

What's Up?

The English-Speaking Community Newsletter



AGM 03/03/2022: Extract from President's address

Dear Friends,

What a joy it is for me to be with you today to reflect together on this strange year that I thought we would never see again. As it turned out, 2021 was somehow a repeat of 2020. It started with a combination of lockdown and curfew sending us back to online events whenever possible. Although these did not fully compare with meeting in person, they allowed many members to socialise and stay in touch with each other. Isn't this what the ESC is about?

Our virtual social life embraced regular activities such as **monthly coffee morning**, **Friday evening apéros** and **book club discussions**. **Language conversation groups** gathered regularly, and I would like to thank the group leaders for their commitment and creativity, which made these pleasant meetings possible. We also had a new format of programme, **Conversation with...** Thanks to these interviews, we got to know more about some ESC members. Building on the success of the **online Christmas quiz**, we proposed two other quizzes: **Valentine's and April fool's**, each with a topical background. None of us were experts in online events but we adjusted and learned with the help of our IT specialist, Jonathan. Sometimes it felt like working for a multinational!

Then the doors started to open slowly. *(to be continued overleaf)*

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new ESC contacts

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



Then the doors started to open slowly. **Coffee morning**, **apéro** and **book club** started to meet in person sometime around May - June. **Language conversation groups** did what suited their audience and leaders, organising a combination of formats, if not completely in person.

Olivier and I hosted a popular **garden party** in June that more than 30 members attended. A very successful barbecue took place in September instead of June, as we waited for members, as well as the venue, to be ready for such an event. A **live quiz night**, two **cultural visits**, a **walk in the Vosges** and a fun **bowling night out** at the Orangerie made the end of the year more vibrant than it started. We even launched a new event, **impro or improv** - if you prefer - on 21st December, closing the year in a creative way. Most of these events would not have been possible if we could not rely on our members to initiate the idea and face the organisation.

This is crucial for the ESC! We need enthusiastic members to roll up their sleeves and enjoy doing it. This association is YOUR association. Of course, there is a committee. Most of you have probably no idea how hard the members of the committee work, the number of hours that none of us count, to keep the ESC up and running.

The ESC is like any other organisation. We need to modernise it in order to survive. Other than IT and website developments, we have started working on the statutes and the bylaws. This will allow us to update the information which dates back to 1986. Hopefully one day we will also fill the roles of social media specialist and webmaster needed in every organisation. Stay tuned for an update about the statutes.

Where is the ESC going? The question was already asked in a previous AGM, more precisely for 2016. It's still appropriate, probably even more so. All associations have suffered the last two years. Some of them are struggling, others have completely vanished. So where do we stand? The pandemic has had an impact on our association, it is undeniable. And at the same time, we have lost some of our most prominent members, Sue Moller, Alasdair Hunter and others who are now back in the UK. We have started opening some events to non-members, with less attractive rates. Hopefully this will lead to bringing new, young members.

This year, all members of your committee are willing to renew their wish to do their best and look after the ESC. Hopefully 2022 will be the beginning of a new start!

Joëlle Glore

ESC Membership / Registration 2022: <https://esc-alsace.org/Join>

Feel free to contact the treasurer at membership@esc-alsace.org.

Upcoming events

Spring walk around the Val de Moder

SUNDAY 27 MARCH - 10.30 am

Departure time: 10.30am. (Note: clocks go forth an hour the night before!)

Meeting place: Car Park, Maison des Loisirs, 4 chemin de la Moder, 67350 UBERACH

Walking details: 3 to 4 hours walking time; Gradient: 250m maximum;
Bring a picnic lunch and something waterproof to sit on.
Walking boots, waterproofs and sticks advised (little shelter on way and can be muddy).

Directions: From Strasbourg, come off motorway at Haguenau exit and take directions to Pfaffenhoffen.
From Ringeldorf, drive down hill into Pfaffenhoffen past 'Point P' and then turn right following signs to Haguenau. Go past Match supermarket on your right then turn left to Uberach at the traffic lights. Go over the bridge and turn right into the car park.

Contact: Please contact Polly at 03 88 07 04 93 - 06 72 71 90 41 by Saturday 22nd March.



Save the date! for another walk in May

SUNDAY 15 MAY 2022, at 10.30 am

Polly plans to guide us to Oberbronn and Wasenbourg castle in May. Please pin the date down in your diaries. Full details will be included in the newsletter and reminded by email.

Save the date! for an Apéro 🍺

THURSDAY 14 APRIL at 6.30 pm

For once, our next gathering will not be on a Friday. Watch out for an email with full details and signing-up link.

Come and try Impro with us!

FRIDAY 18 MARCH 2022: 7.00 - 9.00 pm (home of Catherine Manini near Etoile-Bourse, Strasbourg)

For details, directions and signing-up, please contact Nikki at nikki.lynn.michaelson@gmail.com



Bowling evening

FRIDAY 1st APRIL: 6.30 pm

The last visit to the Orangerie last December was a success with 22 signed in members. So we are proposing to return to play ten-pin bowling on Friday, 1st April, starting at 6.30pm. The cost will be about 8 euros per person.

The emphasis will be on having fun with expertise being a minor, optional extra.



Monthly coffee morning at l'Escale

THURSDAY 7 APRIL: 9.30 - 11.30 am

Maggie will welcome members who would like to come and visit the Escale upstairs room (78 rue du Docteur François, La Robertsau, tram E) between 9.30 and 11.30 am. The next two dates before the summer are: 12/05, 16/06.

Coffee, tea and cakes will be waiting for you. A selection of books will be on display. We have some new ones, so surely you will find something you want to take home.



The *pass sanitaire* will be checked. For further details, contact mvautheny@esc-alsace.org.

Would you give Mahjong a try?

TUESDAY 5 APRIL: 2.00 pm

Hannelore Bolon, who has been playing Mahjong for a number of years with a Strasbourg group affiliated to the Fédération Française de Mahjong, would like to show you how to play this fascinating game.

The group meets at her home in La Wantzenau on a Tuesday afternoon. Come and find out about pungs, chows, kongs as well as dragons and winds!

Interested? Please contact Hannelore at lolo.bolon@wanadoo.fr



Save the date! for a Guided tour of La Grande Synagogue de La Paix

THURSDAY 7 APRIL: 2.30 pm

The ESC has been invited for a guided tour of La Grande Synagogue de La Paix (opposite the Contades tram B/C stop) on Thursday, 7th April at 2.30 pm. Such a visit was only possible on a week day.

The tour will last about one hour and costs €5 for ESC members and €8 for non-members. We have a maximum of 19 places.

Watch out for an email with full details and signing-up link.



Languange conversation groups

Despite of the slowing-down of in-person events, three conversation groups are currently operating with adapted measures. The organisation of each group is specific. You are invited to get the details of the dates and locations of the next meetings directly from their group leaders:

English conversation group 🇬🇧 weekly on-line meetings

If you are interested in joining, please contact Nigel at nigelpermaul@gmail.com - 06 75 63 89 98

FRIDAYS: 2.30 pm

Spanish conversation group 🇪🇸 regular in-person meetings in private homes

Next MONDAY 14 MARCH: 6.30 pm

If you are interested in joining, please contact Maria at mtremoureux@esc-alsace.org

News from the German conversation group 🇩🇪

SATURDAY 26 MARCH: lunchtime at Café Dreher, Rathausplatz in Kehl

The German conversation group has been meeting at approximately 3 week intervals, at 6 pm on a Monday night, using Teams, during most of the Covid period. This suited those members who work, and those who are comfortable with an online meeting, but we have been hoping to return to at least a proportion of in-person meetings when the Covid situation allows.

Pre-Covid, the usual meeting place was Café Rapp in Kehl at 2 pm on a Monday. This became difficult, indeed impossible, to access at certain times due to the various Covid restrictions. Whilst online, we also discussed the possibility of a Saturday lunch together. We are (tentatively) planning this for Saturday, 26th March at Café Dreher in Kehl. The aim is to allow everyone, workers and retired, Strasbourgeois, and those who live further afield, to have an opportunity to participate. The place can be easily reached with Tram D.

After a long absence, some of us finally got together on Monday, the 21st February, at Café Rapp, and enjoyed an animated conversation. We were pleased to have a new member join us, and hope that more will follow! The members have varying levels of German, but we are fortunate in usually having at least one member who is fluent and can put us on the right path.

For further information about our activities, please contact me at bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org or on 06 85 33 11 24.

Bronwyn Harrowfield



Past event

Visit to the Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire

On 5th February, at 9am, we entered the building with our guide Marjorie Bea, employed at the BNU. She explained to us the historical context of the Neustadt district, as well as the steps of the construction and modernisation of the building. We could very quickly admire the majestic and modern stairs, serving the 5 levels of the building. After walking through different spaces and the maze of corridors, we entered a door which is only used for the employees and came to a room, where we could admire first the old storage system from the 19th century and then the new one refurbished in 2014.

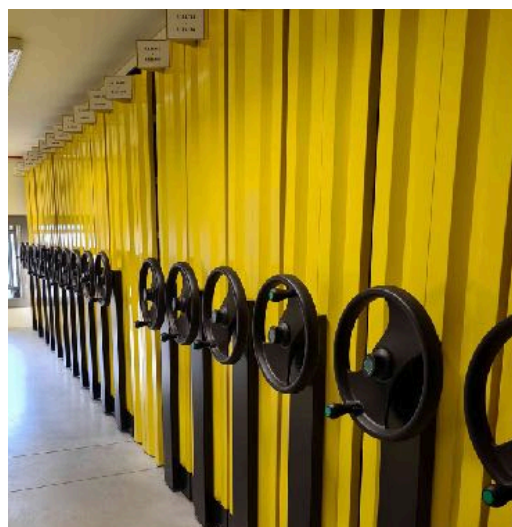
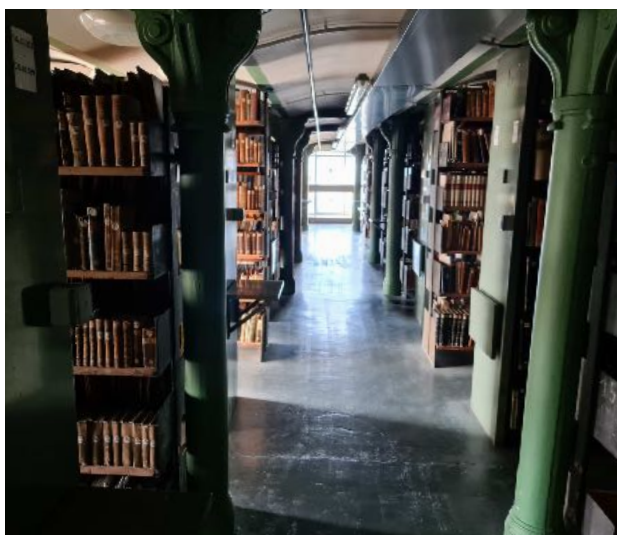


It was an impressive place to be, surrounded by shelves with ancient books. In the BNU are stored more than 3 million documents, displayed in shelves adding up to more than 75 km. It is the 2nd largest university library of France. Its creation originated when most of the books stored in the former city library situated in the Temple Neuf were destroyed during the Prussian bombing of Strasbourg in the night of 24th August 1870. The shock so great that various libraries in Germany (Königsberg, Göttingen, Dresde etc.) donated books after the war. But also eastern countries, such as India!

Marjorie also showed us how to borrow the documents: either you book them online or you can do it directly on special counters. We finished the tour in the room called « *salle du patrimoine* », where you can review books, manuscripts and other documents of the old and preserved collection, as they can't be taken out. The BNU offers also other activities, such as exhibitions and conferences. When the tour finished at 10.30, some students were already sitting at the tables to study. So we had to go out... very quietly!

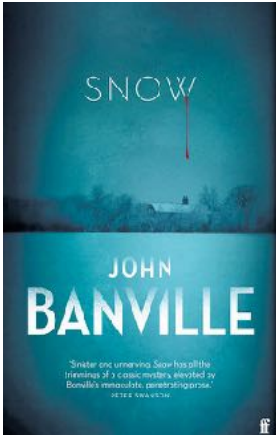
Fabienne Martin

The old Lipman storage compartments supported by columns made of cast-iron / the secured modern reserves



Book club review

“Snow” by John Banville



“ A Catholic priest is found brutally murdered in the crumbling country house of a dysfunctional family of the Anglo-Irish gentry



John Banville is a well-respected writer of literary fiction who, writing under a pseudonym, has maintained a parallel career producing crime novels.

In the recently published ‘Snow’, Banville gives us a detective story set against the social and political conflicts of the relatively young Irish Republic of the 1950s.

A Catholic priest is found brutally murdered and mutilated in the crumbling country house of a dysfunctional family of the Anglo-Irish gentry, and our detective is sent from Dublin to a snow-bound, pre-Christmas County Wexford to investigate. While the powerful Catholic hierarchy moves to hinder

the investigation and prevent reporting in the newspapers, the tragic story of a chain of paedophile abuse is gradually teased out – but not quickly enough to prevent another death.

Revelations that have emerged over the last few decades show a sound historical basis for the story and the author is happy to give the real-life figure Archbishop McQuaid a cameo role.

Fans of the genre were just a little disappointed that the game was given away substantially before the end of the book.

Mike Wraith



William John Banville (born 8 December 1945) is an Irish novelist, short story writer, adapter of dramas and screenwriter.

He won the Booker prize in 2005 for ‘The Sea’. He cites Henry James and W.B Yeats as major influences.

Interested in joining the book club? Contact Joëlle at bookclub@esc-alsace.org

The next books for discussion are:

“ The Spinoza Problem ” by Irvin Yalom on 14th March,

“ The Humans ” by Matt Haig on 11th April,

“ Conversations with Friends ” by Sally Rooney on 9th May.

Information & ads

To rent: Tuscan Beautiful Property, 12 km south of Siena

The house (up to 6 people) has large bright rooms, nicely furnished, a large Cantina (former wine cellar) with a summer kitchen and a living room. There are two bathrooms, two toilets, two kitchens, fireplace, telephone, Wi-Fi/WLAN, washing machine, dishwasher, courtyard and a beautiful garden.

Nearby can be found cool rivers, lakes, churches and chapels, a public swimming pool, supermarkets, a post office, good restaurants, bars and farmers selling wine, olive oil, honey and more.

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

For information, call: Birgit Meyer, 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, 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 03/04/2022 - 6 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)

Cover picture: Oberkirch on the other side of the Rhine - C. Manini

Page 2: Véronique and Joëlle presenting at the AGM - special thanks to Maria Tremoureux