New exhibition brings a very Edwardian family to life

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A new exhibition opening this week at Winterbourne House and Garden's Coach House Gallery will offer a window into the lives of the well-known Nettlefold family who lived in the house in the early part of the twentieth century. *A Spoonful of Kisses* tells the story of the six children. Their pastimes, hobbies and education spring to life in this delightful exhibition.

The title comes from one of the children's letters to their parents where a 'spoonful of kisses' are their parting words. Like many other families of their status, John and Margaret often holidayed away from the children, travelling extensively. The children often wrote to their parents and many of the letters can be seen in the collection alongside sketches, photographs and period items all never before exhibited to the public.

The Nettlefolds were known in Birmingham for their firm Guest, Keen and Nettlefold (GKN), at the time the largest screw, nut and bolt manufacturer in the world. Margaret was notable in her own right, being part of the Chamberlain family.

The exhibition is in response to *Childrens Lives* at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, and is one of several events at the University of Birmingham along the theme of childhood.

Lee Hale, Curator at Winterbourne explains how 'this was such a wonderful opportunity for us to show a part of our collection which is usually under lock and key – we're sure the exhibition will give an added depth to the Winterbourne experience.'

'Many visitors are curious to learn more about the children and we are delighted to show a selection of photos and letters that will answer their questions. John Nettlefold was an influential town planner, known for the Moor Pool estate in Harborne, and its fascinating to see how influential his own interests were on their future lives.'

After a recent restoration to its former Edwardian splendour, the house and garden are a testament to the family in their own right and an exploration of the garden adds another layer to the story. Much beloved by the children, visitors can explore it through their eyes: where they played and rode their ponies, where they kept pets and made dens.

Winterbourne House and Garden is open to the public 7 days a week and has exhibition rooms, a tea room, shop and 7 acres of botanic garden. The exhibition will be open from the Easter weekend and runs until 28 April. Entry to the house and gallery is free with a small charge of £4.00 to the garden. The exhibition is suitable for all ages and is wheelchair accessible.

For more information about other *Childrens Lives* events across the city visit the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery website **www.bmag.org.uk (http://www.bmag.org.uk/)** and the University of Birmingham culture pages **www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture)**

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