

Marking Moments

Notes for Carers

Summer 2021

From workwear to party clothes, and beachwear to pyjamas, this month we look at all things fashion! These notes give extra information and question ideas to help you get the most from the Marking Moments newsletter.

From the Archive...

Spring Joy Underwear, 1932

In 1932 M&S produced a customer magazine which included stories, poems, helpful tips and adverts. This advert is for underwear for all the family, though the advert is primarily aimed at customers purchasing men's underwear. In the 1930s M&S sold a wide range of clothing including woollen beach shirts and Cossack pyjamas for men, flannel suits and pram sets for children, and taffeta dresses and shower capes for women.

What do you think Spring Joy Underwear was made from?

Do you think this advert could be used today?

Knitwear Catalogue, c1949

In the 1940s M&S exported clothing to countries including Switzerland, Belgium, South Africa and Canada. M&S researched the fashions in each country, to make sure the garments they exported would sell well. The prices show how much it would cost a retailer to buy a dozen of each garment, so they could easily calculate the profit they would make on any sales. The jumpers advertised here show how 1940s fashion was influenced by Hollywood films and stars such as Lana Turner and Jayne Mansfield, who were known as 'Sweater Girls'.

Have you ever been to Canada?

Do you think these fashions would sell well today?

The model looks like a Hollywood actress - do you have a favourite film star?

The Hat Bar, 1950

Hats were a very popular product at M&S in the 1930s and 1940s, at the time most ladies wouldn't consider leaving the house without a hat. It was only in the 1950s that we saw a change in fashions, with fewer people buying and wearing hats. The Hat Bar would have had a dedicated Sales Assistant who could advise customers on shapes and styles, and help them choose the right hat.

Customers would pay for their hat at the counter – the till is tucked away in the middle of the display, before doing the rest of their shopping. During the 1940s, many clothes were rationed, with customers having to exchange coupons for their purchases. However hats weren't rationed, so ladies could easily brighten up an old outfit by purchasing a new hat.

On what occasion might you wear a hat today?

Did you wear a hat when you were younger?

Can you think of any famous hat wearers?

Cotton Skirts, 1958

During the Second World War, fabric was rationed and so dresses and skirts tended to be slim and straight. However as shortages ended in the 1950s, the full-circle skirt grew in popularity. Cotton was the perfect fabric for these voluminous skirts – it could be easily starched and pressed to ensure it retained its shape. Ladies would also wear a slip or a full net petticoat underneath – some people starched their petticoats using sugar water! Although it isn't clear from this black and white photograph, these skirts had bright, colourful patterns, perfect for summer. These skirts were known by some as Dirndl skirts – which means a full skirt, gathered at the waist. Many of the circle skirts sold at M&S had pockets in – practical as well as stylish!

Did you ever wear a full-circle skirt?

Do you still use starch for any of your clothes?

What is your favourite outfit today?

An M&S Fashion Show, 1963

This photograph shows a busy hall, packed with people watching the models onstage. M&S regularly held fashion shows across the country, and each show would benefit a local charity. Organisations could only book a fashion show if they guaranteed to sell 1200 tickets for the event. The 1962 fashion show at Blackpool Winter Gardens had a record audience of 3000 people! Models for the shows included employees from the local store who had to learn the choreography and quick outfit changes. Each fashion show promoted the current season's new ranges, members of the audience could then go to their local store to buy the garments they'd seen.

Have you ever worked in a shop?

Would you enjoy watching a fashion show?

Film – Carefree Summer, 1965

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, M&S produced adverts to be shown in cinemas across the country. The adverts often promoted a new fabric, or new seasonal ranges. The early adverts were filmed in a studio and featured dance routines and songs, later adverts were filmed in exotic locations appealing to customers dreaming of summer holidays. This advert, Carefree Summer, was filmed in Portugal, and was awarded 2nd prize at the annual International Advertising Film Festival in Cannes.

Click on the link in the main document, or [here](#), to be taken to the advert on YouTube.

Autumn Fashions, 1967

This advert is taken from a staff magazine in 1967. Staff magazines gave Sales Assistants lots of information on new products and fabrics, so they could tell customers everything they needed to know. The lambswool twinset featured here would have cost 79s 11d. The showerproof coat would have been popular for the Autumn – not too warm but handy for keeping dry. The coat shown here was made from Terylene and would have cost 125s.

Which is your favourite outfit on this page?

Do you wear bright, colourful clothes, or do you prefer more neutral shades?

Modern Man, 1969

This page shows another feature from a staff magazine – it gave Sales Assistants lots of information and photographs of the new range of menswear in 1969. The jumper on the right has a V-neck as well as an attached turtle-neck collar. The model on the left wears needlecord trousers which cost 79s 11d and suede shoes costing 49s 11d.

What age customer do you think these fashions were aimed at?

Do you think the men are dressed for a smart or casual occasion?

Purple Pyjamas, 1971

This photograph is taken from a catalogue promoting the latest ranges for men and women in 1971. The photographs for the catalogue were all taken at Castle Howard, a stately home in Yorkshire. Here, the model's purple pyjamas blend into the bedroom interior – matching the 19th century Japanese wallpaper behind. The model uses a bedside-telephone, very handy for ordering breakfast!

Do you like the wallpaper and furniture in this room?

Have you ever visited Castle Howard, or any other stately home?

Maxi Dresses, 1970s

Although mini-skirts and knee-length dresses were popular in the 1960s, by the 1970s many women were buying longer dresses and floor-length skirts. The bright colours of these dresses is typical of the early 1970s, when bold prints and clashing colours were popular on both women's and men's clothes. Italian designer Emilio Pucci started his career designing ski-wear in the 1950s, but in the 1960s was crowned 'Prince of Prints' by the fashion press for his bold designs in bright colours. His influence extended to the British high street where shoppers wanted similar psychedelic designs.

For what occasion do you think these dresses would be worn?

Do you think they could still be worn today?

Clothes for Exercising, 1984

M&S first sold sportswear in the 1920s, including tennis pullovers and golf hose. In the 1950s customers could buy tennis shoes and in the 1960s our women's slacks were recommended for keep-fit classes. However, in the 1980s, the influence of Jane Fonda and her workout videos resulted in an increased demand for sportswear for men and women. In the mid-1980s, M&S started selling sportswear in a 'shop within a shop' in some stores. By 1986 the range included ski-wear, tracksuits, badminton racquets and even snooker cues!

Do you enjoy playing any sport?

Which sports do you enjoy watching on television?

Do you do any fitness classes now?

Autumn Looks, 1985

Each year, Sales Assistants were provided information on the new Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer ranges. Very often, the range was split into themes that would tie into current fashion trends. This 1985 illustration shows the four main themes for 1985 – neutrals, bright colours, masculine influence, and 'Country Lady'. Sales Assistants would use these themes to help them plan in-store displays, and the themes also helped customers find the clothes they wanted.

Would you wear any of these outfits?

Which is your favourite place to buy clothes?

Do you enjoy shopping for clothes?

This Month In...

July 1966 – World Cup

The 1966 FIFA World Cup was played in England from 11th to 30th July. Venues across the country included Ayresome Park in Middlesbrough, Hillsborough in Sheffield, Old Trafford in Manchester and Roker Park in Sunderland. The most used venue was Wembley in London, which brought many visitors from all over the world to the capital. Visitors didn't just come for the football – they went sightseeing and shopping while they were here. Marks & Spencer in Marble Arch had a very busy few weeks with lots of new customers. To welcome them, M&S ensured that Sales Assistants who spoke other languages were on hand to help. These photographs show the Assistants with their badges, showing different flags depending on the language they knew.

Do you like football? If so, who do you support?

Do you remember the 1966 World Cup?

Can you speak any other languages?

June 1953 – Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

The photograph shows the golden 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 1953 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.

Have you ever seen the Queen?

Have you been to London?

Have a Go...

Dressing Up

You'll need: Scissors, glue

Print out a person shape from page 16 and the clothes from page 17 for every participant. Cut out the clothes and place them on the figure to pick your favourite outfit. Try cutting out other clothes from catalogues or magazines. Once you've chosen your favourite outfit, you can glue the clothes onto the person.

Design Your Own

You'll need: colouring pencils, pens or paint

Optional: Tissue paper, wrapping paper, glue, scissors, sequins

Print out a sheet for every participant. Each person can design their own garment by colouring in the dress or the t-shirt. You could try decorating the pictures with tissue paper or wrapping paper, or adding embellishments like sequins and ribbon. Try looking at catalogues and magazines for inspiration.

Wordsearch

You'll need: pens or pencils

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