

## Marking Moments

Your newsletter from the M&S Archive

June-July 2020 - Notes for Carers

Were you a Thunderbirds fan? Or perhaps you preferred Muffin the Mule? In this issue we look at memories of childhood and family.

### From the Archive

These notes give more information on the archive images, as well as some example questions to help start conversation and inspire memories. The images could be used as part of a reminiscence session either with a group or one-to-one.

#### Knitting Pattern, 1930s

This knitting pattern would have been given away free to customers when they bought wool at M&S. Wool doesn't sound very practical for swimwear, and it would often stretch and become very heavy as soon as it got wet. However it was considered the best fabric for the job before the introduction of synthetic fabrics like nylon and Lycra. The little boy in the picture holds a fishing net and wears sandals, ready for a day at the beach!

Did you ever wear a knitted swimsuit? Can you knit?

#### Children's Books, 1920s

These children's books were a very popular product at the start of the 20th century. As well as story books, M&S sold colouring books, painting books, nursery rhymes and books to help children learn to read. The books were often branded 'Marspen'. This was a shortened version of 'Marks & Spencer', and was a brand name used on stationery, books and homeware at M&S in the 1920s and 1930s.

What is your favourite story or book? Do you know the story of Mother Hubbard?

## From the Archive - continued

### Window Display, 1930s

This photograph shows one of the windows of our Marble Arch, London store in the 1930s. The sign in the window reads 'Marks & Spencer Ltd for Sports Toys'. The window includes cricket bats and stumps, bouncy rubber balls and sailing boats, and even toy swords and tennis rackets in the background. M&S was described as 'The Family Store' in the 1930s and sold products for all the family. What time of year do you think this was? Have you played with any of these toys?

### 'A Page of Wonderful Gifts', 1932

This advert appeared in 'The M&S Magazine', a customer magazine published in 1932. Customers could buy magic trick sets or chemical sets starting at just 1s 6d! This was the Christmas issue of the magazine, so lots of these toys might have been Christmas presents. All these toys were made in Britain.

Have you ever used a Diabolo? Have you ever done a science experiment?

### Display of Coats and Dresses, c1955

This display includes woollen coats and smocked dresses. The children's woollen coats were often made with fabric made in West Yorkshire, or the West Riding as it was known until 1974. Smocking was a feature in many M&S children's dresses, and was done by hand by a supplier in Birmingham. The fabric was passed through a crimping machine before being sewn into place. Going to buy a new coat was often a big event—what time of year would you go coat-shopping?

### Back to School Catalogue, 1954

This M&S magazine from 1954 advertised school uniform and gabardine coats. These double-breasted, belted coats were made from wool or cotton gabardine, the fabric was tested to be fast against sun, rain and air. The coats were often lined with tartan fabric. The children in this image are wearing knee-high socks as they cross the road. Did you walk to school?

## From the Archive - continued

### A Page of St Michael Toys, 1957

This advert shows toys that were available to buy for Christmas 1957. A fluffy toy cat is featured with a matching dog as well as hand puppets, Noddy and Sooty, Snoozie the Seal, and painting sets. Some of these were specially licenced by Disney, like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Our toys won awards for Hygiene in the 1950s because of the special way we made them, so tags on cuddly toys would often state that they were hygienic'.

What stories could you tell using these puppets?

### Clothes for all the Family, 1961

This 1961 catalogue advertises clothes for all the family. The mother and daughter wear matching kilts. It looks like the family have taken a picnic on a countryside walk - though the father's shoes don't look very practical! This catalogue was a special feature advertising a new store in Derby.

What would you take on a picnic? Did you ever have a toy plane like this one?

### Growing up with St Michael, 1969

M&S made clothing for all ages, as shown in this 1969 catalogue. The two older children wear versions of adult clothing – the boy's cable-knit jumper and shiny brown boots would have been very fashionable in 1969. The oldest girl is wearing a Crimplene dress with a Courtelle polo-neck, as well as tights, which were first sold at M&S in 1963.

Have you ever worn Crimplene? What would you take to feed the ducks?

## **This Month In...**

Coronation Procession, June 1953

The photograph shows the gold State Coach passing the Marks & Spencer store in Marble Arch. The coach has been used at the coronation of every British monarch since George IV in 1821. Participants in the coronation procession included members of the Royal Household, the Lord Mayor of London, Prime Ministers of Commonwealth countries, church representatives and standard bearers. The procession went along Whitehall, Oxford Street, Regent Street, The Mall and Northumberland Avenue on the way to Westminster Abbey. M&S in Marble Arch was decorated with flags, swags and banners. Members of staff can be seen at the windows and balconies, trying to get a glimpse of the procession.

End of the Falklands War, June 1982

The Falklands War was a ten-week conflict between Argentina and the United Kingdom over two territories in the South Atlantic: the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. It began on 2nd April 1982 and ended with Argentine Surrender on 14th June 1982. In total, 649 Argentine military personnel, 255 British military personnel, and three Falkland Islanders died during the hostilities. Bill Rowley, the sailor shown in this picture served on board HMS Plymouth - his ship was badly damaged by Argentine bombers. After the war his ship returned to Rosyth Dockyard for a full repair.

## Have a Go...

### Family Tree

- Give each participant a copy of the tree.
- Ask the group to write their name at the bottom or draw their face.
- On each branch group members can either write or draw a person's name or face.
- Participants could include anyone important to them, or they could try putting the Royal Family on the tree – you don't have to stick to family.

The colouring pages could be completed using coloured pencils, pens or paint.

The wordsearch includes childhood and family related words - some words run backwards and some go diagonally.