

# W H Smith's building

W. H. SMITH & SON.  
 152, ALCESTER ROAD,  
 MOSELEY.  
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W.H. Smith's originally had premises at 152 Alcester Road (the east side of the road), as this advertisement from the time shows. They then offered a very different service from today, which included printing, bookbinding, die cutting, new and second-hand books and a lending library.

In 1913 they moved across the road to a new Arts and Craft style building at the end of Victoria Parade, which is shown in the picture below with a passing electric tramcar.

Although the premises are no longer occupied by W. H. Smith's the firm's initials W.H.S. and date of the date of the building, 1913, can still be seen carved into the woodwork on the upper storey above the shop front (see picture on next page).





The typeface used for the inscription on the shop front was designed by **Eric Gill** specifically for W H Smith in about 1925 and was widely used by the company on its shop and kiosk fascias, signs and vehicles. Surviving examples today are quite rare. Eric Gill was a sculptor, typeface designer and printer who was associated with the Arts and Crafts movement. Amongst his many public works are the bas relief sculptures at Broadcasting House and the London Transport headquarters in London and a Virgin and Child sculpture in Lapworth parish church. Eric Gill is believed to have spent some time in Moseley visiting friends.

After they were vacated by W. H. Smith's, the premises were divided into two shops (see picture left) but have recently been more tastefully reconfigured into a single shop and refurbished as a branch of Pizza Express (see picture right).

