



Families are the lifeline of the ESC

Our very existence is due to pioneering families, who arrived in this wonderful region, many with toddlers in tow, unfamiliar with the way of life here, having left families and friends far behind. With no one to pop in for coffee or brew a cuppa, these original parents reached out and created a community, a support network for parents and children which ultimately produced lifelong friendships.

Nowadays we have more technology to supposedly make our lives easier - you can have almost anything at a click from finding the right school, knowing which pharmacy is open 24/7, finding a reliable handyman and even translating your needs or wishes. Whilst we welcome technology, there is nothing more valuable than a personal recommendation, a problem shared over a cuppa or contented kids giggling on the swings. That personal touch, the humour and the camaraderie is what differentiates our ESC community. Many of those original families have moved on and we continue to welcome new families, including French families who have lived abroad and want to maintain and grow their English.

Are you making the most of this rich diversity of nationalities? Have you had an opportunity to meet other families at one of our events? This year we made a conscious decision to attract more families with younger kids. We needed new events. They had to be different and more meaningful than the conversations we have at the school gates. They had to help our kids experience some of our culture 'from back home' but also help them adapt to their new home and learn new traditions.

Pauline Taggart-Bertam (to be continued on page 9)

November - December 2023

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/>

Guy Fawkes bonfire night

SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER: 6.00 pm - private garden 23 rue de Hangebieten, 67120 Kolbsheim

Guy Fawkes, the most famous traitor in British history, tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament and King James I in the Gunpowder plot of 1605. The anniversary of his arrest is celebrated each year with bonfires (including an effigy of Guy on top) and fireworks.

Our celebration of the event is an opportunity to gather at dusk around a warm meal. This is a great event for children and families. Hot dogs, soup and drinks will be served in the Massies' garden.



Our hosts have requested a donation to Amnesty International for Ukraine in connection with the festivities. Give as you wish, and don't forget your warm clothes and your own mug! If you are able to bring heated soup, please contact the organisers and you will be rewarded with free entry.

Please sign up here: [Bonfire-night-2023](#). Contact: events@esc-alsace.org.

Uberach Brewery Visit and Tasting

SATURDAY 18 NOVEMBER: 10.30 am

La Brasserie d'Uberach was one of the first pioneer craft-breweries to be set up in Alsace. A risky venture for a nuclear engineer from the North with very little funding and next to no experience. It all began in an old, disused shoe factory in Val-de-Moder where the owner designed and constructed much of his own equipment.

Today, 24 years later, the brewery has become a thriving concern, well-known for its quality unfiltered, two fermentation beer which includes a range of over 20 types of beer and more recently a single malt whisky. All this while still remaining a micro-brewery with a dedicated staff of only 4 to 5 people. To learn more about the beer, the brewing and Eric Trossat's story and recipe for success, come and join us at the Brewery for a guided visit of the installations which will be followed by a tasting session.

The duration of the visit and tasting is 1h30.

The price is €5 for members and €8 for guests.

Don't miss this unique opportunity and sign up here: [Uberach-Brewery-2023](#). Numbers are limited to 18 maximum. In order to book the group ticket, the date limit for registration is now 31st October 2023. Contact: events@esc-alsace.org.

Following the visit, those who wish are invited to a 'bring and share' lunch at Polly's home (you are kindly asked to bring a salad, dessert or drink). A main dish beer-based taster will be provided. **For lunch contributions, please contact Polly** (as from 02/11) at pstotz@gmail.com - 06 72 71 90 41 / 03 88 07 04 93.



Coffee Morning

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER: 9.30 - 11.30 am

Do visit our free coffee morning gathering on 09/11. 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.

Stop by any time between 9.30 and 11.30 pm for a chat, drinks, biscuits and friendly faces. A selection of books will be on display. We hope you will find something you will want to take home. *Due to an increase in security, it may be necessary to ring at the outside door of L'Escale to gain access to the building.*

For any further details, your contact is Maggie at mvautheny@esc-alsace.org.

Save the date for our next meetings: 14/12, 11/01, 08/02, 14/03, 11/04, 16/05, 13/06.



Christmas biscuits baking

SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER: 2.30 - 5.00 pm

Save the date for another great family event. On Sunday, 26th November, we'll celebrate the opening of the Christmas markets with a gathering at a private house in the Conseil des Quinze area and will bake Bredele together (see also page 9).



Christmas quiz

SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER: 7.30 - 23.00 pm

Save the date for a great trivia evening led by Véronique and Terence. This will be another fun opportunity to rattle your brain on a new theme, the seventies - and dress up accordingly! On Saturday, 9th December, we will gather at a private house near place d'Austerlitz. Full details to follow by email.



Burns Supper 2024

SATURDAY 27 JANUARY: 7.00 pm

Once again Alasdair, Sheila and a great team of volunteers are warming up for Burns Supper 2024. Stay tuned!

Please remember that the cut-off date to renew your subscription with the ESC is 31/12/2023

ESC Registration 2024, click here: www.esc-alsace.org/renew

The fee remains a bargain €30 for singles or €40 for couples/families. [Full details on our website \(Join Us\).](#)

If you have another question, feel free to send an email to membership@esc-alsace.org.

Note that those new members joining from September to December 2023 are already considered to have paid up until the end of 2024.

Whose right?

Two plays dealing with the rights of the individual, presented alternately

D'r Handler

adapted by Louise Palmer from Shakespeare's
The Merchant of Venice

D'r Handler takes place in Strasbourg in the late 1880s. It tells the tale of a merchant, Antoine, who borrows three thousand marks from the usurer, Shylock, to fund a project for his friend Benoît. When his ships fail to come in and he cannot repay the debt, Antoine's life is in danger. Who can save him?

Directed by Louise Palmer

24 NOVEMBER, 8:30 pm at Théâtre du Cube Noir
ESC event - show + apéro - for ESC members and their guests (please see full details below)

ESC members only can still have a free drink on the other nights:

26 November at 17:00

28 November at 20:30

30 November at 20:30

2 December at 17:00

Molly Sweeney

by Brian Friel

Molly Sweeney, blind since infancy, has created a world in her own mind which gives her pleasure and great fulfilment. After she is persuaded by her husband and her surgeon to undergo a risky operation, her sight is only partially restored. In this new frightening environment, she grieves for her old interior world which has been lost forever. Through a series of monologues, Molly Sweeney explores the difference between seeing and understanding in a deeply moving meditation on hope, change and despair.

Directed by Julia Whitham

ESC members only can still have a free drink on the other nights:

25 November at 17:00

29 November at 20:30

1 December at 20:30

3 December at 17:00

When and how you can join:

On Friday 24th November, the ESC will offer an apéro, including 1 free drink to get at the bar + finger food, before the play *D'r Handler* performed at the Théâtre du Cube Noir, 8 allée du Sommerhof, Koenigshoffen. This ESC event is for ESC members and their guests. The apéro starts at 7.30 pm, the play is at 8.30 pm.

For those of you who are not available on Friday 24, Tagora will still offer you the free drink in the ticket price on any other day, and for both plays.

To book your seat, please follow this link: **WHOSE RIGHT? - Tagora**, then email us at events@esc-alsace.org to confirm your registration and tell us what date you've booked. You will then receive the free drink voucher on your arrival.

If you have further questions or want to know more about the offer, please contact Joëlle Glore at events@esc-alsace.org.



Regular groups



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:



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

English conversation group

After a summer break, the English conversation group met on Friday, 29th September at Maryline's place in Vieux Cronenbourg.

Summer stretching out, the weather was just perfect to chat in the garden around a table loaded with cakes, fruits, tea, coffee and so on. Maryline had brought, a bit early, a special treat from England, mince pies mince pies that you find traditionally on tables for Christmas. Nigel, as usual, was busy connecting the session on Zoom for our friends in England and those in France who could not reach the garden. Technique is not always simple and Chantal Stewart gave him a helpful hand so that everyone could take part.



During this first session of the school year, casual conversation went on, mostly about vacation. Every two weeks, some participants prepare a topic with pictures about any subject they would like to share. It could be travels, singers, job, quiz, flowers, exhibitions... you name it!

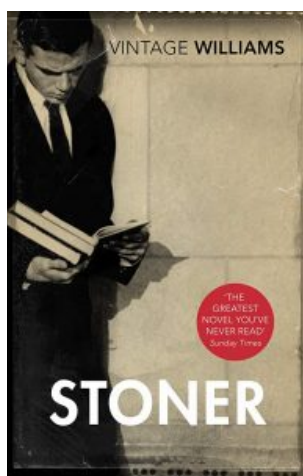
Some of the English Conversation Group members are native English speakers and the French members have different levels of English, but the most important thing for everyone is to spend two hours in a friendly mood.

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

Chantal Krafft

September Book Club review

“Stoner” by John Williams



“ Books are like perfume; the mere fact that you like them doesn't mean you'll worship them all. And as I was handed the package, my guests said: “You'll love this book.” ”

Choosing a book for the book club can be a challenging task. We need to make sure that other members of the group enjoy it, or at least are sufficiently interested to embark on the discussion. Other more factual criteria have been added over the years: the book should be written in English, ideally no more than 350 pages, good material for discussion, and please, please, read it before you suggest it! The worst that could happen, and it has happened, is that someone ends up regretting their book choice.

“Stoner” by John Williams was given to me a year ago by some friends who were invited to our house. I value the idea of showing appreciation through less common gifts, i.e., bottle of wine, box of chocolates or bunch of flowers, and my friends knew I liked reading. But books are like perfume; the mere fact that you like them doesn't mean you'll worship them all. And as I was handed the package, my guests said: “You'll love this book.” And I did!

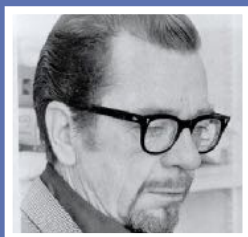
William Stoner is born at the end of the nineteenth century into a dirt-poor Missouri farming family. He is sent by his father to the state university to study agronomy and

learn about modern farming to improve their business. While attending an English class, Stoner is put on the spot by the professor to explain Shakespeare's Sonnet 73. He is dumbfounded not only with embarrassment, but also by the language of the English writer. He instantly falls in love with English literature, switches from agronomy to literature, and later embraces a scholar's life.

And yet as the years pass, Stoner encounters a succession of disappointments: dysfunctional marriage; fragile, wayward daughter; stymied career; abrupt end of a true love affair due to the threat of scandal. What do you do when everything goes wrong? As a reader, you never stop feeling for him.

John Williams's deeply moving novel is a work of quiet perfection. First published in 1965 with limited coverage, it became 50 years later Waterstone's book of the year. “Stoner” is now being heralded by some as a lost classic, a powerful novel and, according to *The New Yorker*, “The greatest American novel you've never heard of”.

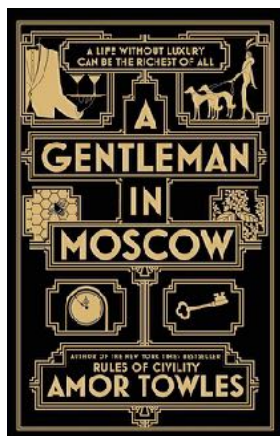
Joëlle Glore



John Edward Williams (29 August 1922 – 3 March 1994) was an American author, editor and professor. He was best known for his novels *Butcher's Crossing* (1960), *Stoner* (1965) and *Augustus* (1972), which won a U.S. National Book Award.

October Book Club review

“A Gentleman in Moscow” by Amor Towles



The members of the book club enjoyed this charming and inventive historical fiction with a cast of wonderful characters.

At the start of decades of tumultuous political turmoil in Russia following the revolution, Count Alexander Rostov was sentenced to house arrest in the majestic Metropol Hotel in Moscow. A man of great resources - sensitive, impeccably mannered, funny, skilled in relationships and practical - he was able to adapt,

survive and prosper in the surroundings of his golden cage.

The book follows his adventures - in turn comic, sad, exciting, never boring - through decades of his house arrest. This was a man with a gift for life who understood his place in the passage of time:

“The content of a bottle of wine is the product of history as unique and complex as that of a nation or a man.”

Christiane Lehmann and Mike Wraith



Amor Towles is an American writer born in Boston in 1964. He graduated from Yale and then received an MA in English from Stanford University. After working as an investment professional for over 20 years, he now devotes himself full-time to writing.

He received the Fitzgerald prize in 2012 for his first novel: ‘The Rules of Civility’. His second novel, ‘A Gentleman in Moscow’ featured in the New York Times best-seller list for over a year. A third novel, ‘The Lincoln Highway’ has also been well received.

Book club monthly readings

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:

Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead on 13th November

With a Mind to Kill by Anthony Horowitz on 11th December

September and October events:

Gastronomic walk in Barr - Ascot style ;)



Village des Assos in Parc de la Citadelle



A few of our valiant volunteers



Visit of the Mayor of Strasbourg

To date we have hosted 3 unique family events with 2 more happening in November. We started our programme with the Mad Hatter's Play Party in May. What an amazing day! We still laugh our socks off remembering how 'inventive' kids were to win the egg & spoon race. Kids could have spent all afternoon at the 3-legged race; first they did it with siblings, then with parents and then they had enough technique and courage to grab a new friend and try again. Anyone remembers doing the sack race on Sports Day? Our kids were clueless when we brought out the sacks! One Dad had to jump into a sack to demonstrate. Not only did we have the chance to relive our childhoods but also share the fun and create magical memories with our kids.

In September, we brought families together for a Treasure Hunt to celebrate 'Back to School'. The excitement was tangible as groups of kids raced around the Parc de l'Orangerie finding clues. Last weekend, we prepared for Halloween and carved 20 pumpkins! Whilst we thought this would be a parent activity, the kids loved the responsibility of cutting out their own shapes. They concentrated, they carved and then smiled from ear to ear when their creation was complete. Every kid was super proud of their hard work and very happy to bring their pumpkin home. We spent the afternoon making masks and monsters and trying out a game of Conkers!

Our next event will be Bonfire Night on 4th November where we will light up the sky with fireworks. And as Strasbourg is the Capital of Christmas, with all its traditions, we cannot miss an occasion to show you how to make Bredele! Learn about these local Christmas biscuits. We have some old Alsatian family recipes to try and kids can enjoy cutting out traditional shapes to make a small bag of Bredele for their family or their teacher.

Pauline Taggart-Bertram

A Treasure Hunt at Parc de l'Orangerie



The Orangerie is my favourite park in Strasbourg. We play there a lot. One day at school pick-up, I heard my Mum talking to other parents about a Treasure Hunt organised by the ESC. "We have to go", I said to my friend. "What do you think the treasure will be? That night we signed up; me, my brother Charlie and my Mum and Dad.

When the day arrived, we met my friend and her family at the Book Shack. There were 8 groups and I wanted our group to win the treasure! With our map and a pencil, we were ready to play detectives. The maps had cool symbols to help us find the clues. We have been to this park many times, but still my Mum and Dad didn't know where the Thief's Well was or the Goose Girl. So, we followed the map very carefully. Some clues were too easy to find, like the letter on the big flower pot outside the Pavillion; and some clues took us more time to find. It was good teamwork!



When we collected the 8 letters, we made the word CAKEPOP! We rushed back to the beginning so we could be the first group back in record time. And there, on a table, was the treasure: Vanilla or Chocolate cake pops with some nice icing and sprinkles. They were absolutely delicious. Everyone got a cake pop and actually, when our parents were talking to each other, all the kids got a second one! This was great fun and I would recommend it for kids and families. I hope there is another one next year.

Daisy

Autumn Four Castle walk

It was a lovely sunny day on October 1st for our four castle walk in the Vosges du Nord led by our fearless and dedicated guide, Polly. There were eleven of us altogether, ready for some good exercise, lively chat and history lessons along the way. Our goal was to make a 9km loop to visit the ruins of Fleckenstein, Loewenstein, Hohenburg, and Wegelnburg.

Ready, set, go! We set off to see all four medieval castles built between the 12th and 16th centuries; yet were ordered to be destroyed by Louis XIV in late 17th century. These were built into the natural rock formations. Their remains are now listed as historical monuments.

Departing about 11am from Gimbelhoff where there is a small hotel/restaurant/outdoor terrace. Also there is a playground there with interesting wood carvings and structures for the children mimicking medieval times.

Onward and upward towards Fleckenstein we passed a field of grazing black and white Vosgien cows. A special and hardy breed adaptable to the mountains. Something new for me to see! Marching on a bit of a steep and rocky climb, we passed many interesting outcroppings towards Fleckenstein castle. But thankfully in the shade! Above us were impressive layers upon layers of sandstone. Like plates of different sizes stacked on top of each other. A popular area for rock climbers.



We followed the path which took us along to the “charcoal burners” area where charcoal was made during the Middle Ages to support industry. One can see numerous explanations about charcoal burning and demonstration models of a charcoal kiln.

Originally this was a very large castle (92m long and 8m wide). Quite imposing! Over the years several reconstructions have taken place to strengthen and preserve it. Remnants of the main entrance still exist originally from the 12th century.

Next stop was Lowenstein castle dating from the 13th century built on two rocks. Destroyed in 1386, not much remains but we had a magnificent view from the top. We chose to forego the climb to the top due to crowds and marched northward to Hohenbourg castle. This was my favorite mostly because of rooms still partially intact and the magnificent panoramic view from the top of the northern Vosges and the Palatine. We stopped for our picnic lunch here and a bit of rest.

Off we went in north-easterly direction towards the German border and crossing over to reach our final castle, Wegelnburg. It is the highest imperial fortress in the Rhineland-Palatinate region built originally in the 12th century. Here there are remains of doors, buildings and rooms carved into the rock. Restorations are taking place as we saw many very large pink sandstone blocks in neat piles on the ground. The summit provides a great panorama of the Northern Vosges forest.



Now the easier part as he head back down the mountain to Gimbelhof for a refreshing beverage and yummy dessert on the café terrace. It was a glorious adventure! Many thanks to Polly!

Judy Kerns

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 December) is Wednesday 06/12/2023.

thanks to Polly Stotz for the cover picture: Canada 10-2023

How to reach committee members *

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* Committee members act in several roles and take on various duties. You will get a quicker answer if you email the right person directly, as indicated by their role-based emails. Please note that contact@esc-alsace.org is a general inbox. All committee members can respond to any requests received from Contact, so please watch for who signs the email and follow up with that person as needed.