



**December 2022**

[www.surrey-constabulary.com](http://www.surrey-constabulary.com)

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**Woman Chief Inspector Catherine Mackenzie BEM**  
**Lanarkshire Constabulary, Kent Constabulary, Surrey**  
**Constabulary born 3 June 1915**




**Mount Browne collection**

**1 January 1962 New Year Honours awarded BEM<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1962\\_New\\_Year\\_Honours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1962_New_Year_Honours)

26  **Catherine Mary MACKENZIE**

Age 31 Years. Date of Birth 3rd June 1915. Height 5 feet 8 1/2 inches. Complexion *fresh* Hair *brn*

Eyes *blue grey* Marks *Moulin*

Born in Parish of *Northam - tipset* Last Residence *15 Byles Road Chatham* in the County of *Perthshire*

By whom employed, and where *Standing Joint Committee of Kent*

What relatives residing in Surrey, and where *- Lanarkshire Constab*

Previous Public Service *Kent Constabulary - 16th July 1938 - 20th June 1947*

Length of Service *5th July 1945 - 31st May 1947 - 16 3/8 - 2 1/2*

Date of appointment *16th June 1947*

Date of commencement of pensionable service *16th July 1938*

When sworn in, and where *Guildford on 20th June 1947*

Before what Magistrates *Mrs J. Wenham* *W. Breaght*

Where first stationed *Headquarters* Initials of Officer making entries *W.B.*

Uniform No. To

MOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS	Where first stationed		No.
	Date	To	
	16-7-57	Inspector (Temporary)	✓
	1-8-48	Inspector	✓
	16-7-57	Chief Inspector (Ro 1957/103/194)	

Miss McKenzie born in 1915 came to Surrey from Kent as a temporary inspector to replace Miss Urquhart also the holder of temporary inspector rank. It may well be that in the early days regulations for a constabulary restricted the appointment of women to police senior ranks. She was appointed to the Surrey Constabulary on the 20 June 1947 with police service reckoned from 16 July 1938 which was no doubt Lanarkshire appointment date. Miss Mackenzie was appointed Inspector in August 1948 having passed the examination in May 1947 and chief inspector in July 1957. She was pensioned in October 1964.

EXAMINATIONS	21.5.51	<p>Passed the Examination for <u>Suspector</u> and passed.  <u>Kent Const</u> about any <u>Exam</u></p>	Date
	Cause and Date of removal from Force		<u>Pensioned 10.10.64</u>
Conduct during Service			
Date of Parchment Paper Certificate			

NO. OF APPOINTMENT 2502

MARRIED ON \_\_\_\_\_

Issued out from Kent Constabulary, Traffic Dept. as qualified driver vehicle in Group 1

GAVE NOTICE OF WISH TO PAY PENSION

CONTRIBUTIONS AT THE higher RATE

ACCEPTED AVERAGING FOR PENSION. Police Pension Regn 1919

Attended course B/51/2 at Police College

Citation Medal

Attended course B/51/2 Police College 3 April 1951 – 15 June 1951

Transferred to 50208 91159

Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Years' approved Service.

Annual Amount of Pay on Retirement £ \_\_\_\_\_

Average for last Three Years £ \_\_\_\_\_

Pension @ \_\_\_\_\_ of Pay = £ \_\_\_\_\_ or Gratuity £ \_\_\_\_\_



Inspector Mackenzie meeting King George VI after receiving The Defence Medal.



It may well be that the inspector in the middle is a special constable

Leaving the force in 1946, Miss Urquhart was replaced by Miss Catherine Mackenzie (known as Kathy) who was formerly served in Lanarkshire and as a sergeant in Kent<sup>2</sup> and came on the recommendation of her predecessor.<sup>3</sup> Writing in 1950 the first historian of the force Superintendent Durrant wrote, “There has never been much doubt in the mind of modern police officers that policewomen can do a lot in preventative and detective work when working in plain clothes. Patrol work is now well within their sphere and they carry out a good deal of such work in uniform. In addition to this, women in uniform fit well into court and escort work. As with men, the greatest difficulty of all is recruitment. Young women apparently do not find the police service very attractive.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1947 six years after Reading Borough gained its first female officers, its Chief Constable reported of the “Women Police Department” that “although this is a comparatively new department, and in spite of the fact that in many quarters the introduction of policewomen was strongly opposed, experience has proved conclusively that such a department is not only desirable but that it is indispensable”.<sup>5</sup>

So far there are few operational references found for policewomen in Surrey for this period. The opening of Mount Browne as an HQ in 1949 gave Inspector Mackenzie the task of arranging for policewomen to be suitably placed so as to direct and assist ladies present. Important guests were to be escorted through the building in nine parties. On their partaking of tea at approximately 4.30 pm, officers and men from the parade would be allowed to inspect the buildings, again in escorted parties. No smoking was to be allowed.



**The Home Secretary opening Mount Browne – Miss Mackenzie far left**

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<sup>2</sup> Off Beat May 1976

<sup>3</sup> Tom Roberts Friends and Villains page 90

<sup>4</sup> Durrant “A Hundred Years of the Surrey Constabulary” Page 62

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bawp.org/Resources/Documents/History%20of%20women%20police.pdf>

In 1950 on June 9 and 13 advertisements appeared in a Scottish newspaper for policewomen: “There are vacancies in the Surrey Constabulary for women of good education who are looking for an interesting career. The work entails uniform street patrol, dealing with women and girls who are the subject of police enquiries and plain-clothes duties in the CID. Candidates should be between 22 and 35 years of age, not less than 5 feet 4 ins in height and in good health. The service is pensionable and a constable’s pay on appointment is £5.11s.2d a week rising to £7 5s 8d (plus allowances of approximately 18 shillings a week after training). Women are eligible for promotion to higher ranks. An attractive uniform is provided and recruits are given 3 months residential training after joining.”<sup>6</sup> It is clear that from the early days of deploying policewomen in the county foot patrol and work on CID were considered the norm, they were not there just to deal with women and children and to wait around for something to turn up.



**WPC Irene Coomber and WPC2 Janet Tripney 1953**

A cadet working at the Guildford police station in Woodbridge Road, a building one the HQ of the Surrey Constabulary, was where Miss McKenzie worked in the early 1960s. Cadet duties consisted importantly of making the tea for all those on duty in the morning and afternoon. Tea and biscuits were carried around all the offices and the cadets took a great deal of time over what was never seen as too much of a chore more a skive! The biscuits were something of an institution, being chocolate McVities, individually wrapped and either milk or plain. They were not included in the tea fund and the biscuits had to be paid for as they were delivered with the tea. There were set times for tea with many a phone call if we were delayed. The worst office to go into was where the policewomen were based, as it was always full of smoke from the cigarettes of Miss Mackenzie the Inspector.<sup>7</sup> Miss Mackenzie had by then served for 20 years in the Surrey Constabulary.

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<sup>6</sup> 1950 9 and 13 June: The Scotsman

<sup>7</sup> Surrey Constabulary History Part 4 [www.surrey-constabulary.com](http://www.surrey-constabulary.com)



**Mid to late 1950s at Mount Browne with Inspector McKenzie**

Miss Urquart left the police service for the probation service and when I visited ex-Supt. Drake some years ago, I found she was at Aberdeen. She was succeeded by the late W/Insp. Kathy Mackenzie, formerly of the Lanarkshire and Kent Constabulary.

Miss Mackenzie had to suffer a lot of banter from her male contemporaries and was often accused of running a 'Marriage bureau'. I heard her silence one of her critics when she witheringly said in her best Scottish accent "Well, if they make as good wives as they do policewomen, I'm satisfied". Incidentally of those in

Yours sincerely,  
Mr. R. C. Nicholls,  
ex-Insp. (Bramley).

**Extract from Off Beat**



**The highly regarded Woman Chief Inspector Mackenzie**



**Miss Mackenzie's Medals**