



Upcoming events overview

French conversation

2 FEBRUARY: 4.00 pm

SWAS final workshop

6 FEBRUARY: 9.30 am

Book club

9 FEBRUARY: 6.30 pm

Coffee morning

18 FEBRUARY: 9.30 am

Quiz evening

19 FEBRUARY: 6.30 pm

Apéro

26 FEBRUARY: 6.30 pm

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new ESC contacts

- General: contact@esc-alsace.org
- Newsletter: newsletter@esc-alsace.org
- Events: events@esc-alsace.org

Upcoming activities



Quiz Time Again

FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY: 6.30 - 8.00 pm

The Christmas Quiz organised last December by the ESC Quiz Masters was, by all accounts, regarded as a resounding success for its entertainment value and brainscratching exercise. Consequently, it has been agreed by the ESC committee to organise another quiz in February and the date chosen is Friday 19th February from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm.

Members and non-member friends are welcome to play and, of course, as is the custom, the winner gets a prize!

A link to register will be sent out very soon and those who are interested will receive a Teams link and instructions in due course.

Your ESC Quiz Masters look forward to seeing you there!

Online February Coffee meeting

THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2021: 9.30 - 11.30 am

Until the health situation enables in person meetings and the Escale community centre opens again, the coffee mornings will be offered by the committee, online on Teams, on the dates previously announced: 18/2, 18/3, 22/4, 20/5, 17/6.

Don't delay pinning them down in your diary and watch out for a reminder by email with the suitable link.



Online February Apéro meeting

FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY: 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Until we can safely meet in town, apéros will be organised by the committee online on Teams, on the following dates: 26/02, 26/03, 16/04, 28/05.

Have a glass of something interesting and some nibbles at the ready, settle into your cosiest armchair and click on the link you will have received a few days before, to join us any time between 6.30 and 8.30.

English Conversation Group

FRIDAYS, 2.30 pm

The English conversation group currently organises weekly online meetings on Zoom on Friday afternoons - one week it is a simple conversation, the following week a more structured session with presentations on various topics of the participants' choosing.

Zoom sessions ID & passcodes are sent once you have registered with the group. If you are interested in joining, please contact Nigel at nigelpermaul@gmail.com - 06 75 63 89 98.

French conversation group

MONDAYS, 4.00 pm

The French conversation group currently gathers fortnightly on Tuesdays at 4.00 pm for online meetings on Zoom. If you are interested in joining, please contact Martin Pickford: pickfordmartin@gmail.com.

The next meeting is on 2nd February. Among participants are two native French speakers and one member each from UK, Russia, Italy, USA and Australia. « We make lots of mistakes but we have a good laugh too » says Martin. Although those sessions are not quite a class, they give an opportunity to correct grammar mistakes or suggest vocabulary when needed.



The Strasbourg Write a Story 2021 Competition offered several free creative writing workshops, thanks to the generosity of the US Embassy in France. So why not 'free the writer within' and join us, whether you're starting out or getting ready to enter our 2021 Competition. The closing date is 12th February 2021.

Online registration is required for our online workshops, so please see our website: <http://sxb-write-a-story.org/>

FINAL WORKSHOP: 6th February 2021 (09h30-12h00)

Creating a Place: worldbuilding and settings – Julia Weston

How to create an interesting, engaging and believable world in any genre to enrich and serve your story.

Letter to the editor

Memories Revived

Bronwyn Harrowfield's recollections of Christmases spent in Australia, printed in the last newsletter, prompted fond memories for Bernard Buckenmeyer. A globetrotting tour guide during his working life, Bernard looks back with great affection on the five Christmases he spent in Perth, Western Australia, singing carols by candlelight on the banks of the Swan River. He also reckons that he attended some thirty sunsets at Ayers Rock and notes somewhat wistfully the contrast in the climate with the grey, humid winters of Alsace.

Past events reviews

Christmas Quiz

Just before Christmas, some of us met online for a quiz night. We were all equipped with pen, pencil and a glass of beer or wine and eagerly waited for Joëlle and Véronique to give us the questions so that we could get our brains working. The evening went very well. Many thanks to the organisers for such an entertaining evening. Two of our members have given us their thoughts on the evening:

Aminat

« Basically all of the questions were foreign to me and I couldn't relate to any of them but I did have a good time, which really is the most important thing.

I found it was really well organised and I learnt a few things. I always thought Jingle Bells was the number one Christmas song of all times, until I found out in the quiz that is in fact White Christmas.

By the end of the quiz, I felt so much better after a long day. »

Christelle

« I enjoyed the quiz very much as the questions were fun and informative. I was invited right away although I had only just joined the ESC, which was very kind. It was a good opportunity to meet new friends and old acquaintances. And if I may say so, the prizes were absolutely worth it! I recommend the quiz to anyone looking for a few hours of fun with friendly people. »

Here are a few of the questions asked:

1. Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?
2. Which beverage company has been using Santa Claus in its advertising since 1931?
3. Which of these was not a gift given by the Wise Men to Baby Jesus - gold, silver, myrrh?
4. When does the Russian Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas?
5. Where is the Christmas menu alcohol free?
6. What strange decorations do Ukrainians put on the Christmas tree?

Answers - 1. Germany, 2. Coca-Cola, 3. silver, 4. 7th January, 5. Poland, 6. Spider's web

I hope the above has given you a sense of what the Quiz Night was like. Another Quiz night is already in the pipeline for February as I write, so please do check your emails to get the suitable link in due time.

Another fun, friendly evening would be just the job to brighten up a dark winter's evening.

Maggie Vautheny

A last flavour of Burns' 2021 - *Lang may yer lum reek*

Should auld acquaintance be forgot...

For the first January in what feels like several millennia, there was no ESC Burns Supper and Ceilidh this January, - another casualty of the pesky virus. Members, friends and associated hangers-on who have become accustomed to our annual event in Offendorf where we have gathered since time immemorial to eat (a lot), drink (a wee bit) and be merry (a Ceilidh is best thought of as rugby set to music) whilst joining hands metaphorically with would-be Scots all over the world in tribute to our national bard Robert Burns before tunefully belting out *Auld Lang Syne* and crawling home exhausted/over-tired (delete as applicable).

Alas it's not to be this year, but we hope to return to the traditional format in 2022.

In case anyone wants to celebrate with traditional Burns' fare at home on or around January 25th, here's a simple recipe you can prepare from scratch, given that it's too late to order a MacSween's Haggis delivery from Edinburgh as we normally do:

1. Buy a sheep,
2. Sell the wool,
3. Cook the rest,
4. Serve with bashed neeps and champit tatties,
5. Season with coriander and Scottish Gravy* according to taste.

*You may prepare your own gravy (but don't get caught!). Alternatively buy a ready-made sauce, available in many supermarkets. My personal favourites are Auchentoshan, Bunnahabhain and Dalwhinnie. Famous Grouse is an acceptable mid-market choice. Lidl own-brand is cheap and not as cheerful as Tesco's.

Burns Supper regulars will know that we serve Scotch Broth before the haggis, but unfortunately it's too late to prepare for this year as it needs to simmer on low heat from October 15th. For dessert, I recommend the following, as both Cranachan and Scotch Trifle are too fiddly to prepare:

1. Store a multi-pack of Mars Bars in the fridge overnight
2. Prepare a batter using 1 cup flour, 1 cup cornflour and 1 cup dark/fizzy beer
3. Dip the Mars Bars in the batter until liberally coated (remember to unwrap them first)
4. Deep fry in hot oil for 65-85 seconds, until the batter is crisp and the centre gooey
5. Serve immediately with half a raspberry as garnish

If still hungry, repeat as often as desired and feel free to experiment with Snickers instead of Mars - the peanuts give this traditional dessert a certain « *je ne sais quoi* ».

Some modernists say that using a Cadbury Creme Egg instead of Mars or Snickers gives a delicious twist, but I have not yet had the pleasure.

Et voila. It's as simple as that! I'm sure our esteemed editor would be delighted to receive photos of any « at home » Burns celebrations for the next edition.

Hope to see you back in Offendorf in 12 months, but in the meantime « A guid New Year tae ane an' a' ».

Lang may yer lum reek (« Long may your chimney smoke! »)

Alasdair Hunter

Book club



« Instructions for a Heatwave » by Maggie O'Farrel

“ The 70s attitudes towards family, divorce, women's role in society and dyslexia seemed like a very strange era to some of us. ”

For those of us who lived in the UK in 1976, Maggie O'Farrell's vivid and expressive descriptions of a very, very hot summer with water restrictions everywhere rang very true. This « strange weather brings out strange behaviour » starting with the disappearance of Robert O'Riodan from his home in London.

The book shows us a family in crisis as the estranged children join their mother in trying to solve the mystery. Although there is no real plot as such, we gradually get to know the family members, their

relationships and the tensions within the family. We also get to see the secrets and lies that link the whole family and how our childhood impacts us all our life.

The 70s attitudes towards family, divorce, women's role in society and dyslexia seemed like a very strange era to some of us and not all of us were drawn to this family saga. However there was lots to talk about. Thanks to Joëlle for keeping the meeting flowing.

Maggie Vautheny



Maggie O'Farrell (born 27 May 1972) is an Irish-British novelist. She has won several awards, in 2010 Costa Novel Award for « The Hand That First held mine », « Instructions for a Heatwave » was shortlisted for the same award in 2014 and her latest novel « Hamnet » won the Women's Prize for fiction in 2020.

Members of the ESC book club meet on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 pm (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: jglore@esc-alsace.org

The next books for discussion are:

- « Clap when You Land » by Elizabeth Acevedo, on 8th February
- « The Beekeeper of Aleppo » by Christy Lefteri, on 8th March

Contribution

Lucky me! I've been vaccinated against Covid

The Covid pandemic still flourishes, now with some mutations. In the German "Tagesschau" a few days ago, they explained that it is normal for a virus to mutate, because it wants to survive. It's a strange coincidence that just after beginning (or during) the vaccination campaign, the "British" mutation appears.

So, just to be clear, the Covid pandemic will be present for a while. But we can all still do something to protect ourselves against it.

The following pros and con arguments were written in the form I was asked to sign beforehand:

1. Against:

- Not enough time for research
- Not much experience
- It is not possible for a pregnant woman to get the vaccination
- After a Covid infection, there needs to be a 3 months recovery period before receiving the vaccine
- Of course not everybody is eligible to get the vaccine

2. For:

- the first shot: brings:
 - 53% protection against 16 sorts of serious Covid (Pfizer)
 - protection also against the mutations
- the second shot brings:
 - 95% protection
 - hope that theatres, restaurants etc. can open again (provided the Government agrees).

A lot of people are afraid of the vaccine, even colleagues of mine in the hospital. To me, it is a big hope for the future, and I didn't have any side effects after the first injection. You can find the stats and numbers online.

I don't want to give up in this Covid chaos... All the governments worldwide are working very hard to find good treatments against Covid.

A patient of mine, over 80, recovered completely from Covid. She was lucky but her good healthy habits have helped her. She wasn't overweight, she had been doing exercises and gymnastics all through her life and was strong minded. I was so happy that she finally got her life back after some special rehabilitation!

If you want to protect yourself and protect others from Covid, even after the vaccination, you'll still need a mask.

Finally, I think now is the opportunity for us all to be active and responsible in our own way with Covid.

May we all take care!

Malika Radünz

Dear members,

Those of you who haven't renewed their registration with the ESC for 2021 are overdue*. Please don't delay. Our accounts will be audited next month.

Safely pay online following this link: <http://esc-alsace.org/Join2021>



Cheques sent to our Treasurer are accepted:

Mike Wraith, 7 rue Lovisa, 67000 Strasbourg (mwraith@esc-alsace.org).

Paypal remains an option.

*unless you subscribed in September 2020 or later, in which case your membership is until 31/12/2021.



Iris Charles in her garden in La Robertsau - 01.2021

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, €40 for non-members and businesses, which should be included with submission. Items for publication should be in English.

Please forward items by e-mail to Catherine Manini at newsletter@esc-alsace.org

Newsletters are usually issued on the Monday before coffee mornings where a few paper copies are delivered.

Deadline for next copy is Wednesday 14/02/2021 - 6 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)

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