



The Synagogue and ritual bath (Mikveh) of the Jewish community in Malsch stood here
from 1834 to 1939



The buildings' outlines are marked on the ground

Hier standen von 1834 bis 1939 die Synagoge und das Ritualbad (Mikwe) der jüdischen Gemeinde von Malsch.

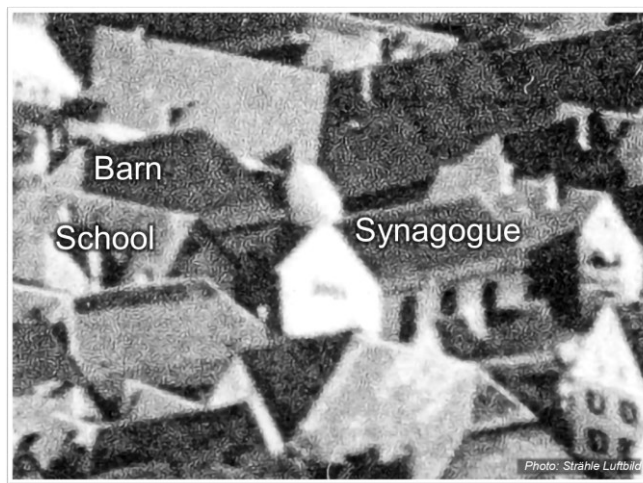
Die Grundrisse sind auf dem Boden markiert.

(Eine deutsche Version der Information auf dieser Tafel und weitere Informationen finden Sie im Internet - scannen Sie den QR-Code unten)

History of the Jewish community up to 1940

This place formed the hub of the early Jewish community and about half of the families lived in the surrounding houses. Long before, there had been a prayer room in a private house and a Mikveh, or ritual bath.

Soon after, a small property was acquired nearby to serve as a school; in **1894** a larger property next to the Mikveh was purchased instead.



In **1938**, the Synagogue was wrecked, and its contents were carried out and set ablaze on the adjacent land. A few weeks later, with the aim of erasing all traces of Jewish existence, the Synagogue and Mikveh were demolished.

Two family photographs survive which show part of the Synagogue and the roof of the Mikveh in the background.



Jews had lived in the general area since the **Middle Ages**; their earliest verified presence in Malsch was in about **1660**.

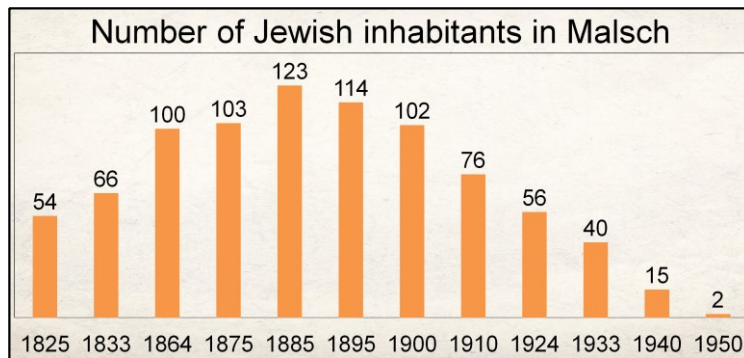
In **1714**, four Jewish heads of household were recorded and in **1726** five.

By **1831**, there were 13 Jewish families in Malsch with the names Bodenheimer, Kahn, Hess, Strauss, Schuster, Falk, Marschall, Hilb and Schwed.

In **1862**, the Jews were granted legal equality. They were then able to take up any trade or profession and even enter the Civil Service. In **1872**, they were also granted the right to settle and

establish a business. One consequence of this was a gradual move away from the village and into the city.

By **1885**, more than 120 Jews lived in Malsch, representing 8% of the village population.



During the war between Germany and France (**1870-71**) and the **First World War (1914-18)**, the Jewish men fought alongside their Malsch contemporaries. Heinrich Hamburger was awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class.

The names of Josef Hirsch Hess, as well as Gustav and Isak Hess, Julius Hilb and Emil Hess, can be found on the two war memorials near the entrance to the cemetery.



In the **19th century**, the Jewish families in Malsch made their living primarily from trading livestock, agricultural products (in particular tobacco and hops), animal skins and hides. They also operated a shop selling textiles.

In **1933**, there were 9 Jewish-owned businesses in Malsch.



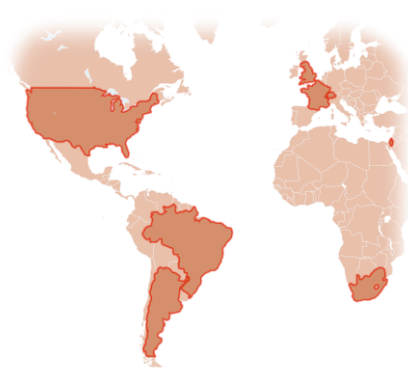
Contemporary witnesses recount that a good relationship existed between neighbours of Christian and Jewish beliefs. It was only with the start of the National Socialist dictatorship in **1933** that discrimination and persecution were reported in Malsch. There was no concerted campaign to boycott the Jewish businesses, but from **1935** on, the racial laws, occupational bans and legal arbitrariness made life ever more difficult. 24 Jewish citizens succeeded in emigrating to the USA, South America, England, France and Switzerland.

During '**Kristallnacht**', on the night of **November 9th, 1938**, the Synagogue was wrecked, and its contents were carried out and burned; the Jewish business premises were also looted, and many Jewish homes were damaged. Almost all the Jewish men aged between 16 and 60 were taken to Dachau concentration camp for several weeks; the children were excluded from attending school in Malsch. On **October 22nd, 1940**, the remaining 15 Jews in Malsch were deported to Gurs in southern France, along with 6,500 other Jews from Baden and the Saarpfalz. Three of them died in the camp there and one in a French hospice. Seven were murdered in Auschwitz. Two children escaped to the USA.

Remembrance and encounters after 1945

In **1947**, just one elderly couple, Ludwig and Klara Hess, returned penniless to Malsch. They saw out the rest of their days in Ludwig's parental home in Raiffeisenplatz.

Today, descendants of the Jewish families from Malsch live in France, England, Switzerland, Israel, the USA, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa. Over the years, several of them have visited their former childhood home or that of their parents or grandparents and also paid their respects at the Jewish cemetery in the neighbouring village of Mingolsheim, where their forefathers were laid to rest from 1878.



In **1993**, the municipality of Malsch took the decision to erect a memorial stone to the former Synagogue on this spot. The picture shows the Mayor, Werner Knopf (*left*), with the head of the Jewish religious community in Heidelberg, Dr. Carl Ehrlich, at the unveiling ceremony.



In **2015**, a group of confirmands created a pair of memorial columns for the Ecumenical Youth Project Memorial in Neckarzimmern to commemorate Malsch's eradicated former Jewish community. One example is on display in the town hall and the other in Neckarzimmern.



A study group began to research into Malsch's former Jewish community in 2013. Its efforts soon bore fruit.

Since **2014**, several descendants of Malsch's former Jewish population have visited the place which their forefathers once called home.

On **22nd October 2015**, 75 years to the day after his deportation from Malsch, Rolf Hess revisited Germany and his former hometown for the first time, along with his family. As a child he lived in Mühlgasse No.8. The community commemorated the expulsion of its fellow Jewish citizens with a religious service and a function in the Zehntscheuer community hall.



Signing the 'Golden Book' on 22.10.2015
Rolf Hess and family, Ronald Lazarus (r) with the Mayor, Sibylle Würfel

In **2018**, the first Stolpersteine were placed in Malsch in memory of the Hilb / Hamburger and Hess families. These small brass plaques, which serve to remember and commemorate victims of the National Socialist regime, are set into the pavement in front of their former homes.



Descendants of the Hamburger / Luftman family from the USA take part in the placing of the first Stolpersteine on 19.02.2018 with the artist Gunter Demnig (3rd from left)

They are located at the main (*high street*) entrance to the town square and in Mühlgasse, to the left of this information board. From time to time, children from the Junior school in Malsch polish the Stolpersteine to bring back their original shine.



In **2020**, this area was remodelled. The outlines of the Synagogue and Mikveh were marked out on the ground and this information board was erected.



This information board was produced in 2020 by the research group 'Jewish Life in Malsch' under the auspices of the local historical society and the municipality of Malsch.