

# **No Alternative**

**by Keith H Lloyd**

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The boy's father was a steel bender and fixer by trade. It meant climbing about on girders, catching hot rivets thrown by a stoker at ground level, into a bucket before hammering them into the girders providing the framework for buildings.

There were many new buildings being erected all round the country in 1937. Little did we know that many would be destroyed during the war just a few years later. The boy's father had to follow the work wherever it was - so sixteen weeks work in Doncaster was not to be ignored. Unfortunately, all the family could not go with him. He could take his wife and a baby but his baby was two years old and his older boy was five years old—so they had a dilemma.

"There is no alternative," said Granny. "The boy will have to stay with us." The older boy thought, are they talking about me? There is no alternative, what did it mean? Alternative to what? Would he have to live with Granny while his family was away? To stay with Granny was not at all daunting, in fact the boy considered it an exciting prospect.

It was explained that his father, mother and brother would be going away for some considerable time and the boy would be taken care of by his Granny. But what he wanted to know was why he could not go with his family. He was told it was all a question of available accommodation. The landlady in Doncaster could only cater for two adults and a baby but was prepared to accept a two year old instead of a baby - but on no account could she take a further child, especially a boy of five.

So it was that the boy was not wanted on the journey and was left in the capable hands of his Grandmother. He tried not to cry when his family left; big boys don't cry and anyway he did not want them to see that he was upset by them leaving him - he knew now there was 'no alternative'.

I was the boy ... Keith Lloyd.