The major wonder of supermarkets

Do you remember the beauty of

over the little extras which sit in

over the shelves. Have you looked

have taken the showbags of my

imitations, that sort of thing.

20 minutes before they broke; min­

plastic items designed to amuse for

in showbags, there would be little

a colour never seen elsewhere but

in showbags, there would be little

plastic items designed to amuse for

20 minutes before they broke; mini­

ature tea sets, magic tricks, frisbee

imitations, that sort of thing.

The major wonder of supermarkets

these days is that someone seems to

to have taken the showbags of my

childhood and shaken them out

over the shelves. Have you looked

over the little extras which sit in

front of the real merchandise recent­

ly? The quality of the goods and

their usefulness is astonishing.

My last trip to a supermarket

revealed a plethora of wonders.

Firstly, there were diet fridge mag­

nets featuring a picture of a woman

in a leotard reaching to open a

refrigerator. A diet fridge magnet

decorates the fridge with the slogan

"STOP. THINK OF YOUR WAIST"

printed on it, just like the genuine

fridge magnet. Another one states

"NO EATING" with a knife and fork

slashed out in the fashion of

Ghostbusters. My trolley was instant­

ly filled with six packets of diet

fridge magnets which took up the

space I would otherwise have filled

with unnecessary food. I already

own a ‘frig pig’ which is a light

operated toy which sits inside the

refrigerator and honks when the

door is opened. Using it in conjunc­
tion with the magnets, I should soon

be absolutely wraithlike.

Once one starts examining these

items it’s hard to stop. Suction soap

holders soon joined the magnets.

These hold the soap and stick to the

basin thus eliminating the unsightly

and potentially dangerous problem

of ordinary soap holders slipping

around like banana skins in a Marx

Brothers film. I was looking for flour

but instead came away with a pack­
et of special party candles,

presumably designed for kids’ par­
ties, which are intended to resemble

various cute animals allegedly

loved by the younger folk. The only

problem is that they are too small to

look like anything but badly formed

lumps of wax. Perhaps the fabled

innocence of childhood will

metamorphose them into fun pets,

but somehow I doubt it.

My personal favourite gadget on

display was the pack of bag sealers

"By Insights". Designed to keep

plastic bags from coming apart, the

pack informed me that “each sealer

has an integral write-on/wipe-off
date and identification tab (Use any

water-based fibre tip pen.)”. The

picture shows a plastic bag full of

peas, with the word ‘peas’ written

on the sealer which holds it together

so that the householder could recall

what was in the see-through bag if

he or she forgot what the little round

green things are.

One of the major worries in a good

bourgeois life is how to eat sweet

corn. Corn skewers are the answer if

you want to avoid butter running down

one’s wrists and smearing one’s Country Road shirts. These
delightful items screw into both

ends of the sweet corn and are, of

course, shaped like sweet corn.

Keep your elbows in and your legs

crossed and you will look perfectly

ladylike as you tackle the dreaded

vegetable. Problems with lipstick

and butter combining remain unsolved as yet, but no doubt a gadget

will eventually be invented to deal

with this. Plastic lip covers, perhaps.

The future of manufacturing can be

read on these packages. All of them

are manufactured in Asia, primarily

in China, but also in Hong Kong and

Taiwan where nimble, underpaid

fingers create the novelties for

wages which would barely buy a

single ‘Collapsible Drinking Cup

with Built In Pill Box’, a fun item that

tetails for $1.00. What, I wonder, do

the workers who make these things

think of us, the consumers of

Decoration Picks and Ice Balls? The

latter’s pack states that “This ice

balls keep the drink cool” (sic) and

the packet contains slices of plastic

in the shape of lemon and orange

segments. The Decorator Picks are

to stick in food or, I presume, on fruit

decorating cocktails, and feature

giant pandas, peacocks and

pineapples. The package shows a

pineapple stuck in a hamburger.

Is this the heaven dreamed of by

Chinese workers? Festooned hambur­
gers, hair swinging in ponytails,
hands clasping an iced ball cocktail?

Corn skewered by the bar­
becue, and diet fridge magnets to

remind them to go easy on the but­
ter? Party loot bags (ten for a dollar)

for the kids, which portray a clown

lifiting his hat over the slogan “This

bag belongs to .......?”

This bag seems to belong to us all in

Australia, where we are free to buy

Suncatchers Stained Glass Look

Window Decorations with ther­
mometer, which portray Nordic cot­
tages complete with snow on roofs

(made in Taiwan) and shoe dips,

bows decorated with rhinestones,

for our feet as we waltz down the

aisles of Woolworths, the Kings and

Queens of our world, our trolleys

filled with wonder, or at least with

shiny and appetite suppressant

magnets to decorate the overbur­
dened fridge.

Penelope Cottier.