

What's Up?

The English-Speaking Community Newsletter



Save the date: Sunday 26 June, a Platinum Jubilee Barbecue!

The midsummer barbecue had been a highlight of the ESC calendar for many years until the disruption caused by the pandemic. This year, we will be able to resume the tradition with the date fixed for Sunday 26th June.

It has been noted that June 2022 also marks the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II - the first British monarch to reign for 70 years. For the majority of Brits, the Queen has been the head of state for all of their lives - a reassuring and dutiful, if somewhat reserved figure, who is also head of the Commonwealth, the head on the postage stamps, and the head of an unruly family which provides a constant supply of stories to keep the tabloid newspapers afloat.

A team from the committee is giving thought to some special events which will be incorporated into the barbecue to commemorate this unprecedented occasion and, if you have any ideas, we would be delighted to hear them. This will be the ESC event that you simply must write into your diary!

See you there.

Mike Wraith, membership secretary

April 2022 - Inside this issue

- 2 • Time to Impro!
- 3 • Visit to Musée Würth in Erstein
- 6 • Past event: another nice walk

new ESC contacts

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

Upcoming events

It's apéro time again!

THURSDAY 14 APRIL: 6.30 pm

Our Friday apéro is... on Thursday! Meet us at Le Social Bar from 6.30 onwards to meet old friends and make new ones. The usual formula is that everybody pays upon being served for their drinks and complementary sides while the ESC provides some nibbles. Directions: 69, rue du Faubourg de Pierre (buses L3, 20 or 2).

Please sign up here [LeSocialBar](#)



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Time to Impro!

FRIDAY 22 APRIL: 6.30 - 8.30 pm

For those of you still wondering what this impro thing is all about, here's a quick recap of our last session. It was a programme of exercises and games aimed at initiating theatrical scenes, as always with some twists and turns.

We sang some popular songs together to bring in the fun and get loose. The scene games got more elaborate and challenging as we went, culminating with the "big baddy" as I like to call it, a game where each person simultaneously plays the body of one character and does the voice for another character. Easy enough, right? The biggest gem of knowledge from this round was that you have to seize the moment to put your ideas on the table, and that way we build a scene together.



What's in store for the next gathering? We'll drive home the notion of agreement. Maybe you've heard of "yes, and..." ? As we continue to help ourselves and our scene-partners by giving juicy tidbits that create a fun scene, we'll look for ways to enhance (or, say yes to) those ideas. Making your partner look brilliant in turn makes you look brilliant. Come with an open mind and prepare to free-associate.

We will meet at a private venue near place de la République in Strasbourg. For details, directions and to sign up, please contact Nikki at nikki.lynn.michaelson@gmail.com.

Mahjong group

TUESDAY 12 & 19 APRIL

Hannelore and Maggie are hoping to see some of you around the Mahjong table to show you the secrets of this fascinating game. The group meets in turn at the private homes of the participants usually on a Tuesday afternoon. The next session will be on Tuesday 19th April at Hannelore's in La Wantzenau. For details, please contact Hannelore at hannelore.bolon@gmail.com - new email address!



An after work Mahjong will also be organised on Tuesday 12th April at 18.30 at Maggie's. This first time will be an introduction to the game, so do come and see what it is all about, even if you decide it is not for you later. If you are planning to come, please contact Maggie at mvautheny@esc-alsace.org.

Guided tour of Bestia, the latest exhibition at Musée Würth in Erstein

SATURDAY 30 APRIL: 10.30 am



We invite you to come along, on 30th April at 10.30 am, to visit the latest exhibition at the lovely Musée Würth in Erstein. “Bestia” provides an original dialogue between works of art from the Würth Collection and specimens from the Strasbourg Zoological Museum where art and science meet. Its intention is to celebrate the beauty alongside the strangeness of the animal kingdom by presenting paintings by prominent artists such as Max Ernst and a selection of taxidermy-preserved animals.

Once again, we will be accompanied by Rosalie Humler, well known to the ESC. Even though access to the museum is free, there is a charge for our English-speaking guide. Otherwise, the audio-guides are only in French and German. The price is €9 for members and €12 for guests / non-members. The group is limited to 18 persons.

Please sign up here: [BestiaExhibition](#) to reserve your place. If you have any question, you can reach out to Christine Secouet at ckeget@club-internet.fr / 06 85 74 47 21

For those who are not familiar with the premises, the museum has a lovely cafeteria where you can grab a snack or meal after the tour, indoors and outdoors (weather permitting). Car pooling can be arranged.

Monthly coffee morning at l’Escale

THURSDAY 12 MAY: 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 last meeting before the summer will be on 16th June.

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.



For further details, contact mvautheny@esc-alsace.org.

Book club's monthly readings

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

The next books for discussion are:

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

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

Wasenbourg castle circular walk

SUNDAY 15 MAY: 10.30 am

Our May walk will take us up through the woods to the vast ruin of Wasenbourg castle above Niederbronn-les-Bains. Built on the foundations of a Roman temple, part of which can still be seen, there is also an impressive Gothic bay window from where Goethe contemplated the Vosges.

After our picnic, we will make our way down into the valley passing by a 'fairy ring' and various stone cupules to arrive back in the village of Oberbronn and its huge convent which is worth a visit and where we can even get a cup of tea and cake.



Meeting place: 10.30 am, Car park, Place du Couvent, 67110 Oberbronn

Elevation gain: approximately 300-350 m.

Directions: Coming from Strasbourg, take A340 - D1063 - N62 - D28 (Haguenau, Schweighouse, Mertzwiller, Niederbronn, Oberbronn) ; it takes approximately 45 minutes.

Contact: Please e-mail or phone Polly (polly.stotz@gmail.com / 06 72 71 90 41) before Friday 13th May so that she can give the hotel an approx number for refreshments after the walk.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE !

Past events

With or without mask, indoor activities are possible, and fun!



This time our bowling evening was followed by a spontaneous dinner at the Orangerie

Local life

Immersion in the local life: Val-de-Moder

More than a day in the countryside, that sunny Sunday was a real immersion in the local life of the Val-de-Moder. We learnt much about the present and the past of the valley during this visit to Polly's hometown **Uberach** - yes, the name might ring a bell, you can see two of its half-timbered houses drawn on the labels of the eponymous beer brewed using the traditional method.

The photo below shows the group around a "**banc-reposoir**", an example of special sandstone benches which were built along the roads of Alsace, at the time mostly country lanes. This was the idea from Adrien de Lezay-Marnésia (1769-1814), préfet du Bas-Rhin appointed by Napoleon. The upper horizontal lintel of the bench was meant to ease the burden of those women who, in the 19th century, had to carry loads on their head. The benches were often surrounded by 4 lime trees whose shade is also welcomed by today's wanderers.

The tour offered extensive views down the valley. During our pauses, family memories of WW2 were brought to us with a recollection of the combats between the German and the U.S. troops (7th army led by General Patch) to take the strategic bridge of Uberach, as the last witness of the events is an old lady aged 97. As it happens, although Strasbourg was freed on 23/11/1944, the liberation of the district was not complete before the end of the **Operation North Wind**, Hitler's major offensive in a final attempt to retain Alsace on 25/01/1945.

Many thanks to Polly for her researches and for her warm welcome. We were rewarded for our efforts with drinks and pastries homemade by our hostess and guide for the day.

In a last interesting anecdote about another very local traditional drink - *snapps* - were recalled the words of a young American soldier (103rd division) who stayed in one of the villager's home in November 1944:

" You'd walk into a house, toss a few words back and forth with the Alsatian family. In a minute the farmer would get a twinkle in his eye. He'd go to the cupboard and come back with a bottle of the stuff and a couple of shot-size glasses. Your first drink was a little on the rough side, unlike the ingratiating spirits of France. You felt it go all the way down and bounce. A shudder rattled your spine and screwed up your eyes. The warmth stayed in your stomach and spread. You took another. Later you said there was something about schnapps. After the war you'd maybe get a concession in the States "

Catherine Manini



Book club review

“The Spinoza Problem” by Irvin Yalom



“ Yalom investigates the inner lives of these two enigmatic men in a tale of influence and anxiety, the origins of good and evil, the philosophy of freedom and the tyranny of terror.

”

In an interview, Irvin Yalom informs us that *The Spinoza Problem* is a novel of ideas, primarily non-fiction, but to understand something of the inner worlds of the two main protagonists, Baruch Spinoza and Alfred Rosenberg, he has introduced fictional characters, kind of therapists like the author, who engage in ‘deep, probing explanations’.¹

The book covers much of the lives of Spinoza and Rosenberg in an ‘alternate chapters’ format which enables the reader to step from one life-path to the other quite easily. A prologue explains the rationale behind this book and a detailed epilogue provides many of the answers to the questions that will be raised by the reader.

The reader is introduced to Spinoza, a delicate and beautiful 23 year-old merchant whose features are perfect: his olive skin unblemished, his dark eyes large, and soulful. This description belied “a determination to always say what he believed on matters of Christian theology, however controversial, and had the consequence

that he was widely considered the embodiment of ungodliness by his contemporaries.”²

Ultimately, owing to his heterodox opinions, he was expelled from the Jewish community at the age of 23 and went on to live a solitary life, earning his living by grinding and polishing lenses for spectacles, microscopes and telescopes.

Alfred Rosenberg was born in 1893 in Reval, now Tallinn, Estonia. We learnt that he had read and been heavily influenced by some of the writings of a certain Houston Stewart Chamberlain, a British-German philosopher, who promoted German “ethnonationalism, antisemitism, Social Darwinism and scientific racialism”.³ Rosenberg, an ideologue, deeply anti-Semitic, went on to become a very important member of Hitler’s inner-circle and oversaw the confiscation of Spinoza’s entire library after the Nazis invaded Holland in WW2.

Terence Boyle

¹ Short interview of Irvin D. Yalom explaining his work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32ZdVO54Nbw>

² Magee, Bryan (1998), *The Story of Philosophy*, DK-Dorling Kindersley, page 90

³ Wikipedia, Houston Stewart Chamberlain

⁴ Bertrand Russell wrote of Spinoza that he “*is the noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers. Intellectually, some others have surpassed him, but ethically he is supreme.*” (Magee, Bryan (1998), *The Story of Philosophy*, page 95)



Irvin David Yalom, M.D., (born in Washington D.C on June 13, 1931) is an American existential psychiatrist who is emeritus professor of psychiatry at Stanford University, as well as author of both fiction and nonfiction. He is the author of *When Nietzsche Wept* and *The Schopenhauer Cure*, among other works.

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

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**

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



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



Catholic Masses in English

We have been informed that the Catholic Archdiocese continues holding masses in English on alternate Saturdays at 5.00 pm at the Church of the Dominicans, 41 boulevard de La Victoire in Strasbourg.

The next masses are on 23 April, 7 May, 21 May, 4 June and 18 June.



Conversation groups

The organisation of each group is specific.
Please get the details of the dates and locations of the next meetings directly from the group leaders listed below:



English conversation group

weekly on FRIDAYS at 2.30 pm (temporarily on hold)

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

German conversation group

fortnightly on MONDAYS at 2.00 pm

If you are interested in joining, please contact Bronwyn at bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org - 06 85 33 11 24

Spanish conversation group

monthly on MONDAYS at 6.30 pm

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

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 Sunday 01/05/2022 - 6 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)

Cover picture: Oberkirch on the other side of the Rhine - C. Manini
- browse the texts in red, they hide active links -