



## **W**e're planning for *en présentiel* meetings...

In a typical year, June brings us our summer barbecue, an opportunity to mix and mingle with ESC members in a sunny garden and accompanied by balmy jazz music. What could be better?

Could it really happen in 2021, when we had abandoned all hope in 2020? Well, your hard-working committee is now looking at how we can make the planned 2021 BBQ (13th June) *en présentiel* whilst being Covid-aware, and we hope that you will be able to join us. Make sure it is in your diary and look out for notices in May newsletter.

\*

The 2020 ESC Annual General Meeting was deferred from January 2021, due to Covid-19 and, following a special dispensation is now planned, *en présentiel*, at the Maison des Associations on the evening of 3rd June 2021, with a reception to follow.

By now, you will know that plans can just dissolve so, depending on how the next months evolve, we will confirm or once again defer these events.

We do hope to see you!

Sue Moller, ESC President

### April 2021 - Inside this issue

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### new ESC contacts

- General: [contact@esc-alsace.org](mailto:contact@esc-alsace.org)
- Newsletter: [newsletter@esc-alsace.org](mailto:newsletter@esc-alsace.org)
- Events: [events@esc-alsace.org](mailto:events@esc-alsace.org)

# Upcoming activities

## Online Coffee meeting

THURSDAY 22 APRIL: 9.30 - 11.30 am

Until the health situation enables in person meetings and the Escale community centre opens again, the coffee mornings will take place via Teams on the dates previously announced: 22/4, 20/5, 17/6, 13/7. Watch out for a reminder by email with the suitable link to join the conversation.

Do click anytime between 9.30 and 11.30 and join us for a cosy chat over a cup of coffee, for as long or short as you wish or are able to. We'd be glad to hear from you.



## Conversation with... Leena Bansal and Deepak Kumar

WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL: 7.00 pm

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

Margaret Killerby will be talking to Leena and Deepak about their lives as 'global nomads'. The careers of Leena and Deepak have taken them around the world. They will also talk about how they met, in the Indian tradition.



Save the date! The next guests will be Bronwyn and Jack Harrowfield on the 12th May (see page 3).

## Online Apéro meeting

FRIDAY 28 MAY: 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Until we can safely meet in town or in private gardens, *apéros* will take place via Teams, on the following dates: 28/05, 25/6, 23/7. To put-up for the online format we are planning to present themes to foster the conversation and cheer us up.

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



## Book club's monthly reading

MONDAY 10 MAY: 6:30 pm "Throw Me to the Wolves" by Patrick McGuinness

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 at [bookclub@esc-alsace.org](mailto:bookclub@esc-alsace.org)



## 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](mailto:nigelpermaul@gmail.com) - 06 75 63 89 98.

## French conversation group

MONDAYS, 4.00 pm

The French conversation group gathers weekly on Mondays 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](mailto:pickfordmartin@gmail.com).

## Spanish conversation group

MONDAYS, 12.45 - next meeting: 10 MAY

Maria invites Spanish speaker, both native and non-native, who would like to converse online with fellow members in a casual way. To join, write to her at [mtremoureux@esc-alsace.org](mailto:mtremoureux@esc-alsace.org).

## German conversation group

WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL, 6.30 pm

German speakers - fluent, and not quite - are invited to participate in a trial online meeting using Teams. This will be on Wednesday, 28th April at 6.30 pm for approximately one hour.

Please contact Bronwyn at [bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org](mailto:bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org) if you'd like to register.

## Conversation with... Bronwyn and Jack Harrowfield

WEDNESDAY 12 MAY: 6.30 pm

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

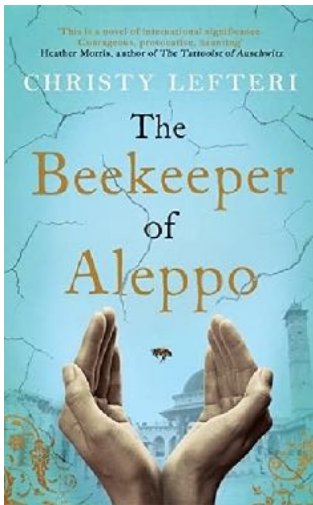
Margaret Killerby will be talking to Bronwyn and Jack about their lives as 'Climate Refugees'.

They will speak about their lives in Australia and other countries, and how they finally came to settle in Alsace.



# Book club review

## “The Beekeeper of Aleppo” by Christy Lefteri



“ As we are celebrating the sad 10th anniversary of the war in Syria, it is difficult not to be moved by the fate of the population as a whole and not to feel for each refugee as an individual. ”

Nuri is a beekeeper; his wife, Afra, an artist. They live a simple life, rich in family and friends, in Aleppo until the unthinkable happens. When all they care for is destroyed by war, they make the heart-breaking decision of leaving their home and embark on a perilous journey through Turkey and Greece towards an uncertain future in Britain. Waiting for them there is Mustafa, Nuri’s cousin and business partner.

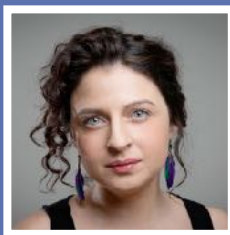
During their long journey, they meet other asylum seekers who come from different places but yearn for a better, safer life. Nuri is worried for his wife who has lost her sight in tragic circumstances, but he fails to realise that his post-traumatic stress disorder is no less serious than hers, perhaps even more profound.

As we are celebrating the sad 10th anniversary of the war in Syria, it is

difficult not to be moved by the fate of the population as a whole and not to feel for each refugee as an individual. Most of us found the story poignant and someone raised the need for better shaped characters. One of the book club members, being a refugee herself, added insight to discussion by sharing what it meant to be an asylum seeker.

As someone who was born in Aleppo and has visited the city a number of times, I could easily relate to some of the places Christy Lefteri took me to through her description of the city, although she admits she has never travelled there herself: the house, the plants in the patio, the old souk and its stalls and even the taste of honey. More than a novel, “The Beekeeper of Aleppo” is an invitation to reconnect with humanity.

Joëlle Glore



Christy Lefteri was born and brought up in London by refugee parents who escaped Cyprus in 1974. She is a lecturer in creative writing at Brunel University. “The Beekeeper of Aleppo” is her second novel and was born out of her time working as a volunteer at a UNICEF refugee centre in Athens. The book won the 2020 Aspen Words Literary Prize.

Interested in joining the book club? Contact Joëlle at [bookclub@esc-alsace.org](mailto:bookclub@esc-alsace.org)

The next books for discussion are:

“Throw Me to the Wolves” by Patrick McGuinness, on 10th May

“Meet Me at the Museum” by Anne Youngson, on 14th June

# Contribution

## Reading to children in elementary schools (part 2/2, started in Issue 468)

(...) We settled around a table and I started to read.

Seven little faces were attentively listening, curiously checking me out. I told them to raise a finger in case a word was not understood. A majority of these children were from immigrant parents. So the first session was like a mutual observation round and we were all very happy with each other. As the days passed I discovered I had a lot of patience and very quickly became very fond of them all.

After a while, and in agreement with the teacher, I decided that I would read them fairy tales. I have a book of Grimm tales that had been waiting in my book case for years and years, and now it finally found its use! We met quite a lot of new words, which I explained to them, and the explanations sometimes wandered away from the reading.

Before the Christmas holidays, the teacher was wondering whether to choose new groups, to give more children in the class a chance to be read to. She was met with protest: no way! they wanted to stay with me: "she is teaching us stuff, she is making us intelligent!" they said. That was the greatest compliment to me! After the holidays, when school resumed and I went to meet them at the end of recess, "my" children came running to me, shouting my name, circling my waist with their arms... I was moved to tears! The other teachers gave me funny looks - they didn't get that treatment. I told them not to worry, if they had me all day, they wouldn't be as enthusiastic !

At the end of the school year I got a present : the teacher had made them each write and illustrate a card to me, and she bound them into a booklet. That was probably one of the most beautiful presents I've received in my life !!!

Anyway, that first experience was fantastic and I have continued to read ever since. Circumstances have made me go into 2 other schools, and then Covid-19 came along this year and ruined the 2nd term. 3rd term, was very brief too. I was looking forward to starting again this September but then I fell down a small staircase and broke my ankle, so that put me out for 6 weeks, and now I cannot go back because a) *Lire et Faire Lire* does not want volunteers over 50 years of age to put themselves at risk and b) the school itself does not want any outsider to come during the second lockdown. I'm sure there will be better days...

Reading to children is so important and so rewarding. Quite a lot of "mine" never read, were never read to, and were so grateful and happy, even if to them it was often like just another recess and their attention span seems to get shorter every year! As for me, I discovered rather late in life the joys of being around children, of reading aloud and making them travel in their imagination, the huge amount of affection I had to give them.

I never want to stop doing that !

Christine Secouet

*P.S. When Lire et Faire Lire put this activity on hold until a further notice - who knows for how long! - I was very disappointed that I could not go into school to see the children. I feel sorry for the young ones, from modest families, whose parents don't often have time to read to them.*

*So when I heard when I heard that one ESC member was having trouble with her eyes, I offered to go and read to her. This time my "listener" chooses what she wants to have read, and the pleasure is mutual, as we get to discuss the content of the book, exchange ideas... It is also a weekly bright spot in both our lives! Maybe you have among your friends somebody unable to read and who would be delighted to receive the same service? Feel free to contact [csecouet@esc-alsace.org](mailto:csecouet@esc-alsace.org)*

# Obituary

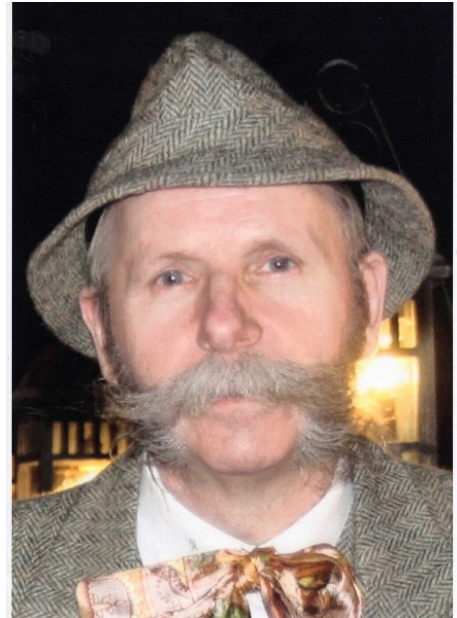
## Christian Wirrmann

The ESC committee was very sorry to hear of the sad passing of Christian Wirrmann and have already expressed their sincere condolences to his wife, Christine Barber. You may get in touch with her at: [christinebarber@free.fr](mailto:christinebarber@free.fr).

Christian was a supportive husband, a caring father, grandfather (Papi moustache) and a generous human being. A man much appreciated within his church community for his active involvement, tireless commitment and positive contributions. He was head of the Meinau scout group for many years, during which one of his projects was to help the scouts build a *tarte flambée* oven. His *tarte flambée* events became very well-known in the local community, particularly the *Fête des Voisins* and the Alsatian evenings at the International Space University where Christine worked. Christian was also a keen hiker all his life, and in recent years had specialised in organising very popular night walks at the time of the full moon. The photo shows Christian enjoying another of his passions: an appreciation for good champagne and Bordeaux wine.

In his professional life, Christian was a well-respected occupational health doctor, looking after the well-being and health of the many employees in his care. He was obviously a man who, by his very nature, went out of his way to help others and immensely enjoyed bringing people together. We regret we had not known him for longer.

Terence Boyle, Catherine Manini



# Information & Ads

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

Feel free to contact the treasurer at [membership@esc-alsace.org](mailto:membership@esc-alsace.org). Full details on our website (click on Join Us).

## 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**)

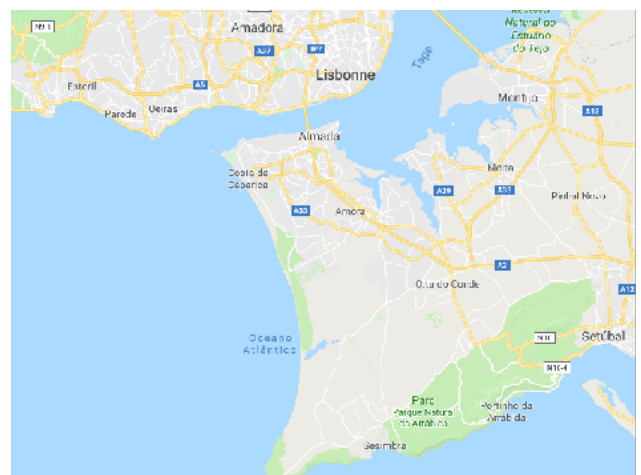
Fully equipped kitchen and living room of 60 m<sup>2</sup>

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](mailto:maria.tremoureux@gmail.com)



## 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](http://www.bella-tuscany.net)

We are also on Airbnb: [www.poggioallupo.com](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, €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](mailto:newsletter@esc-alsace.org)

**The deadline for next copy is Wednesday 05/05/2021 - 6 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)**