdom's agricultural output.

At present, barren, boggy areas are being taken by the ministry of agriculture for the planting of conifer trees. A total of 150,000 acres is to be planted, with 95,000 acres already done. In years to come, Ulster should be self-supporting in soft woods.

Fisheries also represent a big part of Ulster's agriculture. The fishing fleet realized a total of 1,000,000 pounds (or \$2,500,000) in 1969. There are also commercial fisheries for both salmon and eels with a total of 200,000 pounds and 338,000 pounds respectively.

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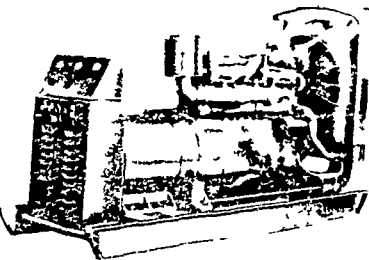
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