

Ronald Haddon 01162 781374  
12 Jasmine Court,  
Saffron Road,  
Wigston,  
Leicestershire.

Brother of 1192577 Flight Sergeant Alan 'Babe' Haddon, 609 (West Riding) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force. Killed in Action 14th February 1943 over the English Channel. Ronald was posted to 609 from Skegness later in 1943 as a part of his training as an airframe fitter, doing general duties. He recalls the Engineering Officer asking him what he would like to do. Not at all what he was used to! He spent 3 months on the squadron, whilst at Manston, Matlaske and Lympne. He remembers 'Groupie' Walker – there were two Walker brothers, a corporal and a sergeant. Both were pre-war auxiliaries. He recalls that Matlaske entailed a long walk to the mess from the billet, that they had hard-tack, and water was got from a lake – and tasted awful. There was one pub, and it only served cider. It was very strong, scrumpy-style cider, and drinking water after would set the effects off again. The locals would sit in a small square, and the pilots would sit around and get very drunk – to the extent that some were taken off flying.

Alan went to live in Leicester at the age of 15, and lived with his father. His brother lived with his grandparents, his mother having died when he was 13 months old. His father never remarried and had difficulties. The brothers were split up a lot throughout their lives. Alan was born 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920. He liked the girls, and was a keen sportsman – playing cricket, and excelling at bowls (much to the chagrin of some of the old men he beat). When he first went to join the RAF he was rejected as his chest had not expanded enough. Determined, he did the 'Charles Atlas' course, and the next time he went for a physical, he passed.

He kept a diary early on in the war, but his logbook was lost over the years – his father had it for a while.

Ron Haddon  
0116 2781374

RAF - Trained at Skegness. At Matlaske, drank cider. Pilots got very drunk, and some were stopped from flying. Trained at Skegness, with 609 for 3 months on GD (airframe fitter) in 1943 (about 5 of them joined together at the same time), after Babe was killed. Remembers Groupie Walker. Manston, Matlaske, Lympne. Hard tack biscuits and lake water. EO asked him what he wanted to do. Alan and Ron were always split up. Born 18th August 1920. Liked the girls. Liked sport. Played cricket and bowls. Father fought in France WW1 - Highland Light Infantry (nearly all from the Gorbals!) (Signals). Was brought up by his parents as a gentleman, authoritarian. Never spoke of the war. Mother died when Ron was 13 months. Lived with dad's elder sister until 5 yrs, dad until 7, then grandparents. Dad went off the rails when mum died, drinking and gambling. Grandfather had very Victorian principles. Alan went to Leicester when 15, father followed. Worked together at Ashwell and Nesbitts, Engineers/foundry. Alan in office, training as draughtsman, father also in office. Alan went to night school. Company tried to make his a reserved occupation - he wanted to fly! From Chester-le-Street in County Durham. Chest wouldn't expand enough for RAF, so took a Charles Atlas course and altered his physique. Ron went to Blackpool just after the 200th kill party, on a mechanics course. (didn't attend party). Matlaske - a fence marked off 'gas square' with skull and crossbones. Still there? Ablutions - auxiliary fire pump pumped water from lake, which stunk. New buildings built for the yanks.