

Remembering Raymond Bennett



Breeder of the Mockbeggar ponies, former Agister, NFPB&CS Council member for many years and President of the Society in 1988.

This photo was taken of me and my mum (Ceciley Thompkins) together with Raymond at Linford where we have been commoning for 5 generations. They had both been recorded as part of the Oral History Project carried out by the New Forest Trust that I was involved with a few years ago. I did the recording of Raymond, who was thoroughly absorbed talking me through his life, which was very interesting.

Raymond was a childhood friend of my dad as they both lived in Mockbeggar, near Ringwood. My mum was a very active commoner in her time and also knew Raymond well...in the 70's she sat on the pounds and wrote up 'the book' noting all the ponies caught and tail marked at the drifts, mainly Raymond Stickland's, but if Sheena Bennett was not available she would do Ray's book and sometimes John Booth's.

My mum's old mare had died and she wanted a replacement to run outside the gate and this pony (*Lovelyhill Humble Tumble 2006 by Furzey Lodge Zennica*) was advertised for sale on the NFED as a yearling. Unfortunately the owners had very limited grazing which the filly had to share with a large appaloosa riding pony and a huge pig and although she was rather expensive, when I called mum she said "you had better bring her on home"... she went out in our field and did not pick her head up out

of the grass for over a week! Tilly is a big framed pony but lives out on Rockford Common and does very well (they do come in for extra during February and March), she loves to browse and prefers holly and brambles to grazing and remains to this day the most expensive pony my mum has ever bought!

Raymond had a very distinctive voice and he was a bit of a “one off” ... some of the recordings we did for the Oral history can be heard on line. [Listen to Raymond Bennett speaking about taking part in the point to point...hope you find and enjoy it!](https://www.newforestmemories.org.uk/)

<https://www.newforestmemories.org.uk/>

Very sad to lose another real characters of the Forest, but I suppose that is just the natural way of things!

By Lucie Rowe

Photo © New Forest Trust