



English abroad: Peter's photo of Finchley pupils on arrival in their twin town of Le Raincy. Photo Peter Lack

Out on the town in our twin town

By Peter Lack

Fifty years ago, over the four Easter holidays of 1965 to 1968, I escorted 200 pupils to Finchley's twin town of Le Raincy, a suburb on the eastern side of Paris. I took the photo above as we arrived on one of these trips.

It is hard to credit that these pupils, assembled and tentative on the steps of the town hall there, will now be either retired or approaching retirement. How many of them will see this reminder of their yesteryear selves? Two of the teacher escorts can be seen to the right of centre in the foreground while, to the left, a few French organisers are evident.

Over Easter 1967 the pupils' visit coincided with an Old Finchleians football tour featuring matches played in a tournament organised and

hosted by Le Raincy's neighbour Livry. The players were lodged in the dormitory of a Le Raincy private school. A year later Livry had established its own town-twinning link with Barnet's neighbour Haringey. Le Raincy was twinned with Finchley in 1962 and is still officially twinned with the Borough of Barnet. I wonder if pupil exchanges still take place or do health and safety hurdles now discourage schools and councils from organising them?

Editor's note: Are you in the photo, did you ever travel with Peter or do you have your own memories of twinning with Le Raincy?

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Fog of confusion hangs over shisha smoking at Oasis

By Janet Maitland

The Oasis restaurant in Church Lane, N2, has made another application to Barnet Council to allow shisha smoking on its premises, despite the Secretary of State ruling against it in January.

Restaurant owner Khahil Jelbouia made the move in May just before he became liable for an unlimited fine if he did not comply with the ruling. Barnet Council is now in a position where it must consider an application which could potentially overturn the ruling, while still having to enforce it.

We understand that local residents have asked the council to take action as they allege that shisha smoking is still going on. The council told us that they have made spot checks.

Supporters and objectors
Only 21 of the 140 people who commented on the application have objected to it; 119 supporters make a large majority even taking into account that 30 supporters mistakenly thought the Oasis would have to close if the application was refused.

Where people live has a major impact on their feelings about the Oasis. Of the 12 Church Lane residents who commented on the latest application, only one has objected. But it's a different story in



Oasis restaurant in Church Lane

Meanwhile, officers considering the Oasis application have to determine whether assessments of the new ventilation system carried out by the two independent agencies consulted by Mr Jelbouia are robust enough for it to be confident that fumes are no longer drifting outside.

Leopold Road closest to the smoking canopy at the rear of the restaurant, where 17 of the 21 residents commenting objected.

These objectors say they are very badly affected by smoke pollution and noise from both the ventilator and customers. Some are particularly concerned about fumes drifting into their children's bedrooms. All of them are angry that the council has allowed shisha smoking to go on without permission and in spite of its own environmental campaign against the practice.

Supporters who have commented say the Oasis is a peaceful, family-run place where they can relax. Even if they don't smoke themselves they are not concerned about shisha smoke because they claim the ventilator is effective or the problem has been overstated.



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