

Reference code: GB165-0753

Title: Jean Reid Collection

Name of creator: Bennett, Jean Margaret (1928-2000)

Dates of creation of material: 1946-1948, 2021

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 1 box

Biographical history: Bennett, Jean Margaret (1928-2000)

Jean Margaret Bennett, née Reid, was born on the 30th March 1928 in Wandsworth, London, of Scottish parents, George Couper Reid and Mary née Jamieson. Educated at St Michael's School, Wandsworth and the Elliott School, Putney, leaving in 1943 with secretarial qualifications. Brought up in a modern free-thinking family enjoying a lot of freedom as a child both in London with her many siblings, and as an evacuee in rural Surrey. Like many wartime teenagers, she corresponded with overseas servicemen and regularly volunteered at the Canadian Legion Club. Among her first employers were the advertising agency Mather & Crowther (where she worked alongside Ernest Lough) and the Canadian National Railways in Trafalgar Square. She married Arthur Percy Bennett in Fulham in 1952, and they had two daughters, Alison born in 1953 and Fiona in 1962. For many years Jean worked part-time with Arthur supporting his developing career in the wine trade. Volunteering played an important role throughout her life in roles as a school librarian, classroom assistant, Brownie leader, and she was among the first to join the scheme to teach English to Bangladeshi women in their homes. Among family, friends and neighbours she was known for her resourcefulness, good advice and her willingness to lend a hand in times of need. She was active in the local Civic Society and became Secretary to the local Liberal Party. She died in 2000 after a short illness.

Scope and content: Correspondence and photographs from three serving Palestine Policemen (Ron Bridgett, Bill Cameron and Joe Wildman) to Jean Reid. Bill Cameron was Jean Reid's cousin and he introduced Ron Bridgett and Joe Wildman to Jean Reid. The letters give some descriptions of daily life and work in the Palestine Police, as well as the deteriorating security situation in 1947-1948.

System of arrangement:

1. Ron Bridgett
2. Bill Cameron
3. Joe Wildman

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of Jean Bennett and then her family.

Immediate source of acquisition: Received as a gift from Alison Botterill (daughter of Jean Bennett) on 11 Feb 2021

Related Units of Description:

In MEC Archive

For other Palestine Police papers and photographs, please see the Guide to collections relating to the Palestine Police.

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Archivist's note: Fonds, series and item level description created by Debbie Usher 24 Feb 2021. Biographical history supplied by Alison Botterill.

SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE JEAN REID COLLECTION

<u>1</u>	<u>Ron Bridgett</u>	<u>1947-1948</u>	<u>15 items</u>
	Correspondence and photographs from Ron Bridgett to Jean Reid.		
	Biographical history: Ronald Bridgett was born in 1921 and served in the Royal Marines for 7 years before joining the Palestine Police in Nov 1946. He served in mounted section of the Palestine Police.		
1/1	<u>Correspondence from Ron Bridgett</u>	<u>1947-1948</u>	<u>7 items</u>
	Correspondence from Ron Bridgett to Jean Reid. The letters give some information about Ron Bridgett's career and family background, as well as mentioning the deteriorating security situation and the impending evacuation of the British from Palestine.		
1/1/1	Letter from Ron Bridgett to Jean Reid	1 Jan 1947	4 sheets
	written from the Police Station Affula, Palestine in which Ron Bridgett introduces himself.		
	Note: This letter may have been misdated by Ron Bridgett and may be 1948		
	Related material: Photograph 1/1/8 was originally enclosed with this letter and there is description of the photograph.		
1/1/2	Letter from Ron Bridgett to Jean Reid	26 Jan 1947	6 sheets
	written from the Police Post, Nahalal in which he mentions the move to Nahalal Police Post on the 'main Nazareth road' in which they have the task of keeping the road open. Ron Bridgett continues to introduce himself to Jean Reid.		
	Note: This letter may have been misdated by Ron Bridgett and may be 1948.		

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| 1/1/3 | Letter from Ron Bridgett to Jean Reid
written from Nahalal Police Post, Galilee
District, Palestine. The letter mentions
the impending evacuation of the British
and rumours about the date of leaving
and the deteriorating security situation.
He writes 'law and order is a thing of the
past – investigation of crime is almost at
a standstill'. There is also a description
of a visitor to the Nahalal Police Post and
the boredom and isolation of daily life at
the Police Post. | 14 Feb 1948 | 6 sheets |
| 1/1/4 | Letter from Ron Bridgett to Jean Reid
written from Nahalal Police Post, Galilee
District, Palestine. The letter seeks to
'correct the impression given by my
letter the other day' which was too
serious and claiming that 'everything
here is great'. The letter also explains
that the Government purchases the
horses the mounted section ride.
However, each policeman is 'responsible
for the purchase price should anything
happen to the horse from negligence'. | 19 Feb 1948 | 4 sheets |
| 1/1/5 | Letter from Ron Bridgett to Jean Reid
written from the Police Station Nazareth,
which includes a description of Ron
Bridgett's family background. | 15 Mar 1948 | 4 sheets |
| 1/1/6 | Envelope addressed to Miss Jean M.
Reid with postmark 28 Jan 1948. | 28 Jan 1948 | 1 item |
| 1/1/7 | Envelope addressed to Miss Jean Reid. | Not dated | 1 item |

<u>1/2</u>	<u>Photographs</u>	<u>1946-1948</u>	<u>8 photos</u>
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Photographs of Ron Bridgett and his colleagues
in the mounted section of the Palestine Police.

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| 1/2/1 | Photograph of Ron Bridgett labelled 'Mounted Depot Summer 1946'. | 1946 | 1 item |
| 1/2/2 | Photograph of Ron Bridgett and a dog labelled 'Dog, Bike, Moustache and myself, Sarona Jan 1947'. | Jan 1947 | 1 item |
| 1/2/3 | Photograph of a group of men on horseback labelled 'Mounted Patrol Mount Dahi Galilee Nov 1947'. | Nov 1947 | 1 item |
| 1/2/4 | Photograph of 4 men on horseback labelled 'Raschid, Achmed, Izzat and Ibrahim Abdulla. Mount Dahi Nov 1947'. | Nov 1947 | 1 item |
| 1/2/5 | Photograph of Ron Bridgett labelled 'Nahalal Police Post January 1948 ("Gimme back my Boots and Saddle")'. | Jan 1948 | 1 item |
| 1/2/6 | Photograph printed on a postcard labelled 'Little Luck and myself Police Post, Nahalal January 1948'. | Jan 1948 | 1 item |
| 1/2/7 | Photograph of Ron Bridgett on horseback. | Not dated | 1 item |
| 1/2/8 | Photograph of Ron Bridgett, an Arab boy and Ron Bridgett's brother. | Not dated | 1 item |

Related material: 1/1/1 has a description of the photograph. Ron Wildman is on the left 'in the centre is a little Arab boy and on the right my younger brother – also Palestine Police'.

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| <u>2</u> | <u>Bill Cameron</u> | <u>1947-1948,</u> | <u>8 items</u> |
| | Correspondence and photographs from Bill (William) Cameron to Jean Reid, with a note on the letters by Alison Botterill. | <u>2021</u> | |

Biographical history: William Jamieson Cameron was born in 1928 and joined the Palestine Police in Jan 1947. He was Jean Reid's cousin.

2/1	<u>Correspondence from Bill Cameron</u>	<u>1947-1948</u>	<u>6 items</u>
	Correspondence from Bill (William) Cameron to his cousin Jean Reid that include descriptions of his daily life and work in the Palestine Police.		
2/1/1	Letter from Bill Cameron to Jean Reid written from the Sarona Police Depot near Tel Aviv. The letter gives the news that this was 'the passing out day when the lads all become Policemen' and that he has 10 days leave before he starts work.	17 Mar 1947	2 sheets
2/1/2	Letter from Bill Cameron to Jean Reid (possibly written from Haifa). The letter describes daily life including bathing in the Mediterranean, the food, and the need for Policeman to go out armed and in no less than threes, as well as the constant searches for arms that they had to carry out on every patrol.	Sunday 11 th [May 1947]	2 sheets
2/1/3	Letter from Bill Cameron to Jean Reid written from the Central Police Station in Haifa with the original envelope. In the letter Bill Cameron responds to family news, as well as describing an upcoming boxing tournament in Jenin that he is participating in, as well as his new job checking all the 'motor transport going in and out of the yard' and 'issuing petrol'.	9-14 Jun 1947	2 sheets, 1 envelope

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| 2/1/4 | Letter from Bill Cameron to Jean Reid
written from 'Western Pal Station,
Haifa' in which he describes a job from
that morning of escorting a prisoner from
the 'prison ward in the hospital to the
theatre to get a new plaster on his arm',
as well as having applied and been
accepted to the Mounted Section of the
Palestine Police, for which there was a
three month training course. The letter
mentions Wildman [Joe Wildman] and
Bill Cameron asks if he has written. | 16 Jul 1947 | 4 sheets |
| 2/1/5 | Letter from Bill Cameron to Jean Reid
written from 'Armoury Workshops PHQ
[Police Headquarters] Jerusalem,
Palestine' explaining that instead of the
training course for the Mounted Section
he has been sent on an Armourer's
course. The letter describes his
participation in the District Sports
tournament in Haifa and the cold
weather and tension in Jerusalem,
whereby attacks were expected on the
police billet and his view that 'there will
likely be a few kidnappings before long
because the boys are being allowed out
single'. | 10 Sept 1947 | 4 sheets,
1 envelope |
| 2/1/6 | Letter from Bill Cameron to Jean Reid
written from PHQ [Police Headquarters]
Jaffa. The letter mentions how he had
'covered all the roads in the northern
division of Palestine' as part of his work
in Arms Inspection and also that in 15 | 18 Jan 1948 | 1 sheet |

weeks he should be on his way home to Britain.

<u>2/2</u>	<u>Photograph</u>	<u>Not dated</u>	<u>1 item</u>
	Photograph of Bill Cameron on horseback.		
<u>2/3</u>	<u>Notes on Bill Cameron's letters from Palestine</u>	<u>8 Feb 2021</u>	<u>1 sheet</u>
	Notes written by Alison Botterill giving biographical information about Bill Cameron, who was Jean Reid's cousin, as well as providing the family context to some of the people mentioned in the correspondence from Bill Cameron.		
<u>3</u>	<u>Joe Wildman</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>9 items</u>
	Correspondence and photographs from Joe Wildman to Jean Reid.		
	Biographical history: Joseph Frederick William was born in 1927 and joined the Palestine Police in Jul 1946. He mainly served in Haifa.		
<u>3/1</u>	<u>Correspondence from Joe Wildman</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>5 items</u>
	Correspondence from Joe Wildman to Jean Reid in which he introduces himself as the friend of her cousin Bill Cameron. The letters mention his desire to leave the Palestine Police and his plans to start his own business, as well as his anger at the terrorism of the Stern Gang and I.Z.L [Irgun].		
	3/1/1 Letter from Joe Wildman to Jean Reid	7 Jun 1947	5 sheets,
	written from M/T [Motor transport]		1 envelope
	Pool, Police H.Q. Haifa in which Joe Wildman introduces himself and		

explains how his friend Bill Cameron had given him Jean Reid's address.

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| 3/1/2 | Letter from Joe Wildman to Jean Reid written from M/T [Motor transport] Pool, Police H.Q. Haifa. The letter mentions Joe Wildman's plans to start a business with a friend once his two years in the Palestine Police are completed. | 23 Jun 1947 | 6 sheets,
1 envelope |
| 3/1/3 | Letter from Joe Wildman to Jean Reid written from M/T [Motor transport] Pool, Police H.Q. Haifa in which he responds to criticism about starting his own business. | 13 Jul [1947] | 7 sheets,
1 envelope |
| 3/1/4 | Letter from Joe Wildman to Jean Reid written from M/T [Motor transport] Pool, Police H.Q. Haifa. The letter mentions the Stern Gang and I.Z.L. [Irgun] and how 'how today the bodies of the two British Sgts [sergeants] were found hanging from a tree'. | 30 Jul [1947] | 5 sheets,
1 envelope |
| 3/1/5 | Letter from Joe Wildman to Jean Reid written from Eastern Police Station, Haifa in which he responds to her criticism of 'business and men'. | 7 Sept [1947] | 4 sheets |

3/2	<u>Photographs</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>4 items</u>
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Photographs of Joe Wildman.

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| 3/2/1 | Part of a letter or note from Joe Wildman enclosing and giving the context to a photograph of Joe Wildman and a friend. The photograph is labelled 'To Jean from the not so humble Joe Feb 47 Haifa'. | Feb 1947 | 2 items |
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- 3/2/2 Studio portrait photograph of Joe 7 Sept 1947 1 item
Wildman labelled 'to a cynical woman
with fondest regards Joe. Palestine 7th
Sept 1947'.
- 3/2/3 Photograph of Joe Wildman standing on Not dated 1 item
the roof of a building in Haifa.
Note: This is the same roof scene as in 3/2/1.