THE STATIONS

1) Shabbat Chain
From the late 17th century until the expulsions in 1938, this was the Jewish quarter of Eisenstadt. The Shabbat Chain, which marked the entrance to this district, was stretched across the way each week, from Friday evening until Saturday evening, to close off the road to wagons and thus secure the necessary quietude on the Sabbath.

2) Austrian Jewish Museum
The Austrian Jewish Museum is housed in Palais Wertheimer, named for its original owner, the Hungarian sovereign rabbi Samson Wertheimer (1658-1724). From the late 19th century onwards, the Wolf family of wine merchants had their headquarters here, known as “Leopold Wolf’s Sons”. - Esther Calvary was the daughter of Esriel Hildesheimer, rabbi in Eisenstadt from 1851 until 1869.

3) Community Synagogue (1834-1938)
This was Eisenstadt’s community synagogue, built according to plans of Esterházy court architect Charles Moreau, between 1832 and 1834. The interior of the synagogue was destroyed during the so-called ‘Night of Broken Glass’ (‘Reichskristallnacht’, 9-10 November 1938). The building was sold after the war and razed. - Meir Ayali was born under the name Meir Eugen Hirschler in Eisenstadt in 1913. He died in Israel in 2001.

4) Shabbat Gate
The (not preserved) Shabbat Gate, which was located east of today’s entrance to the Wertheimer-gasse/Unterbergstrasse, formed the counterpart to the Shabbat Chain at the lower end of the Jewish quarter (see Station 1). It, too, served to ensure the quietude of the Sabbath.

5) Older Jewish Cemetery (1679-1875)
The older Jewish cemetery of Eisenstadt goes back to the earliest days of the Jewish quarter. The oldest tombstone dates from the year 1679. Today the cemetery, which was used until 1875, contains about 1100 gravestones.

6) Newer Jewish Cemetery (from 1875)
After the older Jewish cemetery had attained maximum capacity, the newer Jewish cemetery was laid out in 1875. Today it contains nearly 300 headstones. - Gottlieb Fischer was rabbi in Stuhlweisenburg (Székesfehérvár) in Hungary before making Eisenstadt his retirement home. He died at the age of 85 on 24 Tishri 5656, i.e. Saturday, 12 October 1895.

7) Burgenland State Museum
The expansive private museum of Alexander Wolf was once housed in the rooms of today’s State Museum. Apart from a collection of Jewish artefacts and collector’s items, it also included regional archeological and folk culture exhibits. Beyond his collecting activities, Alexander (Sándor) and his brother Leopold were also wine merchants with their business located in the adjacent house (today’s Jewish Museum, see Station 2). He was expelled from Eisenstadt and died in Haifa in 1946.

8) On the way to the Jewish Cemetery
A Jewish funeral procession. The hearse, drawn by horses and accompanied by the grieving community, wends its way from the inner city, past Palais Esterházy, to the newer Jewish cemetery. The identity of the deceased is unknown.

9) Palais Esterházy
The palace was originally a medieval fortress and was built in a number of construction phases. In the 17th century, it served as the Esterházy princely residence under Paul I (1635-1713). During Paul’s reign, the so-called “Protection Letter” was issued for the Jews of Eisenstadt (1690). It formally assured them of protection and religious tolerance by the ruler; it also contained detailed regulations with regard to tax obligations, community administration, etc.

10) Schiller Clothing Store
Until their expulsion in 1938, the Jews of Eisenstadt played an important role in various businesses of the city. As late as the year 1938, there were still more than 50 shops in Eisenstadt owned by local Jews. Kleiderhaus Schiller was the last enterprise in this longstanding tradition. It was founded by Oskar Schiller of Eisenstadt (1918-2005), who survived the Shoah, and carried on by his grandson Patrick Frankl after his death. It closes/closed at the end of June, 2012.

11) Medieval Jewish Quarter
The presence of Jews in Eisenstadt is historically documented as of the Middle Ages. The first Jewish quarter, which was dissolved and replaced at the end of the 17th century by the neighborhood west of Palais Esterházy (see Station 1), was located in a rectangular area between Schlossplatz, Josef-Weigl-Gasse, Joseph-Haydn-Gasse and Hauptstrasse (pedestrian zone). It included a house of prayer, a ritual immersion bath and a cemetery, although no visible remains can be found. - Franz Werfel’s novel fragment “Cella, or the Overcomer” (1938/39) tells the tale of a Jewish lawyer from Eisenstadt named Bodenheim and his family during the chaos of 1938.

Length of roundabout stroll: about 40 min. (appx. 2 km).
The Past, Passed
An outdoor exhibition of the Austrian Jewish Museum.
Eisenstadt, 17 June – 26 October 2012

For details, see: www.ojm.at/verbegangen

The Past, Passed
... is an outdoor exhibition of the Austrian Jewish Museum comprising 11 textual and pictorial sheets marking a variety of particular wayside stations in Jewish life and leading the visitor through the historic past and the present of Judaism in Eisenstadt.

... spans an arc from the medieval inception of the Jewish community to its apex and all the way to the expulsions of 1938 and the sporadic new beginnings after 1945. By including historic photos and excerpts from the memoirs of Eisenstadt Jews, the exhibition endeavors to create an encounter with many diverse facets of the Jewish past of Eisenstadt, at the same time escorting visitors, permitting them (literally) to pass through the past, touching upon characteristic spots of Jewish life, visit tour-guide worthy sights and see the unspectacular accoutrements and furnishings of everyday Jewish life.

... is conceived and designed as an exhibition in the open air which reaches beyond the ‘laboratory’ atmosphere of a museum. Its aim is the symbolic visualization of bygone days of Jewish life, in the Eisenstadt of 2012.

For more details about the project and comprehensive information about the individual stations, please see: www.ojm.at/verbegangen