

## Secrets of the boudoir



Advertisement, 1935. From the Boots Archive, Y310/4



No7 Counter, 1956. From the Boots Archive, 3273/64



Advertisement, 2015. From the Boots Archive, CAIS 11934

In 1935, Boots launched its first complete series of beauty preparations with the enigmatic name Number Seven. Over the past 80 years, No7 has grown from its initial range of 11 skincare products to an international brand, available in 13 countries worldwide.

Yet the story of No7 is also the story of modern women. From its earliest days, the brand has consistently reflected changing ideals about women's beauty and wellbeing. It has helped successive generations negotiate the opportunities, pressures and freedoms they faced in their everyday lives, whether at home, in the workplace, or out on the town.

Positioned as a brand for the ordinary woman, No7 can be used to chart the changing experience of women across the decades — from the exciting modernity of the 1930s to the hardships of the Second World War, and from the constraining gender expectations of the 1950s to the expressive freedoms of the 1970s and beyond.

This exhibition uses materials from the Boots Archive and The University of Nottingham's Manuscripts and Special Collections to both celebrate the history of the No7 brand and to explore its intimate relationship with the changing lives of British women over the last 80 years.

It has been curated by Judith Wright and Sophie Clapp from the Boots Archive, Dr Richard Hornsey, Lecturer in Modern British History at The University of Nottingham, and Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Advertisement, c.1970.  
From the Boots Archive, Y360/7

