Best wishes to all our members for 2020. It's going to be a great year!

In 2020, we would like to celebrate the cultural diversity of our community with an event incorporating music, songs and food from all the corners of the globe that our membership represents. Did you know we have members from as far afield as Japan and Mongolia to the east, Kazakhstan and Ukraine somewhere in the middle, and Peru, the US and Canada to the west. So, not just UK, France and Germany?

I confess that, for my part, I might not be impressed with the English song or Shepherd’s pie. But I will take the risk in your good company, if you will join me. We don't have a date or a venue yet, we would just like to get the conversation going. Please tell me if you and your friends or family could contribute a song, music, a dance and/or some food typical of your ancestral country.

You can email me at esc.events.67@gmail.com

Sue Moller, ESC President
Regular activity groups

The English-Speaking Community in the Strasbourg area hosts conversation groups in English, French, German and Spanish. These conversation groups are small groups of around 6 to 20 people who meet regularly to exchange conversation, some in their native language and others to practice their foreign language-speaking skills. These groups also provide an opportunity to meet in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere to discuss various topics - travels, hobbies, history, politics... and much more.

**English Conversation**

chez Frederick & Maryline William-Smith
7 rue des Ducs, Vieux-Cronenbourg, Strasbourg
(trams A/D station Ducs d’Alsace)
on alternate Fridays from 2 to 4 pm

Contact: Nigel
nigelpermaul@gmail.com
Phone: 06 75 63 89 98

**French Conversation**

The group meets twice a month,
on a Wednesday from 2.30 to 4.30 pm,
 at the Tea Room « Patrick »
5 rue de Verdun, Strasbourg.

Contact: Colette
fredericka06@yahoo.fr
Phone: 03 88 20 21 17

**German Conversation**

The German group meets twice a month,
on a Monday from 2.00 to 3.30 pm,
in « Café Rapp », Haupstr. 104, Kehl.

Contact: Bernard
bernard.greiner@numericable.fr
Phone: 03 88 66 32 06

**Spanish Conversation**

The group meets once a month,
on a Wednesday from 2.30 to 4.30 pm,
at the Tea Room « Patrick » 5 rue de Verdun.

Contact: Colette
fredericka06@yahoo.fr
Phone: 03 88 20 21 17

Next meeting: 13th January at 2 pm
Regular activity groups

Book club's monthly reading

Members of the ESC book club meet on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 (possible change of date during holidays). The member who has chosen the book will host the meeting and is invited to write a review for the newsletter (which is published in the following issue).

Interested in joining the book club? Contact Joëlle: joelle.glore@gmail.com

| Monday 17th February | 'Lies Behind the Ruin' by Helen Matthews |
| Monday 9th March    | 'The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society' by Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows |

Badminton group

Venue: ASL Robertsau, 212 route de la Wantzenau, 67000 Strasbourg  
When: Saturday morning 10.00 to 11.00  
Price per court to share among players: €20 per hour.  
Neither experience nor expertise needed, just enthusiasm.

Interested in joining the badminton group? Contact Joëlle: joelle.glore@gmail.com

New activities starting

The ESC Committee has always been committed to providing new ideas with regard to events, activities... and is therefore happy to introduce two new offers for you to discover.

ESC Exchange

You may sometimes need help: in the garden, with your baby or your young child or with your dog/cat while you are away! Wouldn’t it be easier for you to call someone from the ESC you trust?

We offer you the opportunity to create an exchange of services. We would set up an email-list of people interested. No money would circulate, but each member would earn tokens and would be able to exchange their earnings by asking for help in another - or the same - field. You decide between you the value of the service being provided. Each new member is given ten tokens to use. Everyone is welcome!

Would you like to join in? Do not hesitate to send us an email at raduenz14@yahoo.com for any question or talk with us about it at the next afterwork get-together.
Dinner Club

You may like to get to know ESC members better? Why not share a meal to which you would have made a small but invaluable contribution?

Here’s the idea:

One member (or couple) is the host and prepares the main course;
A second member brings the prepared starter;
A third member brings the prepared dessert;
The fourth member is the Guest!

The names of participating members for each dinner (8 at a maximum) would be drawn randomly from a hat. Everyone is very welcome to take part in this new activity. This will be a quarterly event. It is not a problem if you can’t host! Just mention it when you register.

Interested? Join the Dinner Club! at raduenz14@yahoo.com

Upcoming events

Burns supper
25 JANUARY 2020 - 7.00 pm
ESCO, Espace culturel d’Offendorf, rue du cimetière, 67850 Offendorf
waiting list - starting 7.00pm sharp
Contact: maggie.vautheny@gmail.com

Guided tour
1 FEBRUARY 2020 - 2.30 pm
Reformed church Saint Paul: 1 Place du Général Eisenhower.
Register at esc.events.67@gmail.com

After-work drinks
7 FEBRUARY 2020 - 6.30 pm
BOMA bistro, 7 rue du 22 novembre:
Register at esc.events.67@gmail.com

if you would like to be updated about ESC activities through Facebook, visit www.facebook.com/ESCAlsace hoping you’ll ‘like’ it!

What’s Up? esc-alsace.org
Upcoming events in details

Coffee morning

THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2020 - 9.30 - 11.30 am

Come and catch up with ESC members and visitors at our free monthly coffee mornings at l’Escale (Tram E stop Robertsau-l’Escale).
The next dates will be: 19/3, 8/4, 14/5, 18/6.

The Escale community centre (centre socio-culturel de la Robertsau, 78 rue du Docteur François) is our regular home and has good parking facilities whilst it is within a five-minute walk of bus routes L6, 30 and 70 (stop at Papeterie). We meet on first floor and the building offers the benefit of a lift for those with mobility issues.

Should you have a question to put to the Committee, you can speak to Maggie, Véronique or Nigel. Or see Bill for help with your computer. For further information, e-mail: contact.esc.alsace@gmail.com. No need to sign-up.

Guided tour of the reformed church Saint-Paul

SATURDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2020 - 2.30 pm

The garrison church of Saint Paul, located in the Neustadt in Strasbourg between rivers Aar and Ill, was built in a very original neo-gothic style after 1870, when Alsace and Moselle were under German occupation.

We invite you to join a tour with ESC member, Fabienne Martin, who will tell you about the strategic place and construction of this magnificent church, and take the time to admire its special volume, interior decoration and organisation, as well as the stained-glass windows.

Cost: €8 for members, €10 for non-members (please have your cash ready).

Register to attend this 1h30 tour on 1 February 2020 at esc.events.67@gmail.com

After-work drinks at BOMA bistro

FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2020 - 6.30 pm onwards

Our next monthly after-work get-together will be on Friday, 7th February, in a tailor-made chic ethnic decor, namely BOMA located in the heart of Strasbourg, 7 rue du 22 novembre, along the new pedestrian walkway.

BOMA is described as a living space with restaurant, bar, music, café, shop; an intimate, friendly and sparkling haven.

Meet us there from 6.30 pm onwards for an hour or two in a convivial atmosphere and enjoy a drink or two, be they draught beers, spirits, wines or cocktails. The usual formula is that everybody pays upon being served for their drinks and complementary sides while the ESC provides some nibbles for early arrivers.

This time please register at: esc.events.67@gmail.com. We hope to see you there.
**Buffet Lunch**

**SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2020**

We will be meeting on Saturday, 22nd February for a buffet-lunch at Pâtisserie Gerber (opposite Clinique Orangerie). You are kindly invited to join the crowd!

If interested, contact Dany at danielle.gay.minck@orange.fr. or tel: 03.88.31.11.95. Details will be confirmed in the next issue of the newsletter.

**SWAS Creative writing workshops**

The organisers of Strasbourg Write a Story are pleased to announce that the competition is running for a seventh year this autumn and winter (entries between 1st December and 15th February - awards 25th April 2020). With the generous support of the US Consulate in Strasbourg and the American Embassy in Paris we are able to bring you a series of workshops to help you free the writer within!

**Change of date! 1st February 2020 - Julia Weston**

**Time to write!**

Tips and reminders of essential elements in writing: including techniques, character, plot, setting, beginnings, endings and editing. With dedicated time to write and share personal feedback.

**25th April 2020 - Susannah Gent (also a competition judge)**

**Emotional Dreams and Structural Analysis**

Writing fiction involves two distinct processes; something that could be called ‘creative dreaming’, and a later process that might be termed ‘sorting it all out’. An exploration of these two aspects of writing and how the writer might maximise their productivity.

Susannah Gent is a filmmaker, screenwriter and Senior Lecturer in Film Production at Sheffield Hallam University, UK, where she teaches screenwriting and directing. As a writer Susannah has been commissioned by the UK Film Council to write The Leaving Party, a feature length film script. Jelly Dolly, a feature length film distributed by Cornerstone International, that Susannah wrote and directed, was developed by the British Film Institute and has gained an award from the British Council.

The above workshops are offered free of charge to adults thanks to the generosity of the American Embassy in France.

For registration, times and venue details, please see our website: [http://sxb-write-a-story.org](http://sxb-write-a-story.org)
Letters to the editor

The rest is history! from Eila and Nigel

Being invited to the AGM held for the first time outside a coffee morning, my consciousness was raised. What does our association do, or mean, to you? And what do you want it to do, or mean to you?

It was born out of loneliness. In the mid-seventies, six women who were in Strasbourg because of their husbands' work met once a month in each other's homes, or through the British Consulate Library! We all had small children, with no hope of work, and no communal place to meet, no church, no international school etc. Life was tough.

British working women had been recruited by the Council of Europe or other enterprises therefore did not suffer the same problems as the stay at home wife, who only had small children to talk to, for anything up to ten hours a day. This is not a 'poor little me' letter; it is an explanation of how our association was conceived.

Six women gradually met others, some native English speakers; others who perhaps had learnt English or had lived in an English speaking country and wanted to continue to speak it. And so the snowball grew.

In those early days we knew no men who were "house husbands", so it was organised by women for women and their needs.

It is interesting, with passage of time, how the membership has changed. No need for mother and toddler groups but it does seem the working members need to be catered for. To say it blandly, are members looking to the ESC to provide their social life?

I should, as a founder member, be interested in comments, and to know what members want? Perhaps that is a difficult question...

Eila Walker

Eila's comments take me back to when I arrived in Strasbourg in 1998. At that time there were many male partners looking after their children and trying to find an independent rôle for themselves. So we used to meet at the café Brant, trying to support one another and talking about the meaning of life!

Our link was mainly through the Amicale Femmes of the Council of Europe, which, as the title suggests, was set up for female partners. It was more difficult for males to integrate than females at that time. So Bernadette Villiger, who at that time was the president, asked me if I would like to organise a sort of "Amicale Hommes".

Well! We did not officially create an organisation but we did find rôles for ourselves, for some it was bricolage, for others it was other interesting activities such as teaching English. The Amicale did provide financial support so that we could attend French lessons in the translators' cabins * (remember those!) and Université Populaire. Those were the days.

I am reminded by the computer workshops at l'Escale, recently advertised, that one of my rôles was to set up these courses for young people each Wednesday as they did not have school. But first we had to find computers. The Council of Europe came to the rescue and supplied us with old PCs which we prepared for the lessons.

Another activity was that I was one of the lucky ones as I was invited to accompany missions for the Media & Culture committee around Europe to take photos, even in places like Mostar and Sarajavo whilst K4 were there to give us military support!

Many of our group, as time passed, found jobs often giving private language lessons.

So you ask me what about the ESC? Well that came later for me, encouraged by Jo Crowe. The rest is history!

Nigel Permaul

* before the new administration AGORA was constructed there portocabin on that site where the translators worked and we had French lessons.
"English As She Is Spoke" *

The English Plural according to.... Georges Carling

We’ll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,
But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes;
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese;
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.
If the plural of man is always called men, Why shouldn’t the plural of pan be called pen?
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn’t the plural of booth be called beeth?
Then one may be that, & three would be those.
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose; And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.
We speak of a brother & also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say methren.
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his & him,
But imagine the feminine: she, shis & shim!
Let’s face it - English is a crazy language.
There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger;
Neither apple nor pine in pineapple.
English muffins weren’t invented in England.
We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes,
We find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square;
A guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.
Why is it that writers write, but fingers don’t fing,
Grocers don’t groce & hammers don’t ham?
Doesn’t it seem crazy that... you can make amends but not one amend?
If you have a bunch of odds and ends... and get rid of all but one of them,
What do you call it?
If teachers taught, why didn’t preachers praught?
If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?
Sometimes I think all people who speak English should be in an asylum for the verbally insane.
In what other language do people recite at a play, and play at a recital?
We ship by truck but send cargo by ship...
We have noses that run & feet that smell;
We park in a driveway & drive in a parkway.
And how can a slim chance & a fat chance be the same, while a wise man & a wise guy are opposites?
You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down;
In which you fill in a form by filling it out, & in which an alarm goes off by going on.
And in closing.... If Father is Pop.... how come Mother’s not Mop ? ? ? ?

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_As_She_Is_Spoke

sent by Christine Secouet
The clash between the West and the Islamic World is one of the defining, frustratingly complex issues of the 21st century.

The author of this thoughtful and elegantly written book focuses on the dilemmas of two families of Pakistani origin which have made their homes in the UK and which find themselves caught between loyalties to two nationalities and two cultures.

The Pashas are intellectually curious and, in many ways, integrated into western life while retaining respect for their Islamic roots – but are simultaneously trying to shake off the disastrous legacy of an absentee father who died as a jihadi in Iraq. For the Lones, a mixed Pakistani-Irish family, there is no doubt about their secular, western outlook – to the extent that Karamat, an ambitious politician, makes a point of publicly criticising the backwardness of the Islamic faith.

A chance meeting in New England between members of the two families sets off a chain of events which leads up to the final tragic ending.

The book is openly inspired by the play ‘Antigone’ by Sophocles, a fact which serves to show that human behaviour driven by conflicts within and between families, has changed very little in two and a half thousand years.

Mike Wraith

Kamila Shamsie was born into a well-to-do family of intellectuals in Pakistan. She was brought up in Karachi where she attended Karachi Grammar School, and she has a BA in Creative Writing from Hamilton College in New York State. She moved to London in 2007 and has dual British-Pakistani nationality.

Home Fire is her seventh novel, published in 2017, and winning the 2018 Women’s Prize for Fiction.
Beautiful villa to let in Tuscany

12 km south of SIENA: country-maisonette (19th century-villa), 6 large and bright rooms which are nicely furnished, two floors, sleeping up to 6, spacious hall, big Cantina (former wine cellar) with extra large living room, summer kitchen (dishwasher) and two bathrooms (washing machine), extra WC, sunny courtyard and lovely garden and forest to be let from Mid March till November. Cool rivers, lakes and hot thermal springs in the vicinity, 50 km to the sea, beautiful landscape, picturesque towns and tranquil hills. Internet/ WLAN and telephone.
From €560 /week.

Call for information Birgit Meyer:
0033 388 36 1991 / Birgimeyer2@gmx.de

Also available: lovely apartment for two persons with garden and terrace. €490 /week.

for photos, look on: http://www.poggioallupo.com

Newsletter Publication

We’ll publish your announcements/advertisements each month, space permitting and limited to 100 words. Advertisements will be repeated twice only and please let the Editor know if you need your ad repeated. This service is free to ESC Members, non-members and businesses €40, which should be included with submission. Items for publication should be in English.

Please forward items by e-mail to Catherine Manini at esc.newsletter.67@gmail.com

The next newsletters will be issued on the following dates: 10/2 - 16/3 - 6/4 - 11/5 - 25/6
Deadline for next copy: Sunday 2/02/2020 - 6 pm
ESC Subscription Form 2020

**Annual Fees:** Individual/Family €30 - Student/Au pair: €12
Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December.
For further information about payment email contact.esc.alsace@gmail.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is this application for a:</th>
<th>□ New Member</th>
<th>□ Renewal of last year’s membership</th>
<th>□ Past ESC member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surname</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>First Name</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nationality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member 1</strong> (records will be maintained in this name)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member 2</strong> (spouse, partner)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your details have not changed, just tick here □ Otherwise, please complete as necessary.

**Address:**

House number, Street: ................................................................. .................................................................
Postcode: ................................................................. Town: .................................................................
Telephone Number: ................................................................. Mobile Number: .................................................................
Email Address(es) - Please enter in capital letters: .................................................................

**Children born in 2000 or after:**

Name: ................................................................. Year of birth: .................................................................
Name: ................................................................. Year of birth: .................................................................

If you have given us an email address, we will automatically send you the newsletter by email.
If you do not have an email address, or prefer to receive a printed copy by post please tick here □
Postage is one of our highest costs - please consider this option carefully.

**Completed application forms should either be given to the Membership secretary at an ESC coffee morning, or posted, with your cheque made payable to "English Speaking Community" to:**
Mike Wraith, 7 rue Lovisa, La Robertsau, 67000 Strasbourg
If you have used our PayPal option would you please enter the reference here: ____________ and email a completed membership form to: contact.esc.alsace@gmail.com
Enter comments or interests here:

IMPORTANT: We respect EU General Data Protection Regulations and will only ever use your contact details to send you information about the ESC or ESC events. We will never sell, lend or pass on your details.