

Michael Marks Timeline

- Early 1860s Michael Marks was born in the town of Slonim in Russian Poland, the youngest of five children, his mother died shortly after his birth.
- 1881 Tsar Alexander II was assassinated, which provoked a rise in anti-Semitism across Russia.
- 1882 Michael arrived in England as an immigrant and settled in Leeds. He was about 19 years old. Michael met Isacc Dewhirst, owner of a wholesale business, who loaned him £5 to buy stock.
- 1884 Michael set up his first stall in the Kirkgate open market in Leeds, using the slogan 'Don't ask the price, it's a penny'.
- 1886 Michael married Hannah Cohen, also a refugee from Russia, in the Belgrave Street synagogue. Michael gave his age as 22, Hannah was 21 years old.
- 1886 Michael took up a stall inside the covered market hall at Kirkgate.
- 1888 The Marks moved to a terraced house in Trafalgar Street, Leeds.
- 1888 The Marks' first child, Simon, was born, followed by Rebecca (1890), Miriam (1892), Elaine (1902) and Mathilda (1895).
- 1891 Michael and his family moved to Great George Street in Wigan – a short train journey to places like Warrington, Birkenhead and Bolton where the business could expand.
- 1894 Michael met Tom Spencer, Dewhirst's book-keeper, and the partnership of Marks and Spencer was formally registered. Michael was about 34 years old.
- 1894 The Marks family moved to Manchester, living above the Marks and Spencer Penny Bazaar at 20 Cheetham Hill Road.
- 1897 Michael applied for, and was granted, British Citizenship.
- 1899 Marks and Spencer leased a site on Derby Street, near Michael's home, for a new central office and warehouse.
- 1900 There were now 24 Penny Bazaars in market halls, and another 12 in shop premises.
- 1901 The Marks family moved to Knoll House on the more affluent Bury New Road in Manchester.
- 1903 The partnership of Marks and Spencer was transformed into a limited company. Tom Spencer semi-retired in the same year.
- 1907 Following a Christmas Eve lunch at Manchester's Victoria Hotel with his son Simon and Tom Spencer Jnr, Michael Marks collapsed. He died shortly after on New Year's Eve, aged about 47. His funeral at the Jewish cemetery was one of the largest ever held.