

Moseley Remembered - “Boots Booklovers’ Library”

by Diane Hirst

I wonder if any of you remember when there was a “private” library on the first floor of what is still Boots Chemist on the corner of Salisbury Road? Members paid a subscription (I’ve no idea how much it was) for membership. In this library were several shelves of books, though not as many as the Public Libraries. Thinking about these books, I seem to think they were in better condition than those in the other libraries----all had brightly coloured covers with a small hole, with a metal edge where you slotted in what I think is called a Treasure Tag, attached to piece of string with a bookmark on the end. On the card part (actually plastic) was, I suppose, some sort of personal identification, this was certainly handed to the librarian in charge to deal with before you could take your book home. I seem to think you were allowed to take out two at a time, but I may have got this wrong.

The only books I really liked then were by Enid Blyton. The B authors were, of course, on a high shelf and there was a very nice set of wooden steps (probably two or three) with a pole at the side for one to hold for purposes of safety. How I loved climbing those steps to see which E.B. books were up there! My mother was a member too and always came with me to change her books. This is why I remember the brightly coloured covers. I would find one in a favourite shade and persuade her to take out that particular book! (She never did, preferring to make her choice for better reasons than the colour of the book’s cover!)

I also think that on the opposite side from the large windows overlooking Alcester Road, on the counter where you took out and returned the books, were a few nice little stationery items to buy---pencils, rubbers, notebooks etc, very tempting for a small girl!

I looked up at these very windows today and memories of this very special library---it wasn’t the only one, I remember Boots Library in Hall Green too----came flooding back!

How I loved my visits to Boots Library in the 1950s!

Diane Hirst