

## Marking Moments

Your newsletter from the M&S Archive

September/October 2020 - Notes for Carers

### **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.

Blackpool Provisions Counter, c1934

We introduced food departments to all our stores in 1931, initially focusing on fresh fruit and veg and tinned goods. Three years later in 1934 we introduced provisions including cooked meats, sausages, pies, cheese and bacon to selected stores. This photo includes lots of signs for goods on offer, including cheeses, liver sausage and fish cakes. On the front counter are pies and various cooked and cured meats.

Can you spot the scales and meat slicer? What do you think could be in the jars behind the counter?

Handmade Pies, late 1940s

This window display was created for a promotion called 'Food Value Week' at M&S. You can see signs at the left and right of the display. The 'handmade pies' included steak and kidney; veal, ham & egg and pork pies. Also on offer were sausages, brawn, and jellied veal. The sign states 'English meat only'. The cheeses are from England and Wales. There are also chutneys and pickles to go along with the other products.

Do these foods sound like they would make a good meal? Have you ever tried to make a pie? How did it go?

## From the Archive - continued

### Cake Recipe and Photos, 1950

Until 1950, our cakes were bought from 300 different local suppliers. This changed when our Chief Food Scientist worked with our suppliers to develop specific recipes for high quality cakes. If you look closely at the recipe you can see where individual ingredients were specified. We aimed to create cakes which could pass for homemade! When sugar was finally de-rationed in 1953, our range of cakes and biscuits expanded even more rapidly.

What cakes have you made at home? Did the recipe look like this one? Have you ever had a cake where all the fruit sunk to the bottom?

### Mrs Kenway's shop-bought cake, 1954

We started to sell un-iced cakes so that our customers could ice them at home. This article is about Mrs Kenway, who had bought a shop-made Christmas cake for the first time, which she decorated at home. After her first shop-bought cake, she never looked back!

What's your favourite cake to buy? Have you ever made any Bake-Off style cake creations?

### Tinned food packaging, c1960

These brightly coloured images are the labels for St Michael tinned foods from around 1960, they would have been wrapped around the circular tin. Our packaging designers worked really hard to create bright, attractive packaging in the 1960s. Tins of minced beef and onions would have provided short-cut ingredients for a speedy dinner. Jam often came in tins and families would serve jam in special jars on the table.

Do you think these tins would stand out on the shelf? What's your favourite tinned product?

## From the Archive - continued

Biscuit packaging, 1960

These images are from packets of St Michael biscuits sold around the year 1960. There's one 'Fancy' assortment and one 'Luxury' assortment. Our strict standards meant that up to 8 weeks after production, our biscuits would be 'as fresh and as crisp as when they left the supplier's oven'. Our biscuits were baked in the largest oven in Europe (100-yards long!).

Can you spot the biscuits that appear in both packets? How many of these 1960s biscuits are still available now? Can you see any of your favourites?

St Michael Frozen Foods, 1972

This poster was used to advertise St Michael frozen foods, which were being introduced into more and more stores in 1972. As well as staple items like frozen peas, our range included readymade fish and meat dishes like lasagne and fisherman's pie. Freezing products gave them a longer shelf life, and meant you could buy in-season products all-year round. We had to install lots of new freezers into our stores to squeeze in all the new frozen products!

Which of these would you choose? Have you ever made any of these dishes yourself? If you were throwing a party, what food would you serve your guests?

Cake Recipe books, 1978-1982

M&S developed a whole library of cookbooks in the 1970s and 1980s. Cookbooks weren't as widely available as they are today. The cake decorating book is from 1978 and 'Chocolate Cooking' is from 1982. The cake decorating book includes everything from ideas for children's birthday cakes, gingerbread houses, and wedding cakes. The chocolate book includes classic layered chocolate cake, chocolate mousse, and even chocolate meringues.

If you were going to bake something today, what would you make? Have you ever decorated a cake?

## From the Archive - continued

Italian and Microwave cookbooks, 1979-1985

In the 1970s, M&S cookbooks included the international cuisine that our customers were starting to enjoy, like Italian, Chinese, French and Indian cooking. 'Italian Cooking' is from 1979, 'Microwave Menus' is from 1985. As more customers had freezers, microwaves and blenders at home, we introduced cookbooks with recipe ideas to suit these new appliances—even a dinner party menu for 6, all made in the microwave!

Did you have a freezer or microwave when you were younger? Can you think of an exciting dish to cook in a microwave?

## This Month In...

Moon men, 1964

Following the first human landing on the moon on 20 July 1969, the 'moon men' went on a rock-star style world tour of 22 nations in 38 days. They had just 24 hours in London, during which time they met the Queen and had dinner at 10 Downing Street. While Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin didn't have much time for shopping, the wife of one of the American diplomats on the tour offered to do some shopping on their behalf. She headed to our Marble Arch store where she bought a selection of St Michael knitwear, including a green lambswool pullover for Neil Armstrong. The store later received a thank you letter from the American Embassy!

What do you remember about the Moon Landings? Have you ever shopped in a far-away location? Or do you remember buying a favourite garment?

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

Olympics, 1968

This photo is taken from St Michael News, a magazine for staff of M&S. It shows how the British Olympic team wore St Michael clothing as part of their uniform. While most Summer Olympics are now held in July or August, both 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 1968 Mexico Olympics were held in October to escape the summer heat. In this photo, two members of the Great Britain equestrian team are wearing St Michael dresses and raincoats as they board their plane to fly to Mexico City. Jane Bullen, shown on the left, won a gold medal!

Do you have a favourite sport? Have you ever won a medal? What would you wear to play sport?

## **Have a Go...**

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

The wordsearch includes cooking and baking-related words - some words run backwards and some go diagonally.

The favourite meal activity could be used to encourage participants to think about past or current food favourites. They could draw or write down favourite foods—or even cut out pictures from a food magazine to stick down.