

A Trip to a House and Garden built by a Screw Magnate

My wife and I took a short break to Bromyard in Herefordshire recently and I was asked, how near will we be to Edgbaston? She wished to visit an RHS partner house and garden called Winterbourne and could get in free on an early weekday as she is a member of the RHS. OK so Edgbaston isn't very close to Bromyard but we got there by parking in Worcester and taking the train to University railway station. [Winterbourne is an early 20th century arts and crafts style property](#) and if you like exploring gardens and big houses then its definitely worth a visit. Before you are wondering where this is heading and maybe what has become of things now we have moved away from a printed gazette I'd better get to the point.

I was getting bored wandering from room to room killing time while my wife insisted on reading every printed word on every information panel and booklet when I stumbled across an advertisement for screws, which was exciting! In fact there were a number of boxes of screws and nuts and other fasteners and old advertising material etc on display. It turns out that the house was built by John and Mary Nettlefold of Nettlefolds, the screw manufacturer that dominated the wood screw market in the UK in the late 19th century. [John Nettlefold](#) is an interesting and enlightened character who was inspired by the approach to workers housing and welfare that he found at Port Sunlight and Bournville.

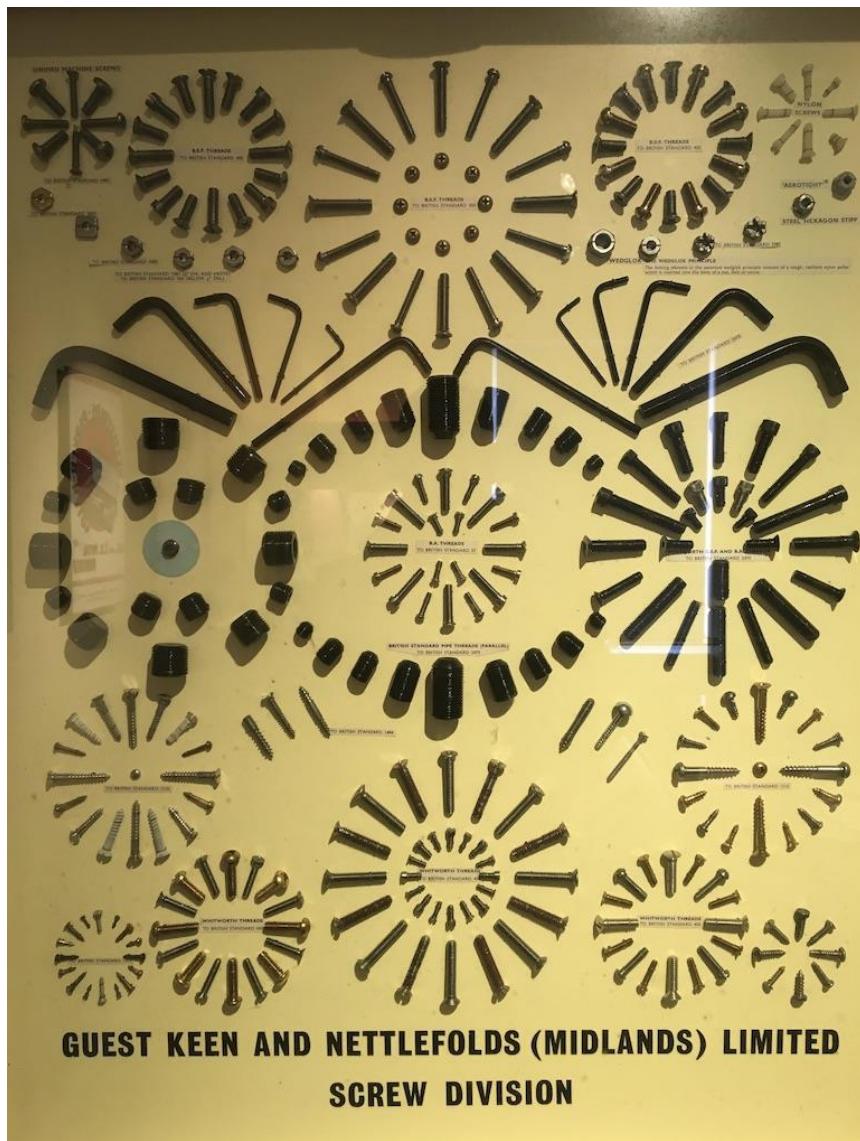


Fig 1, Advertising board that used to hang in the GKN factory in Smethwick



Fig 2, Can anyone own up to having any Aerotight Stiff Nuts at home somewhere?

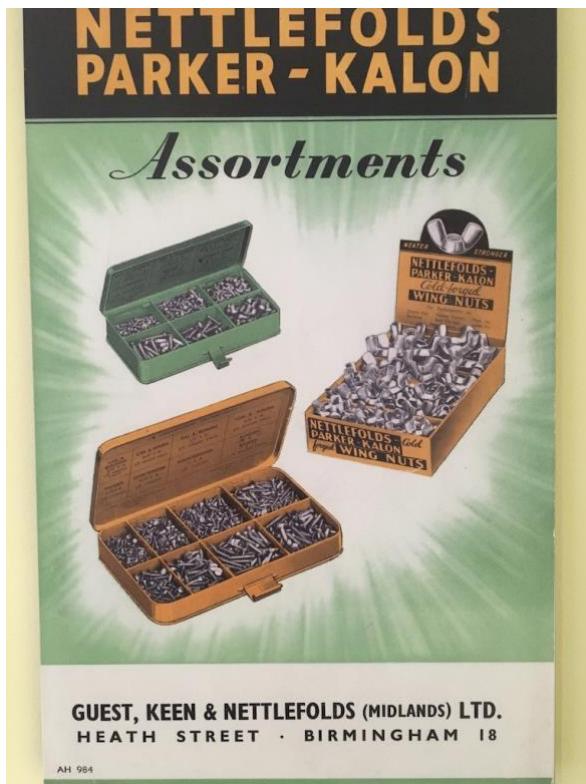


Fig 3, Another advertisement

Many of you will know that eventually Nettlefolds merged with Guest and Keen to form Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds or [GKN](#) which is well worth investigating for what they are up to these days. Even my mum knew about GKN's heritage. I told her about the visit to Winterbourne house and she replied "That'll be the Nettlefold in Guest, Keen and Nettlefold, or GKN dear". She picked that information up when she worked for [Norris Brothers](#) in Burgess Hill, Sussex, the company that designed Donald Campbell's boats for [Bluebird Marine](#) to build and she says they used a lot of GKN nuts and bolts!

Finally, while checking some facts for this article I stumbled across a web site called [Grace's Guide to Britain's Industrial History](#). Hours of browsing there!