

From Group Captain (Ret'd) C J BIRKS MA BSc(Hons) MRAeS
No 201 'GUERNSEY'S OWN SQUADRON ASSOCIATION



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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

REUNION AT COBO BAY HOTEL, GUERNSEY SEPTEMBER 2027

I hope all are well and looking forward to the forthcoming festive season!

I write to ask for commitment to our 2027 Guernsey Reunion, which will be hosted at the Cobo Bay Hotel during the period 7th to 13th September, when the Squadron will be visiting for the annual Battle of Britain visit. Our reunion events will be 8th to the 10th/11th September, unless you elect to attend the Church Service and Parade on the 12th September.

I explain below why we will attend with the Sqn, the expected visit format, the hotel rate for early booking plus other financial considerations. As usual, there is a proforma at Annex A to let us know if you wish to attend the reunion and provide some details. **If you wish to take advantage of discounted rates and ensure accommodation at the Cobo Bay Hotel you must book by the 7th January 2027.**

Reunion Date Background

During the last AGM it was agreed I would liaise with OC 201 Sqn, Wg Cdr Martin 'Beef' Pearson, to discuss the dates of the Guernsey Reunion. The AGM debate centred around whether we attend with the Sqn or separately so as not to interfere with the Sqn's annual Battle of Britain visit.

I met 'Beef' recently and he welcomed a joint visit in 2027. This year, manning constraints meant that only 8 Sqn members could attend. For 2027 he thinks it would probably be similar, although there is a small chance he might be able to take up to 16, but that would be a late call. Therefore, boosting the Sqn nameplate presence with the Association would help the Sqn on this occasion. It allows also association members to be present for the annual award of the Association's Centenary gift to a

Guernsey citizen decided by the Sqn, attend the Sqn's cocktail Party and allow OC 201 Sqn with other Sqn members to attend our Formal Dinner.

Reunion Format

The period for the Guernsey Battle of Britain celebrations commences with an evening Airshow on Wednesday 8th September and finishes on Sunday 12th with a Church Parade, which would include the Squadron Standard and Squadron members. I appreciate that not all members may be able to stay for a five or six day period but, as in 2024, many may wish to do so. The Association run events will be the AGM and Dinner and be complete by Friday 10th at the latest. The format is still evolving but is based on:

7 th /8 th	Arrive on the Island
8 th	Airshow in the evening, times TBD
9 th	AM own time 4 to 5 pm PM AGM at Cobo Bay Hotel Evening Formal Dinner or Sqn Cocktail Party TBD
10 th	Day Own Time Evening Formal Dinner or Sqn Cocktail Party TBD
11 th	Poss Sqn Cocktail Party TBD
12 th	Church Parade & Service with Sqn Standard and members
12 th /13 th	Return home

As you can see, the final format depends on when the Sqn hosts a Cocktail Party, So, if you wish to attend just the Reunion events, you need to book accommodation from only the 7th/ 8th till the 10th/11th September, depending on your transport arrangements.

Accommodation

I have been provided with an excellent accommodation proposal by the Cobo Bay Hotel but it requires commitment by the 7th January 2027. Island hotel rooms during that week are very scarce and expensive due to the airshow; during the same period in 2024 the Cobo Bay was fully booked. However, The Cobo Bay has been the Sqn's second home since the early Nimrod era and many members have asked that we return there. So the owner, David Nussbaumer (an Honorary Association member), has already blocked off 31 of his 33 rooms for us (two had already been pre-booked) with discounted rates for bed and breakfast from the 7th to 13th September:

Balcony Room:	£235 per night Bed & Breakfast.
All Double/Twin Rooms:	£195 per night Bed & Breakfast.
Single Rooms:	£150 per night Bed & Breakfast

You can view the rooms on www.cobobayhotel.com. You do not need to book the whole period, just the days you require. **However, to guarantee the rooms and discount, David requires commitment by the 7th January when he will have to release them back to public availability.** Rooms will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. You can still attend the Reunion if you book accommodation later and you may be lucky if the hotel still has rooms on the open market, but you will not be eligible for the discounted rate. Otherwise, you will need to find your own accommodation in other hotels. To take advantage of the early booking offer:

Book at the Cobo by the 7th January 2027:

Do not book online. Ring the hotel on +44 (0) 1481 257102 and say you are booking for the 201 Association Reunion. You will need to pay a non-refundable 25% deposit of your total stay cost. As a group booking, the hotel requires you to pay the balance by 30th June 2027. Ensure you have travel insurance in case you need to cancel after booking.

Other Financial Considerations

Travel to the Island. If you wish to self-drive, Condor Ferries (now part of Brittany Ferries) operates a ferry from Portsmouth and a catamaran fast service from Poole. Return prices start at £300 for car plus 2 passengers. I will request a discount as in 2024 and pass that on as soon as I have it, if Condor agrees. Otherwise, you can fly with BA from Heathrow or Gatwick, or Aurigny from various UK destinations. Current return flights for early booking on Skyscanner are around £100-£135 from London as I write but would likely increase next year.

Airshow 8th September. The Airshow is free to watch.

Formal Dinner. The Cobo Bay can host a Formal Dinner for up to 80 people and is offering a function menu that would cost £43.85 ahead. In Guernsey in 2024, 60 people attended the dinner but at the two most recent reunions we were nearer to 90. If we are a greater number than the Cobo can manage, I will look elsewhere for the dinner, and I suspect the cost may then be nearer £50-£60 a head. My preference is the Cobo Bay.

Other Events. No other events will be organised. To visit Island attractions, individuals without cars can make use of spare seat capacity with those driving who offer it or use taxis. I will ask those with available cars for their spare seat capacity and publish a list.

Transport

I will obtain costs for coach hire to and from the air show plus the Sqn Cocktail Party and Dinner, if these last events are not at the Cobo.

Subsidy

Once I know the full range of costs the core committee members (myself, Secretary and Treasurer) will decide if a subsidy is required from the association fund, which is

very healthy after our Lincoln Reunion. Based on 2024 costs, this will most likely be for bus transport if required.

Action required now

1. If you wish to attend the 2027 Guernsey Reunion, complete Annex A as soon as possible and return to me **AND** Joe Kennedy. That way we cross check returns to ensure we minimise mistakes!
2. To guarantee a room at the Cobo Bay Hotel for the Reunion, call the hotel no later than Thursday 7th January 2027 to book a room for the days you require within the dates 7th to 13th September 2027.

I hope as many as possible can attend for another Guernsey reunion. Further 2027 Reunion correspondence will go only to those of you who return Annex A. This letter will also go onto the Association website, now under the management of Jerry Flint,

Kind Regards

Chris

Annex A: Attendance Proforma

ANNEX A – ATTENDANCE PROFORMA

Please circle the applicable answer and add dates where appropriate

Name(s):

- 1.
- 2.

Are you a Guernsey Resident or will you require accommodation?

RESIDENT/REQUIRE ACCOMODATION

Accommodation

Do you plan to take advantage of the Cobo Bay Hotel Early booking offer? YES/NO

If so which dates do you plan to stay between?

Have you booked the Cobo Bay Hotel Yet? YES/NO

TRANSPORT

How do you intend to travel to the Island? NA/ FERRY/AIR

Will you have a car available on the Island? YES/NO

If you have a car available, can you offer spare seat capacity? YES/NO

If so, how many seats?

EVENTS

The assumption is that everybody attending will attend the airshow, AGM and Formal Dinner.

Numbers for the Squadron Cocktail Party are not yet known

Would you like to attend? YES/NO

Would you like to attend the Church Service on the 12th September? YES/NO

A form for meal choices will be sent out once numbers, date and location of the dinner are confirmed.