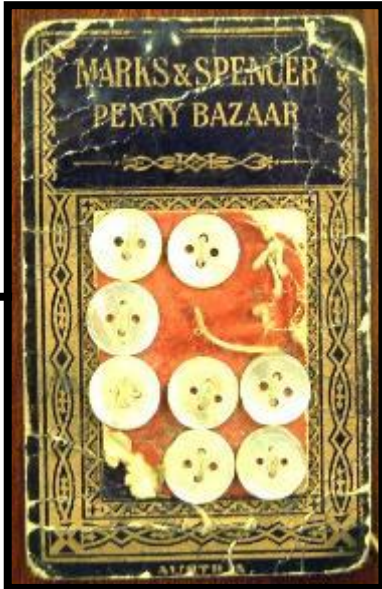


M&S: Packaging

How we have 'dressed' our products since 1884.



Pre-1900

Penny Bazaar items were packaged very **simply** with buttons sewn to card displaying the **branding** 'Marks and Spencer' and 'Marks and Spencer Ltd', for example.



c1900

The **brand names** Monster, Welbeck, Marspen and Daymar were used on packaging from the early 1900s.

Paper bags for Penny Bazaar items showed an illustration of the Head Office in Manchester. Included would also be a list of all stores open at the time.



1930

M&S cultivated its **reputation for luxury goods** with beautifully illustrated paper bags, featuring art deco designs.



1934

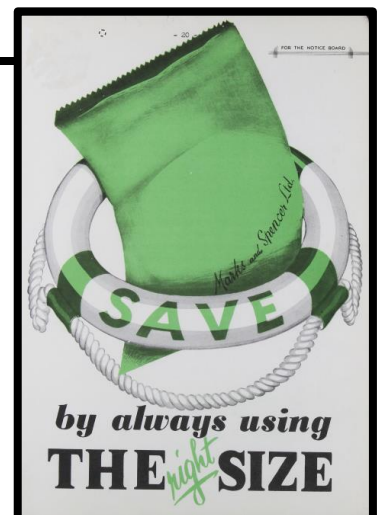
M&S paper bags could be produced at an average rate of 300 per minute.

Stores would keep a catalogue of the various sizes of bags supplied and a chart showing their usage; for example the different kinds of merchandise each bag size would be suitable for. The chart would also be used to **track stock levels**.



Pre war

We encouraged customers to look and handle items freely and so a **minimum of packaging was incorporated in to product and displays**.



WWII

During and after the war, packaging materials were scarce. We even wrapped customer purchases in string when paper was in short supply.

After the war we continued to be aware of paper shortages and encouraged staff to use the right-sized bag.

Post war

Greater emphasis in conducting the business on a **scientific basis** saw M&S work closely with its suppliers in **applying new types and methods of packaging** to ensure hygiene in food production and packaging. Other priorities in packaging at the time were safety and recycling.

1949

Nathan Goldenberg, appointed Head of Food Technical Services, considered **packaging to be an element of the food itself** and its quality to be considered in a similar fashion.



1955

In this year **over 350,000,000 paper bags** were used – that was 6 for every person in the country.



1959

After introducing pre-packed nuts, 1959 sees the introduction of pre-packed fruit on a large scale – this makes for **easier service and fresher fruit** (by using scientific storage conditions)

***Pre-packing
will make for
easier service***



1959

The **St Michael brand** started to feature prominently on carrier bags.

M&S used nearly **3,000 tons of paper** for **410 million bags** and carriers in this year alone.

1960

A high degree of product visibility was aimed at and the accessibility of non-food lines, for examination by the customer before purchase, was deemed important.

Our packaging policy stated that **'For Marks & Spencer the package is an accessory'**.



1960

This year, M&S manufacturers spent five million pounds on packaging materials for merchandise.

A packaging exhibition at Michael House in 1960 underlined the need for packaging:

1. To protect merchandise and preserve its factory-fresh condition throughout its journey from factory to counter.
2. To make selection by customer easier, service faster, counters tidier and understock more accessible.



1963

Our reasons to pre-wrap foods were highlighted in the staff magazine, St Michael News:

Hygiene

Deterioration less likely

Freshness for longer

Presentation is greatly improved

Speed of service at peak sales periods

1966

Labour-saving packaging devices were being sought for food and general merchandise products, following the successful trial of bagged sweets being carton-packed in a way that sweet bags could be discharged fully stacked into baskets.

For example a dual purpose box for the transit and display of fruit and vegetables was introduced, and **the display of socks was made quicker** as manufacturers supplied socks folded four pairs at a time into packaging.

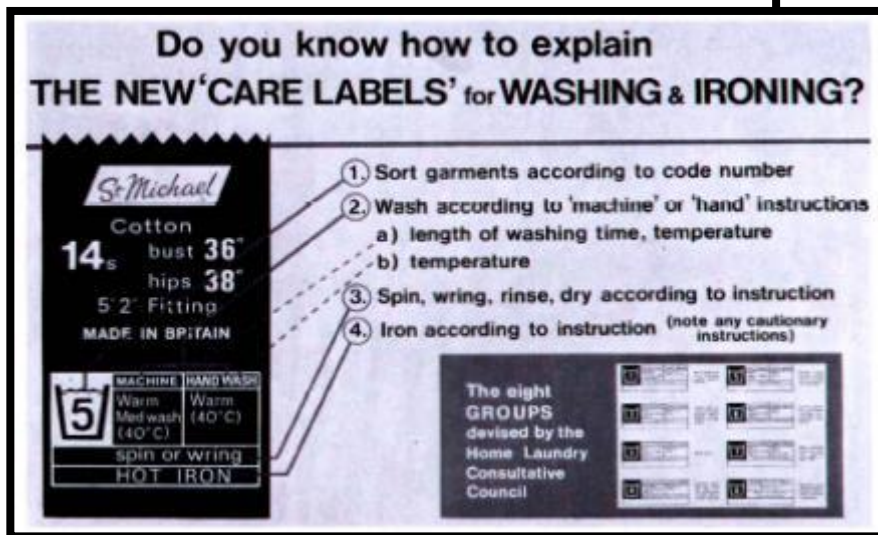
1967

New packaging for men's underwear now illustrated the shape of the garment it contains.



1968

New 'care labels' to help sort and launder washing according to fabric type were introduced.



1969

See-through packs designed for some food lines so customers can see exactly what they're buying, with packs made of PVC. The long-term plan is to eliminate paper bags in favour of plastic carriers.



1971

Although British producers had generally been slow to adapt to new methods of packaging, our **own system of packaging and transportation is rapidly being developed** to meet demands for fresh high quality foods.

Our **suppliers were encouraged to do away with costly and wasteful packaging** material such as cardboard, and replace them with more protective plastics.



1973

Following the addition of 'sell-by' to the **packaging of perishable foods** in 1972, food bags were specially printed with the slogan 'The sell-by date means that St Michael foods are fresh'.

1977

Achievements of Packaging Department recognised with three **awards from the Institute for Packaging**. Items entered for the award are judged on graphics and function. Gold award went to M&S's re-sealable knitwear bags, silver to tableware packaging, and bronze to a Christmas gift pack soap drum.



1980

We achieved **savings of £115,000** a year by using new technology in wrapping materials.



1981

M&S sold fresh **pasta before any other major** retailer thanks to the production of a **'controlled atmosphere' pack** to inhibit mould growth and keep the contents moist.

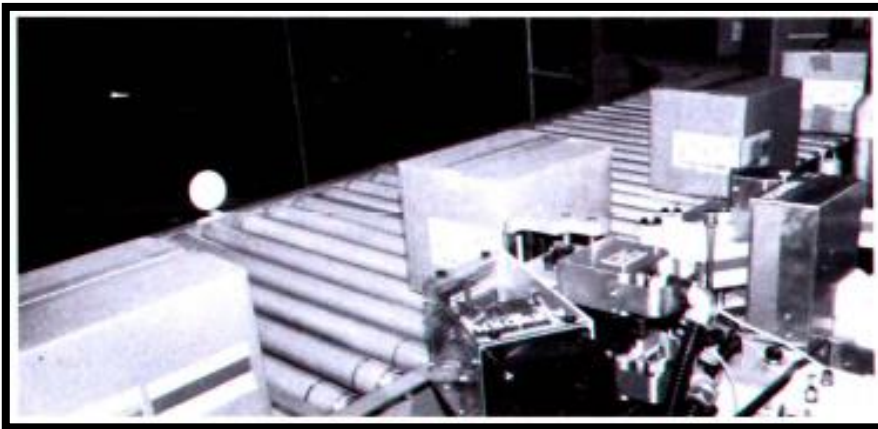
1981

The recycling of clothing hangers was set to achieve **costs savings of £100,000** a year.



1983

By 1983 M&S was able to **recycle one thousand tons of plastic** used in yogurt pots and coat hangers. The recycled material was used in coat hangers that again made their way into stores.

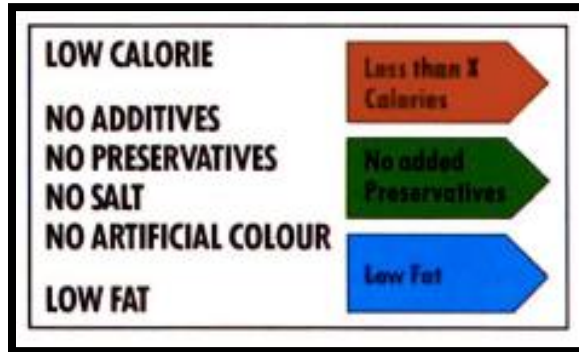


1983

The trial of a new 'Unallocated Packaging System' using barcodes aimed to make **despatch at depots 'faster and cheaper'**.

1986

Food packaging was updated to include colour-coded symbols to give customers more **information about the nutritional value** of food products.



1986

We won several entries in the **Best in Metal Awards** presented by the Metal Packaging Manufacturers' Association including an award for a drinks can design, and crisps container.



1990

A review of packaging saw the **reduction of excessive packaging both in transportation and display**, but still ensuring safety, protection and presentation of products.

1991

Strong re-usable carrier bags costing 15p introduced.

‘Use your common sense – **use the right size bag!**’ – message behind new campaign to cut down on wasteful use of carrier bags in store, potentially **saving £1.5million** a year.

Product wrappings cost 33p per hundred pounds spent on food and 11p per hundred pounds spent on general merchandise.



1999

We are one of the few retailers to label the **origin of products on packaging**, even though this is not a legal requirement.



2000

The re-launch of the brand was an ideal opportunity to update and **improve our range of carrier bags**.



2005

We joined forces with the Waste & Resources Action Programme to **reduce the amount of packaging thrown away** in Britain.

2007

Launch of Plan A puts sustainability on the agenda including the aim of **sourcing all packaging from sustainable sources**.

We launched **the world's first plastic milk bottle using recycled material**.



2008

We introduced a **5p charge** for large food carrier bags with the profits going to charitable causes.



2010

We started to use polyester made from **recycled PET drinks bottles** instead of virgin polymer to make over **300 million clothing care labels** a year.

By **2011**, Plan A objectives had yielded a **20% reduction in food packaging** and a substantial reduction (by 417 million) of the number of carrier bags used since its launch four years earlier.

2017

We launched 'Project Thin Air' - reducing packaging by 75 tonnes and 152 fewer lorries on the road each year transporting products. Packaging for best-selling crisps use 20% less plastic through the use of a new thinner plastic film.

We trialled laser printing on avocados, printing the date and product code directly on to the skin to save packaging.



2018

Our Food on the Move team tweaked the packaging on all our pre-packed sandwiches, using a slightly thinner cardboard – the difference is hard to spot but it has saved £500k!

2019

As part of our 'Plastic Principles', we have removed hard-to-recycle black plastic trays for all of our prepared meals, and replaced them with a terracotta-coloured plastic tray that is easily detected at recycling plants and can be recycled again and again.



2021

We extended our Fill Your Own concept, with the range of packaging-free refillable groceries now available in 11 stores. The initiative supported M&S's plan to reduce and reuse plastic and was set to avoid the use of over 300,000 units of single-use packaging over the next 12 months - with over 30% of products outselling the packaged versions.

