

Marking Moments

Notes for Carers

January – February 2022

From first cars to special journeys by plane, in this issue we look at all things transport-related – cars, trucks, planes... we've even got a hovercraft!

From the Archive...

Ipswich Staff Outing, 1930

The staff in this photograph pose for a group photograph in front of a charabanc. A charabanc was an early motor coach, often open-topped, and commonly used for pleasure trips. They usually had benched seats and were perfect for transporting a large group of people. The people in the photograph are all dressed for a day out – lots of the women wear the typical cloche hat, some of them wear cricket-type jumpers.

Have you ever been on a trip in charabanc?

Do you think it would be a comfortable trip?

Where do you think the group were heading to?

Marksman Spitfire, 1941

In early 1941, M&S employees raised £5,000 to contribute to the production of a Spitfire, which was named the Marksman. The Mark Vb Spitfire was handed over to the RAF on 16 May 1941. A fortnight later, it joined 'B' Flight of the 609 West Riding Squadron at RAF Biggin Hill. The Marksman is best known for pilot Tommy Rigler's mission on 22 June 1941. Whilst on squadron patrol east of Dunkirk at 20,000 feet, Sergeant Rigler shot down three enemy fighters in one sweep, despite being hit by enemy fire. This earned him the Distinguished Flying Medal. He later became a Squadron Leader and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, retiring as a recognised 'ace' after the War.

Have you ever seen a Spitfire in flight?

Were any of your family in the Armed Forces?

M&S Red Cross Ambulance, 1940s

Staff at M&S Head Office raised money for this Red Cross ambulance during the Second World War. Many businesses, organisations, villages and towns held fundraising drives to raise money to help towards the war effort. For example, the City of Leeds raised money to help repair a damaged aircraft carrier. As well as helping troops overseas, The British Red Cross supported people who were affected by the Blitz. Volunteers drove ambulances, carried stretchers and rescued people from buildings that had been demolished by bombs. They gave out essential items such as food, medical supplies, blankets and clothing to people in town halls, emergency rest centres and hospitals.

Where do you think this ambulance could have been used?

What equipment do you think it would have carried?

St Michael News, September 1955

St Michael News was a staff newsletter that ran from the 1950s until the 1990s. It gave sales assistants lots of information on new products and store developments. This issue includes a closer look at womenswear for the season. The photoshoot uses an airport setting for its location, the women climb the BEA stairs to an unseen aeroplane as a helicopter lands nearby. British European Airways was formed in 1947 and operated most long and short haul flights from the UK until the 1960s.

Have you been on a plane?

Where is your favourite place to go on holiday?

Stepney Green Warehouse, 1950s

This photograph shows one of our London warehouses. The Stepney Green warehouse was used to store and process fruit before it was transported by lorries and vans to stores around the country. Although fruit was graded and sorted after picking, it was assessed again at the warehouse – staff would taste and examine the fruit to ensure high standards. In 1959 this warehouse was replaced by a brand-new facility in Kent including 15 acres of warehousing!

What is your favourite type of fruit to eat?

Have you ever grown your own fruit?

Preston, 1958

This photograph shows a busy day on Fishergate in Preston. Opposite Marks & Spencer is the Owen Owen Department Store – a Liverpool-based retailer popular in the 1950s and 1960s. The street is full of cars and other vehicles. By 1955 90% of all cars made in the UK were made by five companies: BMC, Ford, Rootes, Standard-Triumph and Vauxhall. Although cars can still drive down Fishergate, it's much more pedestrian-friendly today!

Do you like driving?

What was your first car?

St Michael Van, 1960

J&P Jacobs were a major supplier of womenswear to M&S. They ran a fleet of these Bedford vans to deliver garments from their factories in Wales and the north of England to M&S stores. Jacobs began supplying M&S in 1929 from one factory, and by 1960 they had nine factories. All garments sold at M&S at this time carried the 'St Michael' label. The brand name was introduced in 1928, and named in honour of the founder of M&S, Michael Marks. It was used until 2000 when it was replaced by various sub-brands.

Bedford was a brand of vehicle made by Vauxhall Motors in their Luton factory. The vehicles took their name from county town of Bedfordshire, in which Luton is located.

Do you have any St Michael garments?

Do you ever shop at M&S?

Fashion Shoot, Spring 1965

M&S often used holiday locations as settings for fashion photoshoots. They showed the clothes on models in aspirational settings, sometimes overseas, but usually within the UK. In this shoot, the models are pictured on holiday in Torquay, Devon, driving in their Bedford Dormobile campervan. Dormobiles came complete with a gas stove, a sink and cupboards and seats which converted into beds, as well as hinged roof allowing people to stand upright inside.

Do you enjoy camping?

Have you ever slept in a campervan?

Have you ever been to Devon?

Fashion Shoot, July 1969

As with the previous photoshoot – interesting locations were often used as a backdrop for M&S fashion shoots. The hovercraft ‘Princess Margaret’ was, at the time, the world’s largest hovercraft and regularly made the crossing from Dover to Boulogne. The journey took just 40 minutes, the craft carried 250 passengers and travelled at 70 mph. Customers from France were a regular sight in the local branch of M&S during the summer! The little girl wears a dress made of Crimplene costing 45s, the lady in the top photograph wears a red Orlon cardigan that cost 35s.

Have you ever been on a hovercraft?

Do you know how hovercrafts move?

Young St Michael, 1970

These models pose by a racing car – possibly a Formula Ford 1600. It’s likely that the location for the fashion shoot was Silverstone Circuit in Northamptonshire. They both wear garments from the new Young St Michael range, a collection trialled in March 1970 in six stores. It was a great success and in October 1970 was rolled out to 15 stores. The range for men included deep-collared shirts with matching scarf ties, slim-fitting knitwear and velvet-look or jacquard flared trousers.

What do you think of these outfits?

What would you have worn in the 1970s?

History of Cars, 1977

During the 1970s and 1980s M&S sold many non-fiction books on subjects including flower arranging, steam trains, plumbing, and this book on the history of cars. The book, with a foreword by James Hunt, was published the year after Hunt had won the Formula One World Championship. James Hunt was renowned for his reckless style of driving and became known as ‘Hunt the Shunt’. He retired from racing in 1979, later becoming a media commentator and businessman. The book features a photograph of a Bentley racing car.

Do you enjoy watching Formula 1?

Do you have a favourite car?

Brent Cross Goods Entrance, 1983

This photograph shows a lorry unloading at the goods entrance of Brent Cross store. The store was built in 1976 and extended shortly after this photograph was taken. The lorry driver has managed to avoid the cars parked close by – the cars would have belonged to staff rather than customers. The cars include a Ford Cortina and a Talbot Sunbeam. The refrigerated lorry has the BOC logo on the side, which stood for British Oxygen Company – during the 1980s they transported and stored frozen and chilled produce for M&S.

What make do you think the lorry might be?

What might be in the back of this lorry?

This Month In...

1965 – Winston Churchill's Funeral

Winston Churchill passed away on 24th January 1965. His lying-in-state was held in Westminster Hall and started on 27th January until 6am on 30th January. During this time over 320,000 people visited to pay their respects. Many visitors queued outside in the cold, so the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) set up a canteen providing hot drinks and food to the visitors. Mrs Lily Gibbons and Miss Cynthia Woods worked at M&S in Brixton, and both were volunteers with the WVS. They are pictured here handing out tea to people in the queue. Three managers from the store also volunteered to help unloading lorries delivered catering supplies.

Do you remember Churchill passing away?

Have you heard of the WVS?

1987- Ranulph Fiennes

Explorer Ranulph Fiennes took St Michael long-life meals with him on his 1986-1990 expedition. His trip to the Canadian North Pole was his first 'unsupported' trip, meaning it was made without outside contact or resupply. With British physician and adventurer Mike Stroud, they travelled on foot, achieving the furthest north unsupported record at that time. Some of the M&S ready meals he took with him included steak and kidney pudding, Irish stew, and beef stew and dumplings. In this picture he has warmed a tin of Irish stew in a pan of hot water before eating it straight from the tin.

Do you like snow and cold weather?

What is your favourite food?

Have a Go...

Transport Quiz

The quiz could be used individually or with a group. You could plan a small prize for the person who gets the most correct answers, or encourage participants to work in groups.

Wordsearch

You'll need: pens or pencils

Print out a copy for each of your participants. Ask them to find the transport-related words in the list. Some words go diagonally, and some might go backwards!