



St Patrick's Day 2021

An Irish friend sent me a short video on WhatsApp recently. First a picture of a street bulging with revellers in the Temple Bar area of Dublin on St. Patrick's Day 2019. Then the same scene in 2020, but this time a completely empty street! It seems that this scene is to be repeated in 2021, with the Irish government recently announcing its digital St. Patrick's Day strategy.

Growing up in Ireland, the 17th March meant spring was here and you could spend more time outdoors, looking for daffodils, picking buttercups and trying to find shamrock in the grass.

After mass in the morning singing our hymns in Gaelic ("*Dóchas linn Naomh Padraig, Aspal mór na h-Eireann*"), I remember one year taking part in the parade through central Dublin, walking tall in my girl-guides uniform. I marvelled at the gymnasts walking on their hands, people on unicycles and stilts and the marching bands with the troop leaders throwing their tasselled drumsticks into the air.

Years later I returned to revel with those crowds and join some friends with a beer in my hand. This time I marvelled at how the girl guide troops had been replaced by floats with splendid colourful dragons, looking like they belonged at carnival in Rio. As an Irish emigrant myself, contributing to societal changes in other places, it was a testament to how much the country of my birth has changed recently.

Here's hoping we can celebrate properly again in March 2022!

Ann Lynch

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new ESC contacts

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

Upcoming activities

Online Coffee meeting

THURSDAY 18 MARCH 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: 18/3, 22/4, 20/5, 17/6, 13/7.

Watch out for a reminder by email with the suitable link to join the conversation.



Online Apéro meeting

FRIDAY 26 MARCH: 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: 26/03, 16/04, 28/05, 25/6, 23/7.

Watch out for a reminder by email with the suitable link and join us any time between 6.30 and 8.30.

This time, you are invited to choose an object which means something special to you, for instance which arouses memories or curiosity, and that you could briefly present to the participants. Looking forward to hearing your story!



Online Quiz Night

THURSDAY 1 APRIL: 6.30 - 7.30 pm

Our quiz masters are preparing another friendly evening for you. And the winner gets a prize! This event is for ESC members only.

Watch out for a reminder by email with the suitable link to join the fun. The questions will start being asked at 6.30 sharp, so please make sure to connect a few minutes before, so that we can help with possible technical issues.



Book club's monthly reading

MONDAY 12 APRIL 6:30 pm : "Chances Are" by Richard Russo

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 book for discussion is "Weathering" by Lucy Wood, on 10th May.



Conversation with... Louise and Simon Palmer

FRIDAY 19 MARCH: 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Don't miss the next opportunity to get to know our fellow members better. Watch out for a reminder by email with the suitable link to join the conversation.

Margaret Killerby will be talking to Louise and Simon about their lives in England and France, and the important part played by music and the theatre.



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 gathers fortnightly (soon it will be weekly) on Tuesdays at 4.00 pm for friendly online meetings on Zoom. They give an opportunity to correct grammar mistakes or explore vocabulary, in the presence of at least one native French speaker.

The group is not at full capacity. Zoom sessions ID & passcodes are sent once you have registered with the group. If you are interested in joining, you are invited to contact Martin Pickford: pickfordmartin@gmail.com.

Spanish conversation group

MONDAY 22 MARCH, 1.00 pm

If you are a Spanish speaker, both native and non-native, and you would like to converse with fellow members in a casual way, Maria kindly invites you to write to her at mtremoureux@esc-alsace.org. These sessions will be online on Teams, until it is possible to meet in person again.

A first trial session will be organised on Monday 22nd March at 1.00 till 2.00 pm to schedule monthly meetings.

German conversation group

Those hoping to improve their German skills, both native and non-native, are invited to contact me with the aim of forming an online study/conversation group. It is envisaged to use Teams. Participants can get support from the ESC to use the video-meeting tool favoured by the ESC.

Let's get our German skills ready for an eventual return over the Rhine!

Please contact Bronwyn Harrowfield: 06 85 33 11 24 - bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org

Online Quiz Nights

When the pandemic started messing up our events, we had several projects in the pipeline for the ESC. That was at a time we could meet socially in person without restrictions or limited number of guests. Then the first lockdown and its spooky atmosphere put those plans on hold. It was just a matter of two weeks, then four, then double that, before we could actually leave our bunkers and start testing what remained of our social skills and talk to each other in a more carefree style. Not everyone was ready for that in the same way and at the same level. The garden *apéros* were a breath of fresh air for the whole summer before it all started going downhill again. One way of bringing members together and giving them a feel of community life was to go online.

Véronique Heller-Clauss and I thought that inviting people to socialise online needed more structure than a normal spontaneous get-together, such as Friday night *apéro* in a bar. We needed a concept to keep members entertained around a common project. She later came up with the suggestion of gathering members online for a quiz. We had our idea!

Quiz nights are really a British thing. I remember an intense evening at a Mark Warner ski resort where small groups of strangers fought tooth and nail to make their team win. Although there is always a risk

of an embarrassingly low score, at the end of the day it is more about the fun and learning new things. There is a long tradition of quizzes associated with the ESC. Martyn Symons, a long-standing ESC member now happily retired in Spain, used to organise proper pub quizzes, especially around Christmas time. I attended once, contributed extremely poorly, and was saved by Mike Wraith who did all the work in the name of his three team-mates. It was a fantastic evening!

Back to our online quizzes. Véronique and I organised the first one in December and had 15 participants. The second one was in February and the limit of 20 participants was quickly reached. We learned a lot about Christmas/New Year and Valentine's and had fun while building the questions. The fun was even greater when we actually ran the show, although as complete beginners, both as quiz masters and online gurus. We are learning and getting better each time. So, join us for the next edition on Thursday 1st April. Although it is not merely about winning, the highest score gets a prize!

Joëlle Glore

<<< Next quiz on Thursday 1st April at 6.30pm >>>



Lockdown Notes

tinyurl.com/Lockdown-Marsh-Family

Members of the English conversation group were amused by the theme presented by Theresa Collet: a funny parodic video, sung by a British family with 4 children. Family Marsh parodies have been viral on the web for a few months. Find above a link to "Totally Fixed Where We Are" adapted on "Total Eclipse of the Heart". Other videos can be found on YouTube, among which "Have The New Job" adapted on « Hallelujah".

tinyurl.com/Rustic-France

Chantal & Philippe Krafft presented a humorous video from a couple of their acquaintance living in Auvergne.

Reading to children in elementary schools (part 1/2)

I moved from Paris to Strasbourg in the autumn of 2014 and, once I settled in, wanted to become active in associations and meet new people. The *Week-End des Associations* was very helpful – that is how I discovered the ESC and became a member. I was already a member of *Troc des Savoirs* back in Paris, a great concept of people exchanging know-how and I was delighted to discover that a chapter of it was 5 minutes away from my new Alsatian home! There I met a lady who told me she was reading to children in schools. I immediately checked out that association *Lire et Faire Lire**, and a few months later, became a volunteer. I was able to attend one of their regular training sessions and meet other volunteers (the majority of whom are – are you surprised? – women!). I had arranged to accompany a neighbouring reader during one of her sessions as a “trainee”, so to speak, but somehow there was always an obstacle to our getting together, so I figured I'd manage on my own.

It is *Lire et Faire Lire* that contacts schools and offers them a Reader – free of charge, of course. A contract

is signed however, between the Reader and the association, and between the association and the school, essentially for insurance purposes. The school must never be far away from the Reader's home. The Reader can choose the age group of her “audience” and coordinates with the teacher, who chooses a maximum of 7 pupils, the day and time of reading, which always takes place in a different room. The Reader can either chose which books to read, or read what the teacher wishes.

“My” first school was a hop, skip and a jump away from my home and I was quite nervous on my first day in December 2015: I have no children, have no small children within my relatives, and have never worked with children. I had chosen the age group of 7 (*Cours élémentaire 1 & 2*) and had agreed to come twice a week, after the morning recess. The children were just as nervous and curious as I was!

I was given the lovely library to do the reading in. We settled around a table and I started to read (...)

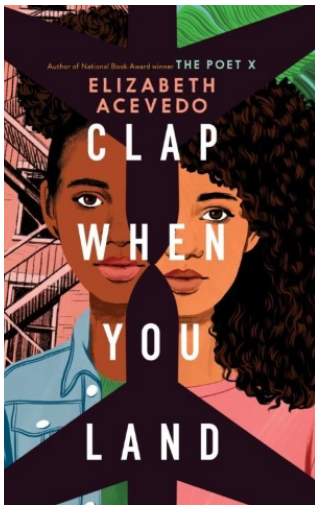
Christine Secouet

Editor's note: Christine's impressions of reading to her young audience will appear in the next issue. Stay tuned!

* *Lire et Faire Lire* is an association launched in 1999 by a famous French writer, Pascal Jardin, and the former president of *Relais Civique*, with the objective of transmitting the pleasure of reading through a transgenerational practice. Pascal Jardin figured that if children don't read enough, it's probably because they have not been read to. So the idea of creating this organisation was to get retired people (who supposedly have more time than people still working) to read to children in elementary schools. Training and regular meetings are organised for the readers who are of course all volunteers. You can find out more (in French) on Wikipedia.

Book club review

"Clap When You Land" by Elizabeth Acevedo



“ The imagery in the novel is so strong that we got a sense of what it looks and feels like to live in both the Dominican Republic and New York City. ”

In a novel-in-verse that brims with grief and love, Elizabeth Acevedo artfully unpacks a family secret that was revealed when a plane crashed en route to the Dominican Republic.

The book opens with a vivid description of mud. Mud that sticks to shoes and clothes. Mud that sticks to the soul and makes it hard to erase the barrio where Camino lives. The imagery in the novel is so strong that we got a sense of what it looks and feels like to live in both the Dominican Republic and New York City.

Promoted as young adult fiction, the novel forced us to ask the obvious: If we relate to the book, does that mean that we are in fact young adults (even if we don't look the part)? Or does it mean that the themes and emotions present in

the story are universal and not limited to young people?

We discussed at length how family members lead secret lives. Can we imagine hiding part of our lives? It is more common than I was anticipating and tragedies like plane crashes often bring them into the open.

Long form poetry was a new style of book for all of us, but we soon became accustomed to the form and focused on the story. Most people agreed that they would never have discovered or chosen this book on their own, but they were glad to have experienced a truly moving story.

Kate Crow



Elizabeth Acevedo is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of *The Poet X*, *With the Fire on High* and *Clap When You Land*. She holds a BA in Performing Arts from The George Washington University and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Maryland. She is a National Poetry Slam Champion, and resides in Washington, DC with her love.

Information & ads

VILLA TO RENT IN LISBON

Villa Goreti is a lovely and spacious traditional Portuguese house located in a quiet area, 15 min. from Lisbon and 5 min. from the beach.
(Map with places of interest available upon request)

3 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms (can accommodate up to **9 people**)

Fully equipped kitchen and living room of 60 m²

Television with cable network and Wi-Fi

Outdoor terrace with BBQ and a **swimming pool**

Close to all commodities: Grocery Shop, Restaurants, Cafes.

Contact : Maria Tremoureux - 00 33 6 11 12 68 51 - maria.tremoureux@gmail.com



Membership /Registration 2021: [link to Register with the ESC-Alsace](#)

Feel free to contact the treasurer at mwraith@esc-alsace.org. Full details on our website (clic on Join Us).

Beautiful property south of Siena To rent - Tuscany:

The house is a beautiful country-maisonette (19th century-villa) located 12 km south of Siena, 1 hour from Florence, Pisa, Volterra, San Gimignano or Lucca, 50 km from the sea and about 2 km from the next village or rivers to swim in.

It has 4 large bright rooms which are nicely furnished in a country style fashion and which sleep a max. of 6 people plus a big Cantina (former wine cellar) with a summer kitchen and a second living room with a sleeping sofa bed for 1 or 2 people. The main living room has a library, there are two bathrooms, two toilets, two kitchens, a nice spacious entrance hall, fireplace, telephone, Wi-Fi, washing machine, courtyard, woodlands near by. We have a beautiful garden within a typically Tuscan landscape next to a quiet road and between two villages. The local countryside offers a range of activities for all interests. Churches and chapels, many cool rivers, lakes, a public swimming pool, supermarkets, post office, good restaurants, bars and farms where you can buy wine, olive oil, honey or rent horses.

Price: 560€ /week (June/July/August 630€ /week) for 4 persons.

Call for information: Birgit Meyer, 45, Rue du Maréchal Foch, F-67000 Strasbourg

Tel: 0033 388 36 1991 (home) – 0049 172 6202 371 (mobile)

email: Birgitmeyer2@gmx.de

Views on: www.bella-tuscany.net

We are also on Airbnb: 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, €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

The deadline for next copy is Wednesday 07/04/2021 - 6 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)

Cover picture: On Passerelle Saint-Guillaume, Strasbourg - C. Manini