Unveiling of the Memorial to mark the Centenary of the Royal Air Force

14th July 2018 Tunbridge Wells Cemetery
The Event was held at Tunbridge Wells Cemetery Chapel in conjunction with the Royal Air Forces Association Tunbridge Wells Branch.

The Association was formed in 1943 to support all members of the Royal Air Force and their dependents with the Tunbridge Wells Branch opening in 1946.

The welcome and introduction was given by Mr Maurice Verrall, President, Tunbridge Wells Branch Royal Air Forces Association and the Exhortation was given by Mr Ron Sawyer, Chairman, Tunbridge Wells Branch RAFA, left.
Unveiling of the Memorial
by Mr Peter Blackwell JP Deputy Lieutenant of Kent.

Standard Bearers below.

The last post was played by a Cadet from 129 (Tunbridge Wells) Squadron ATC.

Flight Lieutenant Tim Blackwell JP RAFAC read the full list of the Royal Air Force personnel buried in Tunbridge Wells Cemetery whilst flags were planted for each person, full details of which were published in a commemorative booklet available on the day.
The First Address was delivered by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor James Scholes

Wreaths & Flags were laid by:

Deputy Lieutenant of Kent, Peter Blackwell JP DL,

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor James Scholes,

Mr Ron Sawyer, Chairman, Tunbridge Wells Branch RAFA,

Flight Lieutenant Tim Blackwell JP RAFAC,

Miss Felicity Brown, The Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery.

129 (Tunbridge Wells) Squadron Air Training Corps,

Skinners’ School CCF Air Contingent, (Left)
The Band of 129 (Tunbridge Wells) Squadron ATC
A Personal Story

Victor Charles Dadson
Flight Sergeant Pilot R/76567
Royal Canadian Air Force 408 Goose Squadron

My personal link to Victor is that his mother Edith was a sister of my paternal Grandmother and along with her sister Ada were known as my father's Canadian aunts. My brother Maurice and I grew up in Tunbridge Wells knowing that Victor was buried in a war grave in Tunbridge Wells Cemetery and that his aircraft crashed soon after take-off but had no more details. In recent years with the internet becoming available I started to try to find out more and firstly contacted the RCAF 408 Squadron website. As a result of this I was contacted by George McKillop who served with the squadron from November 1941 until December 1944 and provided the names of the other crew members flying with Victor. In addition to this I was referred to the book Bomber Command Losses 1942 by W R Chorley which gave details of crew and aircraft thus learning that he was flying a Handley Page Hampden reg. number AD782 EQ. At this point I thought that would be the extent of my knowledge but this was not to be the case. In 2012 I was contacted by John Henderson who is a retired member of The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, he had read my e-mail requests and offered to access the service records of Victor in the Ottawa archives. I accepted this offer and he kindly sent me by e-mail copies of Victor's service records which now increased my information considerably. The following year I was contacted by a researcher in Holland who provided details of a previous incident involving Victor when he was attacked by a ME 110 German aircraft after returning from a raid on Osnabruck. He took evasive action and in the process warned the crew they may need to bale out, sadly the navigator did bale out and fell into the Ijsselmeer Lake and drowned. On this occasion Victor’s evasive action was successful and he flew the aircraft safely home. I now have a complete folder about Victor’s service in the RCAF which includes a penciled note from a police constable in Southborough informing an Aunt of the death of Victor on active service and a transcript of his memorial service. Therefore the service and dedication of the plaque remembering RAF personnel who rest in peace in Tunbridge Wells on 14th July 2018 was a poignant occasion for our family. The service was attended by my brother Maurice Verrall (RAFA.TW President) his wife Sylvia and son David, myself, my wife Ros and cousin Max Scott-Ham. Trevor Verrall
The RAF Memorial Booklet was published by Mr Peter Blackwell JP DL, with the assistance of Ann Bates, Noreen O’Meara and Shirley Sutcliffe.

Also in attendance were Ken Dry, Registrar and Bereavement Services Manager for Tunbridge Wells Cemetery and his wife, together with Councillor Jane March representing Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

The Memorial before and after
The Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery was set up in 2014 with these aims:

- To further the protection, conservation and sympathetic enhancement of the Tunbridge Wells cemetery for public benefit and enjoyment;
- To record and foster its heritage of monuments and its ecological importance; and
- To foster its appropriate use as an educational resource for the community.

We have the following projects in hand, with more to follow:

- Researching and recording the lives of the people buried in the cemetery
- Recording the plant and wild life
- Clearing up around the graves
- Identifying the graves in need of restoration

**Membership details:** The current annual subscription is £10- please visit our website for application details

**Website:** foftwc.wix.com/foftwc

**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/TunbridgeWellsCemetery

**Twitter:** TW Cemetery @FoHCTW

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The Royal Air Forces Association Tunbridge Wells Branch: http://www.tunbridgewellsrafa.org.uk/

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