



ESC coffee mornings

Thursday morning monthly ESC get-togethers at L'Escale date back many years. In the early days they were lively affairs with mothers and children, then gradually they became the preserve of empty-nesters and retirees. In recent years, and particularly after the shock of the pandemic, numbers attending have dwindled to a level which can hardly justify the (sharply increased) cost of the room hire.

However, the idea of a regular daytime event is hard to give up. We could continue the present arrangement while charging a small fee to attend – though this risks reducing attendance even further. The committee has also considered the possibility of moving coffee mornings to a café in town, with the association paying the price of drinks (within reason).

The ESC already has several daytime activities: the English Conversation Group, and conversation groups in German, French and Spanish. Is there a niche for another social gathering and what might it be?

If you have any comments or suggestions for a revitalised or alternative 'coffee morning', we would be delighted to hear them at events@esc-alsace.org.

Mike Wraith

March - April 2024

For more info and updates, visit the [What's On](#) page of the ESC website:

••• esc-alsace.org •••

ESC contacts

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

Upcoming events

see also: <https://esc-alsace.org/calendar/>

St. Patrick's Day Family Celebration

SUNDAY 17 MARCH: 2.30 - 5.00 pm

Céad míle fáilte! A hundred thousand welcomes to an afternoon of Irish culture to celebrate their national day, 17th March, also known as St. Patrick's Day.

Listen to beautiful melodies of Irish folk music and to Irish fairytales; decorate some Celtic artwork (kids activity); enjoy a cup of tea with scones or drink some of the black stuff (Guinness) and practice your footwork for a jig (dance). Thanks to the Rhine Valley Irish Association who organised the programme. Wear your lucky green!

Did you know that Ireland has 3 official patron saints? St. Patrick (17 March), St. Brigid (1 February), St. Colmcille (9 June). St. Patrick is the most well-known (he banished the snakes from Ireland). 17th March is our national day, celebrated globally with parades, music, dancing, special foods, drinking and a lot of green!

Our event will open with traditional Irish music - some songs you will certainly recognise so we hope you will all sing along! Now that your vocal cords are warmed up, how about trying the Irish language (Gaelige) - we have selected a few phrases to try out. The Irish are great storytellers - listen to Celtic mythology where kids will be mesmerised by the fairytales! We have a couple of craft activities for children: making a paper St. Brigid's cross, and colouring in some letters and animals based on the Book of Kells.

Last year, 2023, Ireland introduced a new bank holiday - St Brigid's Day, the first to be in honour of a woman. This new official holiday (1 February) will

celebrate the creativity of women. People traditionally make straw crosses, often in a diamond shape, on the eve of St Brigid's day to receive her protection.

The Book of Kells, one of our national treasures, was crafted in one of the monasteries founded by St. Colmcille. If you ever have the chance to visit Dublin, make sure you stop off at Trinity College to see the real Book of Kells (800AD)!

There will be a small bar to purchase drinks: Guinness, beer, Baileys and soft drinks. Tea and scones will also be available to complete the Irish experience.

The grand finale will be one dance - the Siege of Ennis - where we will have everyone up dancing! If you want to brush up on your footwork, make sure to check out this Ceili dance on YouTube!

An Irish Blessing: "May your troubles be less, and your blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door,"

All of this for free but don't forget to register: [Sign-up link for St. Patrick's Day Family Celebration](#)

For any further details, contact Pauline Bertram at events@esc-alsace.org.

Bouc Bleu Carnival Parade and Pancake Party

SUNDAY 10 MARCH 2.00 - 4.30 pm in Hoenheim

The Carnival of the Blue Goat (Bouc Bleu) in the streets of Hoenheim, Bischheim and Schiltigheim is an unmissable event in the region. On Sunday, 10th March, it's time for the big cavalcade departing from Hoenheim (rue des Vosges). The carnival procession is made up of groups from Alsace, the rest of France, Belgium and Germany - regions where the tradition of Carnival is a real institution. Floats, GuggaMusik or costumed groups will be part of the circuit. Nearly a thousand carnival-goers make up this parade. An amazing sight to see! Expect to be showered with confetti and perhaps sweets for the younger ones.

We will meet at Maggie's house, 9 rue du Lion, by 2:00 sharp and walk up the street together when we hear the music. When it's over, there will be pancakes and hot drinks for everyone back at Maggie's.

Cost: 5€ for ESC members / 8€ for adult guests / free for children under 12

For any further details, contact Pauline at events@esc-alsace.org.

Beware that Rue de la République will be closed to traffic. The easiest way to get to Maggie's is on the Tram B, stop Général de Gaulle and walk 10 minutes.



Coffee Morning

THURSDAY 14 MARCH 9.30 - 11.30 am

Do visit our free coffee morning gathering on 14/03. We meet monthly at L'Escale, Centre Socio-Culturel de la Robertsau, 78 rue du Dr François (in the upstairs room). Good parking facilities are available, and it is within a five-minute walk from tram line E and bus routes L6, 15 and 30. You do not have to register for this event.

Drop in at any time between 9.30 and 11.30 am for a chat, a cuppa, and to browse the books and DVDs. We hope you will find something you will want to take home. For any further details, contact Maggie at mvautheny@esc-alsace.org.



Note: See the cover article for a discussion of what's next for Coffee Morning. The location and/or format of our gathering may be forced to change soon.

Apéro time

FRIDAY 22 MARCH 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Get ready for the weekend with an apéro at the Brasserie WOW, 32-34 rue du Jeux-des-Enfants. So come along and meet us on Friday 22/03 from 6.30 pm onwards to meet old friends and make new ones.

The usual formula is that everybody pays upon being served for their personal drinks and sides, while the ESC provides some small plates to share.



Please let us know that you're coming by signing up on Helloasso. Just click on the link: [Apero March 2024](#). For further details, contact Catherine at cmanini@esc-alsace.org.

The provisional dates for the next apéros are: 19/04 (update), 24/05, 28/06. The location for each event will be determined in due course. If you would be willing to greet the 15-25 participants, order the small plates and be the point of contact for the evening, that would be of great help.

Save the Dates

Discover Baseball - America's Pastime

SUNDAY 7 APRIL at 7.00 pm - Jonathan Crow's house, 5 rue Albert Sayet, 67200 Strasbourg

Have you ever wondered why millions of Americans cheer loudly for grown men to mash a small ball over 330 feet (100m) and call it a home run? Come discover this pastime that is part folklore, part sport, part statistics, and mostly just fun to watch with friends. Jonathan, an avid San Diego Padres fan, will explain the rules at 7.00pm before a marquee early-season matchup between the Arizona Diamondbacks and Atlanta Braves at 7.20pm. Themed drinks and snacks will be provided, details to follow.



Contact: Jonathan Crow and Pauline Kaspar at SportsOutdoors@esc-alsace.org.

Spring Walk round Ottrot and Klingenthal

SUNDAY 14 APRIL at 10.30 am with Polly

Stay tuned! Full details will follow by email.



Internationaux de Strasbourg Women Tennis Tournament

MONDAY 20 MAY from 11.00 am onwards

The biggest women's only clay court tennis tournament in France, right before the French Open, will take place from the 18th to the 25th of May 2024 at the Tennis Club de Strasbourg. This year, for the first time since its inception in 1987, the tournament is part of the WTA 500 category, making it the 2nd biggest women's tournament and the 3rd overall in France. Just a week before the French Open in Roland Garros, it traditionally serves as a warm-up to the Grand Slam and attracts some of the biggest names in the game.

Food and drinks options are available on the grounds of the tournament. We'll organise for our group to meet at 1:30pm.

The Tennis Club de Strasbourg is accessible by collective transport: Tram E "Parlement Européen" or Bus 50 "Wacken" or Busses 6, 15, 30, 50, 72 "Robertsau Boecklin". You may join us on Monday, 20th May before 11.00am (opening time) near the entrance right away or join us later in the day, it's up to you. Our seats will be together.

Doors open at 11.00am and the last match starts at 5:30pm, so it will be an opportunity to watch lots of matches (singles and doubles) on 4 different courts.

The ESC offers "combo" tickets in Category 2, valid for a full day including the evening match, for the bargain price of 15€ for adult members, 10€ for children (guests: adults 20€, children 4-12 year-old 15€).

Please register here: [IS Tennis 2024](#)

Contact: Jonathan Crow and Pauline Kaspar at SportsOutdoors@esc-alsace.org.



Annual General Meeting

TUESDAY 16 APRIL 6.30 pm at the Maison des Associations, 1A place des Orphelins, Strasbourg

The AGM for the year 2023 will take place at 6.30 pm on Tuesday, 16th April at the Maison des Associations, 1A place des Orphelins in La Krutenau, followed by a social gathering with crémant, red wine and a tempting light buffet. [Please register here.](#)

An AGM provides the opportunity for members to discuss all aspects of the functioning of the ESC and to make suggestions for events. Members wishing to raise a point for discussion at the meeting should send it, in writing, to the Secretary, Catherine Manini (secretary@esc-alsace.org or by post: 26 rue de la 1ère Armée, 67000 Strasbourg) by 22nd March 2024.



This is also an opportunity for people to join the committee, and we are always keen to welcome new enthusiastic members. We are particularly looking for anyone who would be willing to coordinate a subset of 2-5 events of their choosing throughout the year. Nominations should be sent, in writing, to the Secretary: secretary@esc-alsace.org by 22nd March 2024. The Secretary will acknowledge receipt.

To allow us to provide sufficient catering, please register here: [ESC AGM for 2023.](#)



Conversation groups

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



English conversation group

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

German conversation group

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

French conversation group

If you are interested in joining, please contact Colette at fredericka06@yahoo.fr - 03 88 20 21 17

Spanish conversation group

If you are interested in joining, please contact Maria at mtremoureux@esc-alsace.org - 06 11 12 68 51

January 2024 events

Galette des Rois Tea Party

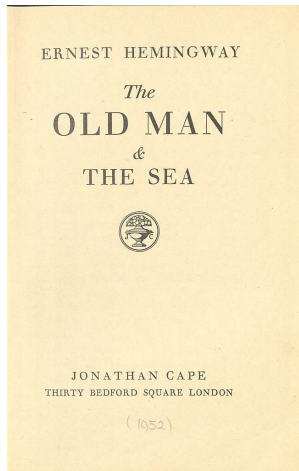


Burns Supper



January Book Club

“The Old Man and the Sea” by Ernest Hemingway



“ Because we have objectified animals, we are able to treat them impersonally ”

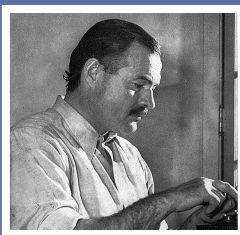
The sea. We all remain speechless by its vastness. A novella such as *The Old Man and the Sea* stands out for the vastness of its themes and its emotions, which leaves us all speechless, as if we were in front of the great expanse of water, again. In one hundred pages, Hemingway manages to explore some themes that haven't aged a bit.

The most significant one is the link between man and nature. The novella suggests that this bond is old, primeval, but that humankind have denied any connection with their environment. As it is mentioned in a passage, young fishermen have bought bigger boats to fish, and now see the ocean as a hindrance, instead of “something that [gives] or [withholds] great favours”. But

treating nature as a mere object is even worse. “Because we have objectified animals, we are able to treat them impersonally.” says Barry Lopez, an American nature writer, as though he were answering, in the eighties, to what the Old Man tells himself, in the thirties, while being adrift on the high seas.

The Old Man and the Sea is an ode to everything that surrounds us, to even the tiniest speck of life surrounding us. Clearly, this novella doesn't urge the reader to leave their current lifestyle and build a cabin in the woods. Rather, after reading this book, we will clearly see why we belong to nature as much as nature belongs to us, and live deep inside us.

Ivan Segura



Ernest Hemingway was born at the turn of the 20th century. He witnessed the major events of his century, which influenced his works: the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War. He wrote the novels *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). He tragically committed suicide in 1961.

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

The next books for discussion are:

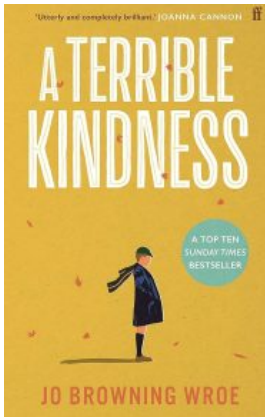
“Tom Lake” by Ann Patchett on 11th March

“Trespases” by Louise Kennedy on 8th April

“Hamnet” by Maggie O'Farrell on 13th May

February Book club

“A Terrible Kindness” by Jo Browning Wroe



“ It is a tender tale of friendships, family dysfunction, courage and vulnerability in the face of loss and trauma. ”

“Keep your head down and your heart hard. That’s your kindness.” These are the words addressed to 19 year-old William, a newly qualified embalmer who has arrived to help at the scene of a massive landslide in the Welsh mining village of Aberfan where 116 primary school children and 28 adults lost their lives in October 1966. Having driven all night, William grits his teeth and gets through the job, working quickly and efficiently with a make-shift team and equipment over an intense period of 3 days.

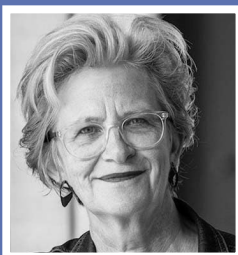
This tragic and harrowing start to Browning Roe’s novel is, for some, difficult to read. The events indeed have a devastating effect on William, haunting him throughout the years that follow to the point of refusing to have children with his wife Gloria. However that is not essentially what his story is about. Moving backwards and forwards in time, we learn about his years as an exceptionally talented chorister in Cambridge, the importance of music in his life, his embalming training in London, running

the family funeral business in Sutton Colefield and finally, the turning point, when in his own personal despair, he suddenly turns to help those who have given up on life.

It is a tender tale of friendships, family dysfunction, courage and vulnerability in the face of loss and trauma. More unusually, it also opens up the hidden world of undertaking, revealing the practical side of an essential role in society, showing humanity and respect to mark the end of life. “We do our job. We do it well, we do it quickly, we do it discretely and we leave.”

After a lively discussion and much enthusiasm for the many themes in the book, some members felt the rather choppy narrative structure was somewhat frustrating for the reader. It was also generally agreed that the story became too dramatic so that the end is disappointing since all the ends tie up too nicely. Some things could have been left unsaid to leave the reader with his own thoughts.

Polly Stotz



Jo Browning Wroe grew up in a crematorium in Birmingham. She has an MA in creative writing. She lives in Cambridge and teaches creative writing to post-graduates at the Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education. Her debut novel ‘A Terrible Kindness’ was written in 2022. It was a Sunday Times best seller.

Other Events of Interest

Online Creative Writing Workshops with SWAS

The Strasbourg Write a Story Committee continues to offer a series of online creative writing workshops for those who want to improve their writing skills or simply have a go and free the writer within!

Based on Ursula Le Guin's seminal book on writing "Steering the Craft", the workshops provide valuable insights and practical advice on various aspects of the craft (€7.50 per session).

For further details and to register go to <https://sxb-write-a-story.org/workshops-2024>.

Meet and greet with author Sampurna Chattarji and student performance

THURSDAY 18 APRIL, 6-8 pm, Unistra Bibliothèque des langues (Portique, Campus Esplanade)

ESC Member Lara Delage-Toriel invites you to join her students and colleagues for a showcase of English-language Indian literature as part of the Strasbourg Capitale Mondiale du Livre "World Voices" series. Acclaimed author and translator Sampurna Chattarji from Mumbai will answer questions about her work, while some of Lara's students and a couple of professional musicians echo the discussion with musically-enhanced readings of her short stories and poems.

Please note: this is an all-English event but questions from the audience may be asked in French and written translations of some of the texts will be provided.

Final call to renew your membership. This will be your last copy if we haven't received your subscription. In March, the distribution list will be updated. You will not be advised of possible updates.

Newsletter Publication

Articles for publication should be in English and sent to newsletter@esc-alsace.org.
Half a page adds up to 1500 characters (with spaces); one full page is 2500 to 3000 characters.
Pictures (.jpg format only) are easier to handle if attached to your email, not included in a document.

The deadline for the next bimonthly copy (in May) is Wednesday 17/04/2024.