**Essays on Mount Crosby - Company Town**

For a century (until 1997) Mount Crosby was an odd little town with an unusual demographic. I can say that because of being from here, though diplomacy might prevent you from agreeing with me. It was a company town - the property of the Boards and eventually the council. And there was a sharp thing about living in a company town that came into the minds of its women and children every now and then (perhaps less so the men); that you could only live here as long as your dad did too.

If something happened to him or he did something unexpected, you would, of course, be gone to somewhere unknown and probably unhappy. I thought of it occasionally, and at large it happened with a frequency that made sure we knew about it. I felt it was an advantage the farmers' children had (that they were better grounded), though I wouldn't have changed places if I'd been asked.

There was a sort of awful equality to it - no-one could stay without the worker - no father meant no job, and no job meant no house (it wasn't a charity). It happened to a young friend of mine, just nine, whose father was an electrician and lived in a house near the old school. He had arrived somewhat unexpectedly from out of town, as electricians' families tended to do, and he was a good kid and managed to fit in pretty well considering he had landed on a parochial planet.

He was here for about a year before his father died and they were given the usual fortnight or so to find another life, which they did in Cheltenham better than we could have done, and I never saw him again. He wrote a card once addressed to me at the Post Office saying he enjoyed the Collingwood Football Club. It seemed a small thing to enjoy compared to all the perils he faced and from it I became, I am sure, one of the most unusual Collingwood supporters going around - knowing nothing of the game or the team except that they reminded me of Alan (and still do).

Col Hester