

# Calw. The Hermann Hesse Town.

Perhaps the greatest compliment the town of Calw has ever received stems from the author of world-famous novels and stories such as 'Beneath the Wheel', 'Demian', 'Siddhartha' and 'Steppenwolf', who was born here on 02 July 1877, at Marktplatz 6, directly opposite the Town Hall:



"Many a pretty town have I seen between Bremen and Naples, between Vienna and Singapore, towns by the sea, towns high up in the mountains; and as a pilgrim I have taken a drink from many a fountain which later turned into the sweet poison of nostalgia. But the prettiest town of all that I know is Calw on the Nagold, a little old Swabian town in the Black Forest."

— Heimat, 1918

Explore sites that are associated with the life and literary work of the poet and his family. Stroll through the crooked alleyways and narrow streets and see Calw through the eyes of Hermann Hesse. Enjoy the tour in multimedia at: [www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Stätten](http://www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Stätten)

- 1

Marktplatz 6

Birthplace of Hermann Hesse
- 2

Marktplatz 9

Town Hall
- 3

Salzgasse 8

Salt Chest
- 4

Kirchplatz 3

Old Latin School
- 5

Kirchplatz 2

Municipal Church
- 6

Altbürger Straße 3

Superintendent's Office
- 7

Marktplatz 30

Haus Schüz – Hermann Hesse Museum
- 8

Inselgasse
- 9

Brühl
- 10

Welzbergweg 1

Cemetery
- 11

Bischofstraße 70

Badischer Hof
- 12

Bischofstraße 52

Stone House
- 13

Bischofstraße 48

Vischer Palace – Calw town museum
- 14

Weinsteg
- 15

Lederstraße 32

Andréa House
- 16

Lederstraße 24

Former home of the Hesse family
- 17

Marktplatz 4–6

Georgenäum
- 18

Im Zwinger 3

Georgenäum
- 19

Am Schießberg 9

Former infirmary and poorhouse
- 20

Metzgergasse

Former house of the Gundert family
- 21

Badstraße

Former house and workshop of the locksmith Gottlob Mohr
- 22

Hermann Hesse-Square with Hermann Hesse Fountain
- 23

Nicholas Bridge with Hermann Hesse Statue
- 24

The River Nagold
- 25

Junction Nicholas Bridge/Bischofstr./Bahnhofstr.
- 26

Bahnhofstraße 1

Giebelnath House
- 27

Bahnhofstr. 20 + 24

Former seat of the Perrot mechanical workshop
- 28

Bischofstraße 4

Former seat of the Calw Publishing House
- 29

Bishop's Fountain in the Central Bus Station (ZOB)
- 30

Hirsau, Wildbader Straße 2

Feldweg House

## On the trail of Hermann Hesse.

The Hermann Hesse hiking trail offers everything you could possibly wish for in a hike. Beautiful woods, the romantic hilltop town of Zavelstein with its castle ruins and the spa town of Teinach with its thermal spa where hikers can rest their weary bones. From Bad Teinach you walk down the Teinach valley to the Nagold valley and then head back to Calw. Hermann Hesse did plenty of walking here and can tell us a lot about the area. For information on the hiking trail please contact the Calw Tourist Office or go to [www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Wanderung](http://www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Wanderung)



## 37 information stands guide you along the Hermann Hesse Path.

Starting out from the Hermann Hesse Museum you cross the picturesque Market Place, the historic town centre, and arrive at the municipal gardens, which directly adjoin the town. The information stands, which display a historic picture and texts with quotations from Hesse's works, are divided up into three themes: the first part consists of quotations from the Gerbersau Tales which give an insight into how Hesse viewed his town, the

second part in the municipal gardens presents selected poems and the third part provides historic descriptions. The path passes the Dr. Emil Schüz memorial stone and leads up to a scenic path with a beautiful view of Calw. It then continues to the memorial stone of the economics expert Eugen Horlacher and to the tilia tree 'Schillerlinde'.

[www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Weg](http://www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Weg)



## Hermann Hesse Museum.

Since 1990, the historic town palace 'Haus Schüz' (Schüz House), which overlooks Calw's Market Place and the poet's birth house, has been home to the Hermann Hesse Museum. The museum has the most extensive collection open to the public on the 1946 Nobel Laureate for Literature. Hermann Hesse is considered to be the most widely read German-language author of the 20th century.



Expected to be closed until 2026.

Please note: The Hermann Hesse Museum is expected to be closed until 2026, due to renovation and reconstruction measures.

Alternatively, it is possible to visit the presentation about Hermann Hesse in the Palais Vischer, which provides an overview about the life stages of the poet and his work as a painter in his adopted home Montagnola.

In addition, two rooms deal intensively with the theme of the "Steppenwolf" novel.

In the Tannery Museum (front-building) also exists a Hermann Hesse exhibition, where the main topics are dedicated to "Hermann Hesse's Childhood in Calw" and "Calw in Hermann Hesse's work".

### Hermann Hesse-Museum

Marktplatz 30, 75365 Calw  
E-mail: [hermann-hesse-museum@calw.de](mailto:hermann-hesse-museum@calw.de)  
Closed until 2026 due to renovation work.

### Palais Vischer

Bischofstraße 48, 75365 Calw

April – October  
Saturday and Sunday:  
02:00 p.m. – 05:00 p.m.  
Admission Reduced € 2.00 / € 1.50

### Vorderhaus des Gerberei-museums

Badstraße 7/1, 75365 Calw

Year-round  
Thursday – Sunday:  
02:30 p.m. – 05:00 p.m.  
Free Admission



## In the Footsteps of Hermann Hesse.

Thanks to the poet and Nobel Prize winner Hermann Hesse the charm and beauty of the Black Forest town have found their way into literature, thus achieving world fame. Strolling through the alleys of Calw in the footsteps of 'Steppenwolf' – whether as a local or as a tourist – you will find that many things have remained just the same as how the young Hesse saw and internalized them. Discover Hermann Hesse's Calw together with our tourist guides!



Hermann Hesse was born in Calw on 02 July 1877. In his hometown, many buildings are reminiscent of the Nobel Prize winner and his stories.

"Calw is the most beautiful town of all", he once wrote. In his stories he poetically named the town 'Gerbersau'. In the guided tour, you will see where he lived and the places he so imitably described in his stories. The town of Calw as a literary museum – follow in his tracks!

### Guided Hermann Hesse tours

Public tours only take place in German.

Meeting place: Town Hall, Market Place

May to October, each Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

(in German) - Approx. 1 1/4 hour

Adults (18 and older) € 8.00

Reduced € 6.00

Reductions for juveniles 12 – 18 years of age, free admission for children under 12 years of age.

The ticket entitles you to free admission to the Palais Vischer (during the renovation of the Hermann Hesse Museum)

Special tours for groups: can be booked at the Calw Tourist Office.

Maximum of 25 persons: € 80.-

Maximum of 25 persons: € 100.-

[www.calw.de/Führungen](http://www.calw.de/Führungen)

Further reading: Many places in Calw and its surroundings are described in such detail in Hesse's stories that even today the reader can still identify them.

'Auf den Spuren von Hermann Hesse: Von Calw nach Montagnola' by Herbert Schnierle-Lutz  
Paperback: 350 pages  
Publishing house: Insel Verlag, Edition: 1 (8 May 2017)  
ISBN: 978-3458361541

Hermann Hesse and his hometown Calw, 'Chronologie eines wechselvollen Verhältnisses' by Herbert Schnierle-Lutz  
Calw town archive: 'Kleine Reihe', Volume 26, Calw 2011  
ISBN: 978-3-939148-29-6



[www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Stadt](http://www.calw.de/Hermann-Hesse-Stadt)

### Calw Tourist Office

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[touristinfo@calw.de](mailto:touristinfo@calw.de) · [www.calw.de](http://www.calw.de)

Stadt.Calw touristinfo@calw



English



## A Literary Exploration ...



... of Hermann Hesse's Home Town



herz. erfrischend. echt.




# Discover the town of Hermann Hesse as a literary museum.

## 1 Marktplatz 6, Birthplace of Hermann Hesse

Hermann Hesse was born here in the apartment on the second floor on Monday, 02 July 1877, at 6:30 p.m. At the time, the house was both the residence and home of the trading company of Emil Dreiß; in 1882 it became the textile business of Traugott Schiler, later the textile business of Friedrich Daur; today it is the home of the fashion store Schaber. Hesse's parents, Johannes and Marie Hesse, lived there with their children from their marriage in 1874. From 1873 – 1881 Johannes Hesse was an assistant of Hermann Gundert in the Calw Publishing House. On 15 August 1875 Hesse's elder sister **Adele** (1875 to 1949) was born here.

Hermann Hesse was christened in the building by his grandfather Hermann Gundert on 3 August 1877. Hesse's younger brother and his sisters were also born in this building: **Paul** (born 14 July 1878, died 17 December 1878), **Gertrud** (born 6 August 1879, died 30 March 1880) and **Marie**, called Marulla (born 27 November 1880, died 17 March 1953).


## 2 Marktplatz 9, Town Hall

The current Town Hall was built in the years between 1726 and 1730 after several preceding buildings had been destroyed in the wars of the 17th century. The façade of the Town Hall was renovated in 1929. The ground-level arches of the Town Hall once hosted the town's market, especially the booths of the bakers and butchers. Two large fountains, presumably built in 1586 and adorned with the heraldic lions of Calw bearing the coat of arms of the state of Württemberg and the town of Calw are located at the upper and lower ends of the Market Place. Both the Town Hall and its market hall are mentioned in Hesse's stories: 'Eine Fußreise im Herbst' and 'Schön ist die Jugend'. The lower fountain plays a role in the story 'Kindheit des Zaubers'.  


## 3 Salzgasse 8, Salzkasten ('Salt Chest')

The building was built in 1696. In 1722 it was named after its function: the 'salt house' (it also accommodated the town recording office, as the salt trade was the privilege of the town). During Hesse's school years a class of the 'Latin school' (the former grammar school) was housed here. Hermann Hesse spent half of the four years he went to school in Calw in a classroom housed in the town hall and half in the fire engine house built on to the back of the 'Salzkasten', the ground floor of which accommodated the fire brigade. The school building is described, amongst others, in the story 'Unterbrochene Schultunde'. The Salzgasse is mentioned as 'Hirschengasse' in the story 'Die Verlobung'.

## 4 Kirchplatz 3, Old Latin School

This building was built in 1696 and was the home of Calw's 'Latin School' (the former grammar school), which was transformed into a 'Real-Lyceum' (intermediate school teaching classical subjects) in 1874. When Hesse attended the 'Real-Lyceum' (1886 - 1890) the building accommodated the rector's office; today it houses Calw's adult education centre. The classrooms in this building were used to teach the upper forms, which Hesse however attended not in Calw but in Maulbronn and Cannstatt. The Latin School plays a role in the stories 'Der Lateinschüler' and 'Peter Bastians Jugend'. Hesse's schooldays in Calw are recounted for example in the novels 'Unterm Rad' (Beneath the Wheel) and 'Demian'. From 1871 until July 1872, before Hesse was born, Hesse's mother was the first female teacher to teach English to upper forms at a secondary school in Württemberg.  


## 5 Kirchplatz 2, Municipal Church

The Municipal Church was first documented in 1262. After being destroyed in 1634 and 1692 it was rebuilt around 1700 on the original foundations with a tower in Southern European style. After various alterations it was partly demolished in 1886 and reconstructed in 1888 with a steeple. The Protestant Municipal Church plays a role in the stories 'Kinderseele' and 'Die Verlobung', as well as in the memoir written by Hesse in 1954 'Notizblätter um Ostern'.



## 6 Altburger Straße 3, Superintendent's Office

Since 1698 this has been the seat of the Protestant town Superintendent's. In his story 'Vierter Lebenslauf des Josef Knecht' which originated in the context of 'The Glass Bead Game', Hesse describes the house as a 'special part' (Spezialart) of the administration of the religious order.

## 7 Marktplatz 30, Haus Schütz

Built in 1813 for the physician, Dr. Johann Georg Zahn, by the ducal court architect R. F. H. Fischer. It was later inhabited by the doctor and natural scientist Emil Schütz (1828 – 1877). Since 1990 it has hosted the Hermann Hesse Museum.

## 8 Inselgasse

There once was an island between the river Nagold and one of its arms over which the road has since been built; this island was the site of the 'Schill- & Wagner'sche Deckenfabrik' (Schill & Wagner Blanket Factory) which, in 1895, became the 'Vereinigte Decken- und Tuchfabriken AG Calw' (United Blanket and Textile Mills Calw). This is where the Italian families lived who came to Calw at the time the railway was built (1865 – 1874). An Italian woman and the old workshops and factories on the island feature in the story 'Hans Dierlamms Lehrzeit'. On 1 July 1895 Hesse experienced a tornado here and described it in his story 'Der Zyklon'.

## 9 Brühl

This was the site of the town's fairground and playground. Hermann Hesse describes a circus performance in the Brühl in his story 'Schön ist die Jugend'. At that time the site was lined with large trees, the destruction of which by a tornado on 1 July 1895 is described by Hesse in 'Der Zyklon'.

## 10 Welzbergweg 1, Cemetery

This has been the graveyard of the town of Calw since 1618. Beside the lower wall is located the communal grave of the Schill family. Members of the Hesse and the Gundert families, who were related in marriage to the Schills, are also buried in this grave: Hesse's mother, **Marie, Gundert by birth, widowed Isenberg** (18 October 1842 – 24 April 1902); Hesse's maternal grandfather **Hermann Gundert**, PhD, missionary, indologist and publisher (04 February 1814 – 24 April 1893), whom Hesse portrayed in his memoir 'Großväterliches'; Hesse's grandmother on his mother's side **Julie Gundert**, née Dubois (1 October 1809 – 18 September 1885); his great-aunt, **Uranie Dubois** (15 January 1806 – 15 January 1885), who had lived in Calw since 1872; his uncle and aunt, **Friedrich Gundert** (7 March 1847 – 15 July 1925) and **Emma Gundert**, née Heermann (4 July 1848 – 1 October 1918), both of whom are described in the story 'Schön ist die Jugend'.

## 11 Bischofstraße 70, Badischer Hof

The inn was renovated and extended around 1870 by Georg Thudium (1854 – 1892) and a skittle alley was added. The large hall became renowned in the town as a place for meetings and lectures. The inn is mentioned in 'Eine Fußreise im Herbst' as 'Schwäbischer Hof am Brühl' and as 'Bayerischer Hof' in the story 'Die Heimkehr'.



## 12 Bischofstraße 52, Stone House

This house was built in South Tyrolean style in 1694 for Johannes Schill, partner in the Calw Cloth Manufacturing and Trading Company, who on his business travels to Bolzano had got to know and appreciate this style of architecture. Hesse's uncle, Friedrich Gundert, managing director of the Calw Publishing House and head of the Calw church choir, was a great admirer of Johann Sebastian Bach. On his marriage to Emma Heermann, last heiress to the Schill house, one of the 'oldest' and 'most beautiful' houses of the town became a house of music. In the story 'Schön ist die Jugend' Hesse's first-person narrator pays a visit to this house.

## 13 Bischofstraße 48, Vischer Palace

This house was built between 1787 and 1791 by the ducal court architect R. F. H. Fischer for Johann Martin Vischer (1751 – 1801), head of the 'Rafting and Timber Trading Company', which in the 18th century was rich and powerful. The house was the birthplace of Emilie Vischer (1799 – 1881) who later married the poet Ludwig Uhland (1787 – 1862). Today it houses the Calw town museum.



## 14 Weinsteg

As far back as in the Middle Ages this crossing of the river Nagold had been referred to as 'Weinsteg' (German for 'wine footbridge'). In 1863, the former bridge was replaced by a narrow iron construction. It features in the chase after Polly, the escaped parrot belonging to the Hesse family, in the memoir 'Aus Kinderzeiten'.

## 15 Lederstraße 32, Andreä House

This was originally the wool store of the Calw Cloth Manufacturing and Trading Company. It later became the Protestant parish hall and was named after Johann Valentin Andreä (1587 – 1654), superintendent of Calw and later court preacher of Stuttgart. Over the street, in 'Biergasse', Hermann Hesse's brother Hans became a commercial apprentice to Johannes Hinderer (born in 1869 in October 1896. In the story 'Ein Knabenstreich' the character 'Samuel Leukardt', known as the 'Sammetwedel', had his shop there.



## 16 Lederstraße 24

This house belonged to the Staudenmeyer Family. The Hesse family lived here on the second floor from September 1889 until June 1893. Today it is known as the 'Flory House'. This house was the scene of the 'fig theft' in the story 'Kinderseele' in November 1889.

## Calw town museum

## 17 Marktstraße 4–6

In the late 1880s, the junction of the Market Place with Marktstraße was the site of Mrs. Haas' fruit stall, the toyshop of Jakob Jenisch (1851 – 1939) and the workshop of the coppersmith Heinrich Kirm (1841 – 1911). They are all mentioned in the story 'Unterbrochene Schultunde'.

## 18 Im Zwinger 3, Georgenäum

'A seeding ground for true and all-round public education, founded as an institution for the encouragement of trade and industry, and of art and knowledge for the public benefit' by Consul General Emil von Georgii-Georgenau (1828 – 1902). It was officially opened in May 1871. – This is where Johannes Hesse held his missionary lectures. Painting and drawing lessons were held here, and concerts were performed by the choir and the church choral society. The first library in Calw was located here.



## 19 Am Schießberg 9

This was the site of the town's former infirmary and poorhouse that inspired Hesse to write the story 'In der alten Sonne'.

## 20 Metzgergasse


Hesse's grandfather, Hermann Gundert, and his family lived in the last building at the end of the alley before moving into the building of the Calw Publishing House. Beside the supporting wall on the opposite side would have been the public house of Philipp Manz frequented by the beneficiaries of the infirmary in Hesse's story 'In der alten Sonne'. The 'Metzgergasse' is referred to as 'Josef-Knecht-Gasse' in 'The Glass Bead Game'.

## 21 Badstraße

Former house and workshop of the locksmith Gottlob Mohr (born in 1843) and his family. Hesse describes the experience of the early death of his artistically talented playmate, Hermann Mohr, in the story 'Der Mohrle' or 'Erlebnis aus der Knabenzeit'.

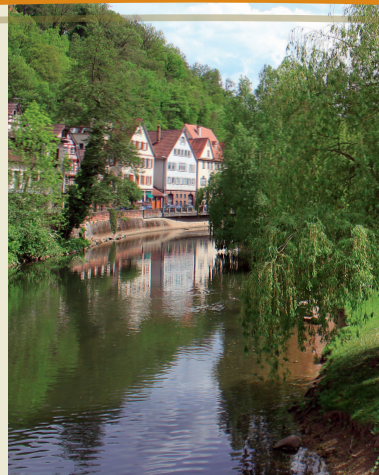
## 22 Hermann Hesse Square and

## 23 Nicholas Bridge


The oldest stone bridge across the river Nagold which bears the chapel of St. Nicholas on its central pillar is Calw's most important landmark. The bridge was built around 1400, renovated in 1863/64 and again in 1926 when the chapel was adorned with a new tower. The bridge was for Hesse 'the dearest place in town', even the 'cathedral square in Florence' was 'no comparison'. In 2002 to mark Hermann Hesse's 125th birthday, a life-sized bronze sculpture of Hermann Hesse by the artist Kurt Tassotti was erected here. In 1920, the city council of Calw decided to name the fountain in the square in front of the bridge the 'Hermann-Hesse-Brunnen'. On Hesse's 70th birthday in 1947, the square was likewise named after the 1946 Nobel prize laureate.  


## 24 The River Nagold

When Hesse was young, the river Nagold was almost consistently dammed up to provide the millers, craftsmen and factories with water power. The tanners, after whom Hesse poetically named the town 'Gerbersau', also had their workshops along the banks. Hesse often liked to fish from the bridge or from the banks. A hundred meters upstream from the bridge on the right there was the bathing meadow described in 'Beneath the Wheel'. Hesse described the timber rafting on the Nagold vividly in the story 'Floßfahrt'.




## 25 Junction Nicholas Bridge/Bischofstraße/Bahnhofstraße

The eastern access to the Nikolaus Bridge was flanked by two large buildings designed by the ducal court architect R. F. H. Fischer. Until 1692, the house on the left, looking from the bridge (Bischofstraße 1) was the site of the town infirmary. In 1791 the Town Mayor Hasenmayer built a town house here which later became the residence and trading company of the Reichert family. As far back as 1723, the town house opposite it which is almost identical in design, at Bahnhofstraße 2, accommodated one of the best inns of the region, the 'Waldhorn'. Ludwig Uhland stayed here in 1812, as did Hermann Hesse in 1931.  


## 26 Bahnhofstraße 1

Giebenrath House, previously an inn and bakery, today's 'AltePost'. The baker and innkeeper Heinrich Giebenrath (1853 – 1939) was the direct neighbour of the Hesse family who lived in the publishing house at Bischofstraße 4 from 1886 – 1889 and from 1893 – 1905. Hesse gave the name 'Giebenrath' to the main character in his novel 'Beneath the Wheel'; describing the house of Giebenrath's father he most probably had this house in mind.

## 27 Bahnhofstraße 20 and 24

This was where the main building of the Perrot mechanical workshop and church clock manufacturing, where Hermann Hesse worked as an apprentice machinist for 14 months in 1894/1895, was located. However, he did not work in this building, but in the 'middle mill' which was located where the car park stands today in the Lederstraße. His master, Heinrich Perrot (1864 – 1949), had rented a workshop there to be independent of his father's workshop in the Bahnhofstraße. Hesse described his experiences in the workshop in 'Beneath the Wheel' and in the stories 'Aus der Werkstatt', 'Der Schlossergeselle', 'Hans Dierlamms Lehrzeit' and 'Peter Bastians Jugend'. In the house at Bahnhofstraße 24 was the Café Haager, which is mentioned in the story 'Kinderseele'.  


## 28 Bischofstraße 4

From 1854 – 1920 this was the seat of the Calw Publishing House which had been founded in 1836 and which was managed by Hesse's grandfather Hermann Gundert from 1862 – 1893 and by his father from 1893 – 1905. From 1862 until 1893 this was the official residence of Hermann Gundert and his family. From 1886 – 1889 and from 1893 – 1905 the Hesses also




lived there with their children and this is the house which Hesse refers to as his 'real parental home' with 'grandfather's library'. It is here that Hesse wrote the short stories in the 'Calwer Tagebuch' (1901) and parts of 'Beneath the Wheel' (1903/1904) while on holiday visiting his family. Due to renovations, the building has unfortunately entirely lost its classical facade. The veranda which was built on to the back of the house in 1895 at the request of Hesse's mother was altered in 2008 and hidden from view.

## 29 Bischofsbrunnen (Bishop's Fountain) in the Central Bus Station (ZOB)

This fountain was originally a well in a neighbouring cellar from which Hesse as a child used to fetch drinking water in a grey-blue Stuttgart jug for his father, who was 'an ascetic gentleman who was nevertheless a gourmet of the simple things'.

## 30 Hirsau, Wildbader Straße 2

Feldweg House in Hirsau; today this is the 'Kloster Hirsau Hotel'. Walks on the 'Wiesenweg' along the river Nagold to Hirsau were traditionally part of a typical Sunday for the Hesse family. Final destination of these excursions was the home of Georg Heinrich Feldweg, inspector of roadworks (1812 – 1895), whose daughter Johanna Beate (1855 – 1935) was married in second marriage to Hesse's uncle David Gundert (1850 – 1945), commission agent of the Calw Publishing House in Stuttgart and founder and head of the D. Gundert Publishing House in Stuttgart.  


## Gerbersau Summer Readings

Every year, between Hesse's birthday on 02 July and the date of his death on 09 August, cultural events and lectures take place in his commemoration. Professional speakers read stories and recollections by Hesse that are primarily set in his hometown of Calw. The readings are accompanied by various genres of chamber music performed by the teachers of the Calw Music School. The offer is rounded off by literary Sunday walks in search of the poet.

[www.calw.de/Gerbersauer-Lesesommer](http://www.calw.de/Gerbersauer-Lesesommer)

## Legal information

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