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www.surrey-constabulary.com

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WPC Betty Green (Wickenden) Surrey Constabulary 1957- late 1960s

Lionel Stewart MBE late Bedfordshire Police wrote in April 2023 in a message to the editor: One of our member's wife was in Surrey for many years before transferring to Bedfordshire. One of her ex-colleagues has just died and left her a large quantity of original photographs many of them from training school and all women. A part of Surrey Constabulary and women policing history.

Date:1954

Description: No. 4 District Police Training Centre, formerly "H.M.S. Fledgling" W.R.N.S. Training Centre. After it was vacated in 1948 the police took it over from 1949 until 1960.

The centre trained newly appointed police constables from Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire and the city and borough forces within those counties. Women polices constables from all over England, except the London metropolitan police, were also trained there. The courses lasted for 13 weeks and covered criminal and traffic law, powers of arrest and general police duties.

Mr Trevor Dunkley: "I was at Mill Meece when it closed down. In the middle of our initial course, we were moved to Ryton on Dunsmore!"¹ WPCs from Surrey then went to Ryton.

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<https://www.search.staffspasttrack.org.uk/Details.aspx?&ResourceID=45295&PageIndex=5&SearchType=2&TemeID=29>



Police Constable 520 Peter Hillier Gloucestershire Police at Mill Meece Training School 1949. shows the wearing of caps not a helmet when under training.²



By late 1950s wore helmets at Mill Meece (Glos History)



Typical police training establishment based around former military accommodation.

² Gloucestershire Police Archives URN 10606

Surrey Constabulary WPCs under training at Mill Meece 1957



**Believed Mill Meece – photo from Betty Wickenden collection.
Note caps and not helmets.**



Training believed initial at Mill Meece 233/B. WPC 21 Green (Wickenden) 1956 Surrey Constabulary, Mill Meece, Staffs trained WPCs from across England except Metropolitan Police



Course 233/B 1957



WPC Green rear left



Front right in right side photograph



Betty Wickenden collection, on left Di Hague also from Surrey



**Left photograph: Di Hague Surrey, right Bee Bristol
Centre photograph WPC Green Surrey Constabulary on left
Right photograph a Surrey WPC at Mill Meece**



Jenny Mathewson left with Betty Green on right.



This photo has Dee Hague written on rear.



Centre Jenny Mathewson right Betty Green



WPC Green (Wickenden) right WPC Smith undated– most likely personal transport



Betty Wickenden nee Green, Jenny Futter third left nee Mathewson



Height limited of 5 feet 4 inches maybe overlooked in one case



Mixed forces – Surrey officers named:
Rear left 2 Butcher 3 Gilbert 9 Hewlet (?) 10 Wickham 11 Barlow 12 Greetham Pam
Front 2 Stewart 3 Hamilton 4 W/I Hughes, 5 CC Rutherford, 6 WCI Mackenzie BEM 8
Osborne





Left rear Mary Waugh later Hughes, Miss Mackenzie, Janet Tripney/Rosam, Gail Patterson, Marrie Wooller/Wilson, Margaret Cameron, WPS Lee-Dennis, Mary Duncan/Redgewell, Ivy Parker, Margaret Chrichton, Peggy Gibson/Denyer,?? Maureen Moody/Poole, King, Janet Boushier/Haire Front Row L-R Phyllis Burfoot, Marjorie Gould/Christmas, Joyce Port. Betty Elli, Adams




Janet Tripney/Rosam

Police Women 1/No 4049
 TODAY'S police officers would probably find it very odd that prior to 1976 police women had their own establishment, pay scales and hours of duty and did not work night duty. They even had their own supervisors and were entitled to a longer meal break than their male colleagues. In the early 1950s W/Inspector Catherine McKenzie was authorised by the Chief Constable, Joseph Simpson, to go to her native Scotland to recruit extra women for the Surrey Constabulary. Among them was Mary Waugh who now lives in Essex. She has sent me a photograph of a group of police women taken in the stable yard at Mount Browne (now part of the Contact Centre).

Off Beat August 2000 Tony Forward



Miss Mackenzie with WPS Lee- Dennis

<p>SURREY CONSTABULARY WOMEN POLICE</p> <p>FAREWELL DINNER</p> <p>To W/Chief Inspector C. Mackenzie, B.E.M.</p>  <p>on Wednesday 30th September, 1964 6.45 p.m. for 7.15 p.m. at The Corona Restaurant, Guildford.</p>	<p>TOASTS</p> <p>H.M. The Queen * * * *</p> <p>W/Chief Inspector C. Mackenzie, B.E.M. * * * *</p> <p>Proposed by W.P.C. B. Wickenden.</p> <p>Seconded by W.P.S. J. Mathewson.</p> <p>Presentation by W/Insp. O.S. Bowyer.</p> <p>* * * *</p> <p>Response by W/Ch.Insp. C. Mackenzie.</p>
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Speeches from Betty Wickenden and Jenny Mathewson 1964

1966

Woking News and Mail February 26, 1966: The girls in blue get plenty of variety: Why the police force? I asked two women police constables attached to Woking Police Station – WPC Betty Wickenden a married woman who lives at St John’s and 21-year-old Valerie Horton who comes from Leatherhead and has digs in Woking. Why become a woman police constable rather than joining one of the armed services?



WPCs Wickenden and Horton

“Because while you are part of a team, you’re also an individual answered Mrs Wickenden. “The job is rarely boring, there’s plenty of variety. And I think you must have a vocation. It’s a fulfilment in itself.” WPC Horton said, “After a careers lecture at school on the force there was nothing else I ever considered doing.”

WPC Wickenden joined the force 9 years ago and married later. She has no children and manages to combine a home and career successfully “though to a certain extent your homelife has to fit in with the hours you work.”

She never managed to take the examinations which might have given her the opportunity for promotion to sergeant and although she regrets that, she does not regret the fact she is a constable because as she said the job is a fulfilment even without promotion.

WPC Horton joined the force 15 months ago. For three months she stayed in a hostel at Ryton on Dunsmore, Warwickshire a Home Office training school, learning what the job entailed, law, police powers and procedure, self-defence, drilling and of course physical education. Then

on to police HQ at Guildford where she studied local procedure and by-laws. Finally, she was posted to Woking. Except in cases where there would be extreme hardship if the WPC was not posted to her hometown, the “new girl” is posted to an area which she may not know, This is partly because it will fit in with the “establishment”, partly because of the embarrassment a beginner might feel if called upon to deal with an old friend in an official capacity. “Although” said Woman Inspector Jenny Mathewson (Later Jenny Futter) who had come over from Guildford HQ to meet me at Woking Police Station, “the girls make friends wherever they go, but at least they are more self-assured and able to deal with all members of the public, or whatever the trouble might be more easily.” Woman Inspector Mathewson joined the force at the same time as WPC Wickenden nine years ago “so you see what you can do if you try” said Mrs Wickenden without rancour.



By 1971 Jenny Futter nee Mathewson, was a chief inspector and Peggy Sandford a superintendent having transferred from Essex.

Once settled at a station a girl is not moved again unless necessarily in her interests or for purposes of promotion. If the WPC is searching for promotion, it is likely she will have to move because the Surrey Constabulary has an authorised establishment of 55 women including seven sergeants. A girl who wants to get on can apply for a position. Promotion to sergeant is subject to examination and selection based on ability and a minimum of four years’ service.

What does the force look for when considering an applicant for the Women’s Police Force? Self-reliance, plenty of common sense, initiative and maturity, not to mention a knowledge or understanding of human nature said Inspector Mathewson. Entrants must be aged 20-35, (exceptionally suitable girls are recruited at 19). Girls must not be less than 5 feet 4 inches in height and have a good standard of health- they will have to pass a medical. Although there are no educational restrictions as regards numbers of O Levels passed applicants need a good standard of education and intelligence and girls with GCE are naturally preferred. There is

nothing to stop a married woman from joining the force though if she has children, she might be refused in her own interests. At the age of 19 a woman constable earns £630 a year and this salary of course carries hidden assets that really transform into a very good salary indeed, For the girls does not to have many working clothes (though they spend about 50% of their time in plainclothes work at Woking). They are supplied with two uniforms and after three years' service they graduate to three. Their black stockings are issued and an allowance is made for flat, black lace-up shoes. WPCs Wickenden and Horton have an expense in the laundering of their glossy white stiff collars, but they think it is money well spent for the smartness and comfort professional laundering achieves.

The girls think of their uniforms as a protection, a hidden armour, and feel that equipped in the comfortable navy blue, they can venture down any dark lane without fear. As skirt fashions have changed so have hems risen, and the girl's skirts are as short as anyone else's bearing in mind the fact that do their patrols on cycles. Each suit is tailor made for the individual and alterations are carried out free for them by the tailor.

A policewoman's day is not taken up largely, as I thought' doing secretarial work to relieve the men on the station. Civilians are taking over more and more of this work. Most of the girl's shift is spent on enquiries, often concerning women or children, interviews, observation or patrolling. The girls liked working on a station where they were greatly outnumbered by men. "We are normal women" smiled WPC Wickenden. But one aspect of the work which neither WPC enjoyed was giving messages of death for which they are often detailed. The WPCs have a chance of working with the CID although there are not many opportunities yet for women to become women detective constables.

The women's police is still a young service, it is just 22 years old. The highest position a woman has so far achieved in the Surrey Constabulary is that of chief inspector. Although the girls at Woking don't see much chance of a woman becoming a chief constable, they look forward to the time when a girl who wants to get on may one day aspire to being an assistant chief constable.



Surrey WPCs under training at Ryton on Dunsmore in about 1962