

END OF AN ERA

Boots in Moseley, on the corner of Alcester Road and Salisbury Road closed on 30 June. Boots issued a press release in January 2020 stating that it would be closing smaller UK retail premises.

The Post Office is the oldest retail business in the centre of Moseley, Boots, the second oldest. The Post Office itself has been subject to change, it originally also housed the sorting office and delivery office for Moseley and housed the telephone exchange (the old Moseley Exchange number was SOUth) where operators worked 24 hours a day.

Boots in Victoria Parade was opened about 1905, they were not the original occupiers, the premises were originally a corn dealership. The Parade was built in 1900. Volunteers from the Moseley Society History Group have established an approximate date but as the Birmingham Library is closed, trade directories, giving the exact date cannot be accessed. If anybody knows the opening date, please contact the Editor.

Walking into Boots in the 1950's the premises smelt of antiseptic and loose soap. In the left-hand corner at the rear was the Pharmacy, the pharmacist would make up tablets from jars and dispense medicines. A large closed book lay near him, on the front cover the words, 'Poisons Book'. I am sure that things had hardly changed in 50 years.

In the corner, a set of narrow, steep stairs (no Health & Safety), lead to the first floor. On reaching the floor there was a warm atmosphere and a musty smell, this was the private library with numerous shelves tightly packed with books.

The book counter also sold postcards, paper and pencils and crayons.

The room always seemed busy with adults browsing. While my parents looked for books, I sat in the window watching the traffic negotiating the traffic lights.

I liked watching the Corporation buses, the 48, 49 and 50 stopping yards away from the window City bound. The number 1 could be seen in St Mary's Row, this also travelled into the City Centre in the 1950's. My parents, living in School Road, often talked to people they knew, I was quite happy to sit on the windowsill.

The road junction today, unlike many parts of Birmingham has changed little. The vehicles and the buses have changed but thanks to campaigning by the local community, the building line has not.

However, the long connection of Boots, Moseley has been broken.