

Marking Moments

Notes for Carers

September – October 2021

In this issue we look at everything sport-related. Read on for Cycling Sam, clothes for golfing, and the M&S Women's Football team...!

From the Archive...

Staff Football Game, 1934

The Staff Welfare Department at M&S had been established in the early 1930s, the department also took responsibility for sports and social activities. Employees were encouraged to join their store's sports teams – this photograph shows gymnastics, football and netball, but stores also had dance troupes and swimming teams! The bottom left photograph shows the M&S women's football team playing against a team from Woolworths.

Have you ever been part of a sports team?

Have any of your workplaces had sports teams?

East Midland Staff Sports Day, 1949

These photographs are taken from the staff magazine 'Sparks'. The magazine featured stories, quizzes, articles on a wide range of subjects as well as lots of information on what colleagues around the business did in their spare time. This page features photographs of the three-legged race and the egg and spoon race. The East Midland Division included stores across Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire.

Do you think the participants in the egg and spoon race are dressed for the occasion?

Did you have a school sports day? If so, which was your favourite event?

Do you enjoy watching sport on television?

Bradford Ladies Cricket Team, 1951

This photograph was taken just after the cricket team had beaten a team from the Yorkshire Electric Board. The history of women's cricket can be traced back as far as 1745, but the Women's Cricket Association wasn't formed until 1926. In 1935 Myrtle Maclagan achieved the first ever test century by a woman, and by 1975 the first Women's World Cup Cricket Competition was held. The winners, England, were presented the cup by HRH The Princess Anne.

What do you think of this team's kit? Do you think the woman on the right forgot her plimsolls?

Have you ever played cricket? Perhaps you prefer to watch?

Table Tennis, c1957

In the 1950s M&S sold products for all the family, including toys and games for children. Customers could buy games like Crow Shoot or Pop Gun Skittles. A replica Stirling Moss Vanwall car cost 9s 11d, whilst a toy breakdown truck cost 19s 11d. Noddy toys and books were popular, and in 1955 Newcastle store sold nearly 300 Donald Duck toys in just two hours! Magic sets and chemistry sets were also popular products with younger customers. Table tennis, or Ping-Pong originated in England in the 19th century as a popular after-dinner parlour game – before nets were available players often used a row of books in the centre of the table!

Did you have a favourite toy when you were younger?

Have you ever played with a chemistry or magic set?

Did you play any sports as a child?

Cycling Sam, 1955

Warehouseman Sam Worton picked up the nickname 'Cycling Sam' when he decided to take a safari around every branch of M&S in the country on his bike. Using up all his holidays, he cycled 7173 miles over the next five years, visiting 243 stores from Aberdeen to Truro. Sam explained the inspiration behind his trip: 'I was cycling up to Glasgow from Nottinghamshire to visit relatives and I thought I'd call into the Doncaster store for a cup of tea. The manager asked me if I'd pass on his regards to the manager of the Carlisle store if I was passing, who in turn asked me to send his good wishes to the manager at Preston'. And so Sam's journey began...!

Can you ride a bike? Do you remember learning to ride?

What mode of transport would you choose if you were to tour the country today?

Keep Fit, Spring 1960

Joan Casey worked at the Portsmouth store in 1960. In her spare time she took keep-fit classes, and in 1959 even came second in the Miss South Britain competition. In these photographs, taken from a staff magazine, she demonstrates some simple exercises to help her colleagues keep fit and flexible. Joan uses 5lb dumb-bells, but explains that if you want more of a challenge you could try using 25lb weights instead! Keep-fit classes had grown in popularity during the 1950s. In 1954 the BBC launched a new programme: 'Keep Fit With Eileen Fowler'. After the first programme aired, the BBC received 10,000 letters from women in support of the programme.

Do you do any keep-fit classes?

Looking at Joan's exercises, which parts of the body do you think each exercise would benefit?

Swimwear, Spring 1963

The first swimsuits sold at M&S were offered in a variety of styles to suit the wearer's modesty: from 'a regulation one piece... which essentially spells swimming' to 'a combined brassiere and shorts to give the utmost comfort and freedom'. During the 1950s there were lots of developments in textile technology. New fabrics such as rayon and nylon were widely used to provide people with easy-wear, easy-care garments, and were perfect for swimwear. Men didn't miss out – swimming trunks with elasticated waists were big sellers in the 1950s. In the 1960s beachwear became more popular with customers. The M&S stand at the 1962 Ideal Home Show sold as much swimwear in one day as an average store would sell in a week!

Do you enjoy swimming? (Perhaps you didn't learn to swim and prefer to sit on the beach!)

Did you ever wear a knitted swimsuit?

Golfwear, November 1969

This advert for menswear features models on the golf course. The photoshoot was held on location at the Castle Harbour Hotel in Bermuda which had its own golf course adjacent to the hotel. Although these clothes aren't specifically designed for playing golf, M&S did begin selling clothes for the course in the 1990s. In this photograph, the man on the left wears terylene and worsted trousers which cost 85s, the man on the right wears a striped nylon shirt which cost 45s.

Do you enjoy watching or playing golf?

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?

Surfing, 1989

This advert features models on the beach wearing cotton clothes. They carry surfboards on the beach – though their outfits wouldn't be practical for jumping on the surfboard. Surfing is thought to have originated in Hawaii and was first observed by European explorers in the 18th century. Today, the best surfing beaches in the UK include Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, Saltburn in North Yorkshire, Perranporth in Cornwall and Llangennith near Swansea. Surfers on these beaches wear wetsuits rather than polo shirts!

Which is your favourite beach to visit?

Have you ever lived by the sea?

Ski-Wear, 1985 and 1987

Throughout the 20th century, M&S sold thermal underwear, chunky jumpers and thick quilted jackets, useful on the ski slope! However, it wasn't until the 1980s that M&S introduced dedicated skiwear ranges, more products were introduced as more customers were going on ski holidays. The first skiing holiday packages were offered by Thomas Cook around 1909, the sport grew in popularity during the 1960s due to innovations such as metal skis and better snow clothing. Skiing reached a new audience in 1988 when Eddie the Eagle became the first person since 1929 to represent Britain in Olympic ski jumping. Eddie came last in the 70m and 90m jumps but gained a huge following!

Do you have a favourite winter sport?

Have you ever tried skiing?

Gareth Southgate's Waistcoat, 2018

M&S has provided suits for the men's England football team since 2007, and for the 2018 World Cup tailored the team in a navy blue three-piece suit with striped tie. The team's manager, Gareth Southgate, was regularly pictured pitch-side wearing his waistcoat and fans flocked to buy their own from M&S. During the World Cup, sales of waistcoats at M&S doubled! The garment was dubbed a 'lucky waistcoat' in the press, with England making it all the way to the third place play-offs, where unfortunately they lost to Belgium.

What occasions might you wear a waistcoat today?

Do you watch football on television? Who do you support?

This Month In...

1974 – Princess Anne's Visit

Princess Anne was guest of honour at the St Michael Fashion Show held in London in 1974. The show presented the new styles and fabrics for the season, and raised over £7,500 for Save the Children. Afterward, the Princess told M&S 'It was a terrific show, I really enjoyed it'. M&S charity Fashion Shows were held throughout the 60s and 70s and into the 1980s. Organisations could book a fashion show, providing they guaranteed to raise a certain amount for charity, and members of the public could book tickets. Models were often recruited from local stores, although a core group of Sales Assistants were bussed around the country to perform at the shows.

1968 – Visitor to Burnley Store

The photograph shows a llama stood next to a Hosiery stand in Burnley's M&S. The animal had wandered in to the store as the circus parade passed by outside... or maybe the Store Manager had requested the visit for the photo opportunity! Animals such as elephants, lions and tigers were a regular sight at circuses across the country, until England passed a ban on wild-animal circuses in 2019.

Have you ever been to the circus?

What do you think about wild animals performing at circuses?

Have a Go...

M&S ARCHIVE

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!

Sports 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.