

## Marking Moments

December 2020 - Notes for Carers

Christmas is just around the corner! The evenings are dark and Christmas lights are starting to appear. This month we'll be looking at winter and Christmas.

### **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.

Marks and Spencer Magazine, Xmas 1932

This illustration was the festive front cover for an M&S Customer magazine in 1932. The magazine included lots of suggestions for Christmas shopping at M&S. The family in the image are dressed up warm to walk through this snowy scene, carrying a parcel wrapped up with string and some holly.

Where do you think they were walking from, or to? Have you ever had snow at Christmas? How do you wrap your presents, have you ever used brown paper?

Christmas Decoration Advert, 1909

This advert was printed in an issue of the 'Grand Annual', an M&S customer magazine featuring stories, letters, features and adverts. Customers could buy a box of Christmas decorations through the post. Tinsel used to be made of real metal (originally silver!) so was rather expensive. These paper decorations would have been more affordable for most people.

What are your favourite Christmas decorations? Have you ever made paper chains to decorate at Christmas?

## From the Archive - continued

Advert for Toys, 1932

This advert was printed in 'The M&S Magazine', a customer magazine published in 1932. The magazine featured stories, letters, recipes and adverts. Customers could buy chemistry sets, magic sets, and kits to help children dress up as an actor.

What was your favourite toy when you were younger? Did you ever have a chemistry set?

M&S Christmas cards, c1970 and 1990s

These are M&S corporate Christmas cards sent to colleagues across the business. The top one is from c1970 and depicts a typical shopping scene. Can you spot the green M&S bags carried by some of the shoppers?

The bottom one is from the 1990s and includes an amazing display of fruit. Are there any special fruits that you like to have at Christmas?

Victory Christmas Dinner, 1945

This menu card was printed for a very special staff dinner held at Blackpool Church Street store. The Second World War had been over for two months, so Christmas 1945 must have been very different to the Christmases of previous years. Although there were many restrictions on the food available in staff canteens, employees didn't have to use their ration books for meals at work, so this Christmas dinner would have been a real treat!

Is there anything missing from this menu that you'd have with your Christmas dinner?

## From the Archive - continued

Family in pyjamas, 1976

This image features in a staff magazine from 1976. It shows the family in pyjamas and dressing gowns with some wrapped up presents—perhaps it was Christmas Eve! The young boy is wearing Winnie the Pooh pyjamas, while the girl has a matching dressing gown to go with her pyjamas.

Was the tradition in your household to open presents while still wearing your pyjamas? Or did present-opening come later in the day?

Christmas Hairstyle, 1964

This photograph appeared in the staff magazine 'Sparks'. 'Sparks' included stories, photographs, jokes, recipes and puzzles and was read by staff in stores and Head Office. In the 1950s and 1960s hairdressers visited stores and staff could have a subsidised haircut. The store hairdresser at M&S in Coventry created this festive masterpiece including a wreath of mistletoe and lots of hairspray!

Have you ever had a memorable haircut? Do you think the model would have worn this hairstyle to go shopping?

Christmas advert, 1958

This advert shows a couple in a very modern kitchen for the time. The advert promotes M&S clothing as well as Christmas puddings and mince pies. In 1958 only 60 of our stores sold Christmas puddings, but the festive range was soon expanded across all stores. Aprons were a bestseller at M&S in the 1950s, we even produced matching child-size aprons so the whole family could wear one! The Christmas pudding would have cost 2s 6d, the mince pies were 1s 2d for four, and the cotton apron was 5s.

Do you like Christmas pudding? Have you ever made your own Christmas pudding?

## From the archive - continued

### Christmas Food, 1970

This advert shows the festive food that M&S customers could buy in 1970.

This display includes festive favourites like Brussels Sprouts, Christmas cakes, mince pies, bacon joints, sausage rolls and cheese and biscuits. There's also some items you might not associate just with Christmas, like Liquorice Allsorts, Cox's Apples, and canned meats. The range of food sold at M&S increased during the 1970s. In 1971 we trialled frozen foods from peas and carrots to cod steaks and lasagne, and in 1973 we launched a new range of convenience foods including boil-in-the-bag ravioli and frozen Indian meals.

What is your favourite Christmas food? Do you like sprouts? Can you think of any Christmas foods not included in this picture?

### Christmas Party Clothes, 1977

This advert shows a couple standing on the stairs at a Christmas party, as Father Christmas creeps up the stairs behind them! She wears a brightly coloured kaftan dress and he wears a velvet jacket and smart bowtie. The dress would have cost £8.99, the velvet jacket would have cost £32.50.

Do you have a favourite party outfit? Did you enjoy Christmas parties as a child?

## This Month In...

### Launch of the Hovercraft, 1955

Sir Christopher Cockerell patented his idea for the hovercraft in December 1955 after testing out his idea by putting a cat food tin inside a coffee tin, then blowing a jet of air through the gap in the middle. After fine tuning his idea he secured funding to build the real thing, and a firm on the Isle of Wight transformed his ideas into reality. The hovercraft first took to the seas in July 1959 when it crossed the English Channel from Calais to Dover in two hours. In 1968 M&S models visited the new cross-Channel hovercraft 'Princess Margaret' at the Dover Hoverport, for a fashion photoshoot. Three years later this hovercraft would feature in the James Bond film 'Diamonds Are Forever'.

Have you ever been on a hovercraft? What do you think about the fashions in these photographs?

### Retirement of RMS 'Queen Elizabeth'. 1967

RMS 'Queen Elizabeth' was retired from service in December 1967. The ship was constructed in the mid-1930s and launched in 1938. The 'Queen Elizabeth' first entered service in 1940 as a troopship in the Second World War. Throughout the war the ship travelled over 500,000 miles and transported over 750,000 troops around the world. At the end of the war the ship was repainted and refitted as an ocean liner, and entered passenger service in 1946 sailing between Southampton and New York. In 1961 M&S published a fashion feature with photographs taken onboard the ship. The advert showed a family enjoying their trip, whilst modelling M&S clothes.

Have you ever been on a cruise? Have you ever sailed on the QE or QE2? Have you ever been to New York?