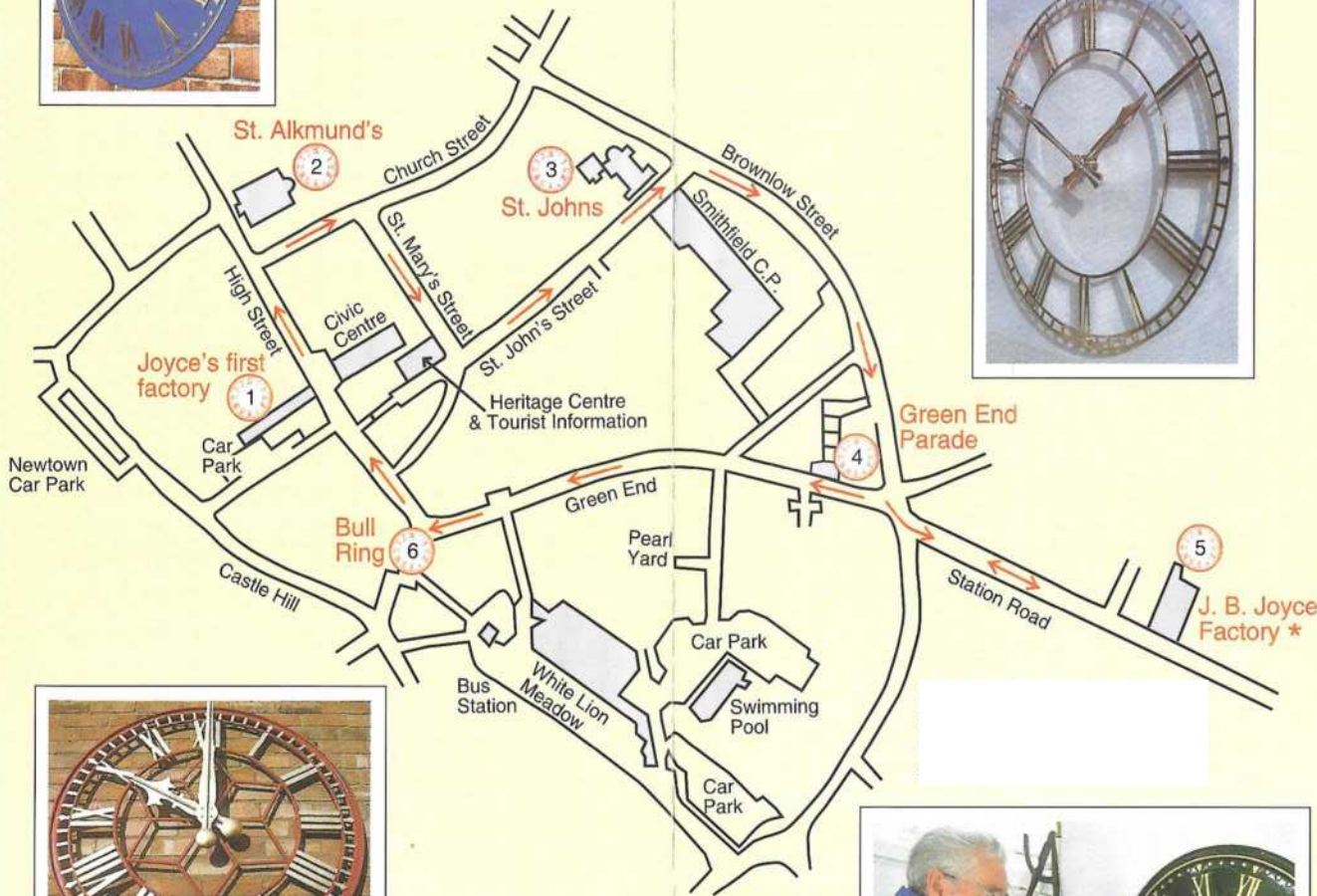




The Whitchurch Clock Trail

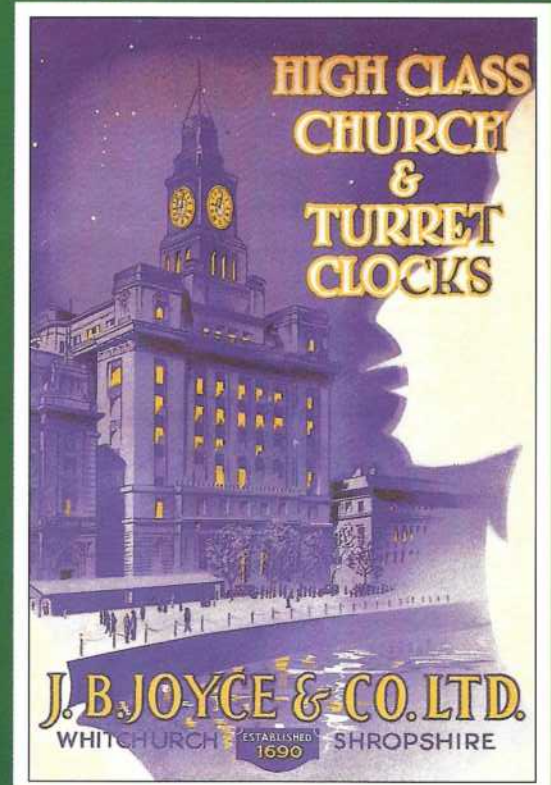


This leaflet was originally produced by Whitchurch Town Council. It has been updated by volunteers at Whitchurch Museum & Archives.
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Spend Time on the

WHITCHURCH CLOCK TRAIL



Shropshire

The Whitchurch firm of J. B. Joyce was established in 1690 and is the oldest maker of tower clocks in the world. They still continue to make their magnificent Tower Clocks here today. Their clocks have gained an international reputation and can be found on cathedrals and palaces from Singapore to Kabul and, of course, much nearer to home. Many examples of Joyce's work can be seen around the town. Why not explore the town, following the clock trail, and discover why Whitchurch is truly the "Home of Tower Clocks".

1 Starting opposite the Civic Centre in the High Street, you will see a building with a unique cast iron frontage. Joyce's moved here in 1790. The building accommodated the workshops and stables and operated from 7 in the morning to 7 at night. In 1830, under the direction of Thomas Joyce, the firm started making the first of their tower clocks and employed between 15 and 20 engineers.

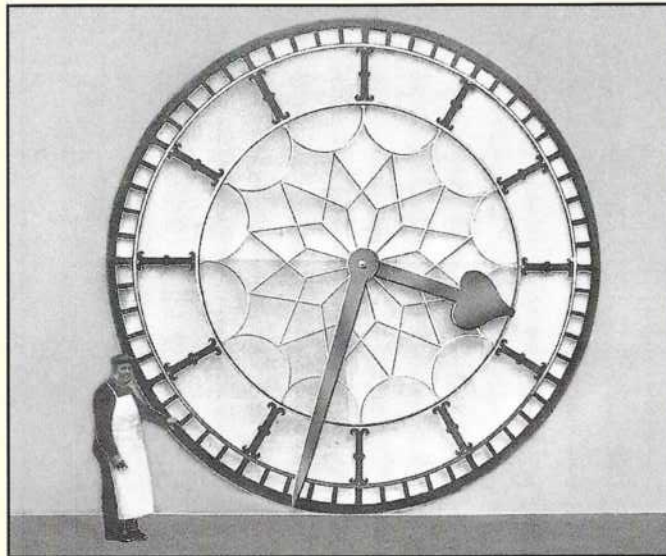
Did you know? One of the first duties of one of the engineers was to exercise Arthur Joyce's horse at six each morning before starting work.

2 The parish church of St. Alkmund, at the top of High Street, houses one of the most prominent clocks in the town. An hour striking Westminster quarter chiming chair frame movement drives two dials. Erected in 1849, the dials were originally made of oak boards with a wooden bezel and later replaced in 1977, they measure 9 feet in diameter. John Barnett Joyce, whose name was taken for the firm in 1825, is buried in St. Alkmund's.

Did you know? The usual ratio for dials is about 1 foot in diameter for every 10 feet they are fixed from the ground.

3 From St. Alkmund's head towards the Horse and Jockey in Church Street and then right into St. Mary's Street. Take the next left into St. John's Street at the end of which you will find St. John's Church. The clock here dates from 1879 and is a time piece movement only driving a 4 foot 6 inch slate dial.

Did you know? The clock installed at Birmingham University has a face that measures 17.5 feet across and a minute hand that is over 10.5 feet long. The hour hand is over 2 feet across at its widest point.



4 Turn right into Brownlow Street and continue past the garage until you reach a small car park. This is Green End Parade. The clock here is a standard convex dial impregnated with maroon pigment. Each of the Roman numerals is finished in 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ carat gold leaf. This clock was installed in 1994 and, although electrically powered, shows that Joyce's clocks are still an integral part of Whitchurch life today.

Did you know? The working parts of a clock should be made of gun metal, a pure mixture of tin and copper, to reduce friction.

5 Cross by the traffic lights into Station Road and about 300 yards on the left is the former Clockworks of J. B. Joyce. The company moved here in 1904 from their High Street site so they could use the rail network to distribute their clocks. They used to pack them into wicker baskets and trundle them down the road for despatch. An inauspicious start indeed for such a majestic product.

Did you know? That Mr. Norman Joyce also moved, along with his factory, and lived in a house opposite the factory gates so he could keep an eye on the punctuality of his employees. Time keeping, presumably, being something of an obsession for an Horologist.

6 Turn back towards Green End Parade and carry on down Green End back to the town centre. At the junction of High Street and Green End is the Bull Ring. Here you will see an example of Joyce's standard pillar clock which was installed in 1994. The pillar clock is made from cast iron and is electrically powered with four faces.

Did you know? You can see a working example of a J. B. Joyce clock inside the Heritage Centre and there's a clock game for the children too.

Other local examples of Joyce's Clocks can be found at Wem, Ellesmere, Market Drayton and Shrewsbury, as well as many of the village churches throughout the area.