# THE WORLD GUNMAKERS' EVENING



# PURDEY

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# FOREWORD

The World Gunmakers' Evening has long presented the cream of the gun trade with a fantastic opportunity to come together under one roof and celebrate what makes our craft so special. Leading names from London, the wider United Kingdom and mainland Europe are here this evening, and I hope everyone present will use the time we have together wisely; exchanging ideas, providing feedback and sharing experiences in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

We have waited a long time for this evening's event and I am sure, like me, you have been counting down the days since purchasing your tickets. The pandemic has posed a massive challenge to the gun trade over the past 18 months, but I believe it has met the challenge it has faced admirably. I have been particularly encouraged by the way the vast majority of gunmakers have embraced new ways of communication to keep in touch with their client base - innovation has long been a part of the gun trade's DNA and this is another example of that. It will be interesting to find out what other innovations were being worked on during lockdown, too.

The challenges facing the gun trade have not been limited to the pandemic, of course. Whilst there is still work to be done, I have been impressed with the advances that the cartridge manufacturers have made in approaching the issue of nontoxic shot and greatly encouraged by the solutions that have been drawn up. I am sure that this issue, along with many others highlighted in this brochure, will be discussed at length during this evening's proceedings.

It has been my great privilege to be Master of the Worshipful Company of Gunmakers for the past 12 months, and it is particularly pleasing that the company is still very much a working company, continuing to carry out the work for which it received a Royal Charter in 1637, namely to proof test guns. I wish my successor, Major Graham Hill, every success during his tenure.

I hope that you enjoy your evening.

DARYL GREATREX

MASTER OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GUNMAKERS

# CREATED & PUBLISHED BY THE MAKERS OF

# FIELDSPORTS JOURNAL

FIELDSPORTS-JOURNAL.COM



# WELCOME

Avery warm welcome to the 7<sup>th</sup> World Gunmakers' Evening, which is taking place in the New Armouries at the Tower of London for the first time.

The World Gunmakers' Evening has grown to become an eagerly anticipated fixture in the fieldsports calendar. Since its inaugural event in 2015 it has provided thousands of discerning guests with the opportunity to handle best guns from some of the world's leading manufacturers, and helped them become better acquainted with the myriad luxury brands connected to fieldsports in the process.

A host of representatives from brands covering everything from gunmaking and sporting art to automobile customisation and luxury timepieces will be on hand to guide you through the design and manufacturing processes involved in a host of mouth-watering pieces on display.

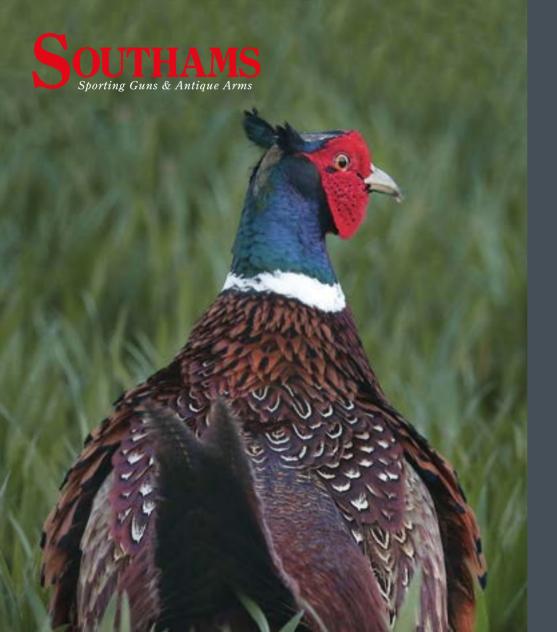
During this evening's proceedings guests will also be able to learn more about the work of the 2021 event's charity, The Country Food Trust. The Gloucestershire-based charity has worked tirelessly to raise funds to provide nutritious game-based meals for those in need over the past few years, and has now donated well over 2,000,000 meals to food banks across the country. Any money which you are able to donate to such a worthy cause this evening will be gratefully received.

As well as a full list of exhibitors and an event plan of The World Gunmakers' Evening, over the following pages you will find interviews, comment and analysis from some of the leading names within the gun trade. We hope that you will find their words both interesting and informative; we are sure that the subjects covered will feature in conversations you will be having with exhibitors throughout the evening and far beyond.

Right from its early days at Carlton Tower Jumeirah in Knightsbridge, The World Gunmakers' Evening has been an event where fieldsports enthusiasts have the chance to network and catch up with friends over Champagne and canapés in a warm and welcoming environment. Following the disruptions of 2020, we are confident this year's event will be worth the wait.

We hope you have an enjoyable evening.

THE WORLD GUNMAKERS' EVENING



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Facts and information about the work of the Gunmakers' Company Charitable Trust, from what it offers to what it needs to survive.

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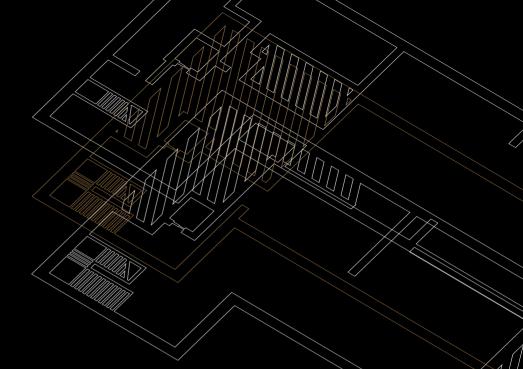
B15

# EVENT PLAN

# FIRST FLOOR

- 1. AYA
- 2. Rizzini
- 3. Longthorne Gunmakers
- 4. Longthorne Gunmakers
- 5. William Powell
- Boss & Co.
- 7. John Rigby & Co.
- 8. John Rigby & Co.
- 9. I.S. Sweetman
- 10. Smith & Torok
- 11. Sabatti
- 12. Holts
- 13. Browning
- 14. Perazzi
- 15. Zoli
- 16. Karl Hauptmann
- 17. Karl Hauptmann
- 18. William Moore & Grey
- 19. Watson Bros.
- 20. E.J. Churchill

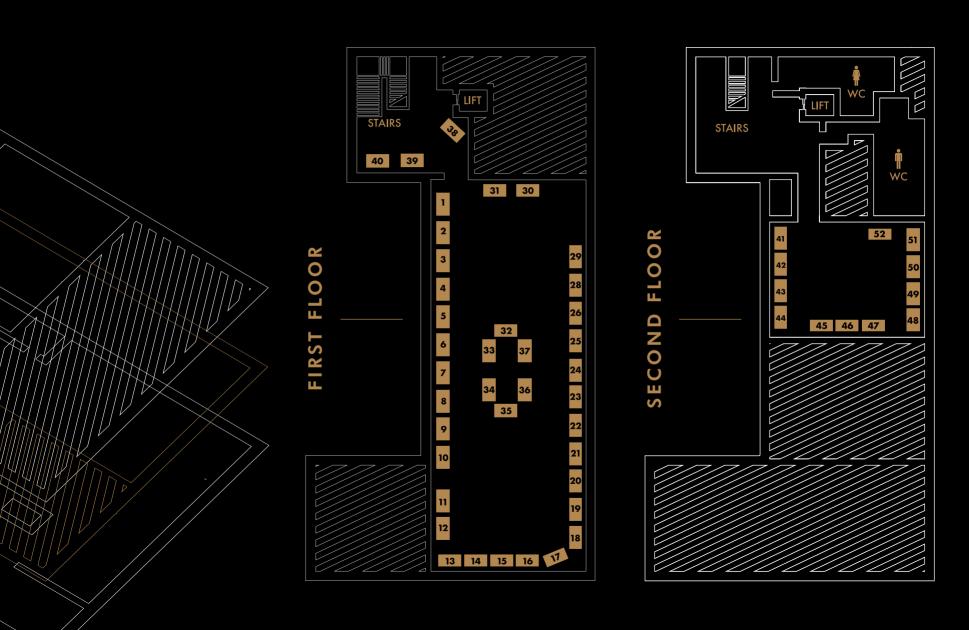
- 21. E.J. Churchill
- 22. Atkin, Grant & Lang
- 23. Atkin, Grant & Lang
- 24. Beretta
- 25. Holland & Holland
- 26. William Evans
- 27. John Dickson
- 28. John Dickson
- 29. Sportarm
- 30. Bonhams
- 31. Bremont
- 32. James Purdey & Son
- 33. James Purdey & Son
- 34. Charles Lancaster
- 35. Charles Lancaster
- 36. Cosmi
- 37. Cosmi
- 38. Boodles (Lobby)
- 39. Bentley (Lobby)
- 40. Robusto House (Lobby)



# SECOND FLOOR

- 41. Kingsmen Editions
- 42. Traditional English Guncases
- 43. Emberleaf Workshops
- 44. Living Art
- 45. Wrackleford Estate
- 46. E.J. Churchill

- 47. Thewlis Gregson
- 48. Hull Cartridge
- 49. Fine Shooting Accessories
- 50. Matched Pairs
- 51. Pheasant Feather Art
- 52. Crow & Jester







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# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NEW ARMOURIES The venue for The World Gunmakers' Evening has a fascinating story to tell

A fter the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, it was realised that storage available at the Tower of London was insufficient when arms collected during the Civil War were recalled. This situation was evaluated by the Privy Council in 1661, and as a result, in 1663 a Royal Warrant was released, allowing the creation of a new storehouse. The New Armouries building was built as a store for small arms between 1663 and 1664. It was constructed against the Inner Curtain Wall on the site of the former Wardrobe garden and still stands between the Broad Arrow and Salt towers.

From 1688 to 1825 the first floor of the building was used to display the popular Line of Kings, which featured a row of beautifully-carved wooden horses displaying historic armours. Initially kept in the House of Ordnance, the exhibit was later moved to the New Armouries building in 1688. It was at this time that the Line of Kings was expanded and improved by 17 new horses. In 1825 it was moved once again from the New Armouries building to a new purpose-built structure known as the

New Horse Armoury, which was situated up against the south face of the White Tower. Until 1883 the Line of Kings was one of the Tower of London's most famous visitor attractions.

In 1947 the New Armouries building was passed on to the Tower Armouries and adapted into museum galleries and offices. At this time the building, unfortunately, underwent a series of modifications which looked to disguise the building's origins by 'Georgianising' its appearance. In 1999-2000 the New Armouries was transformed into a restaurant and conference venue. During these works, excavations revealed medieval building remains under the floor of the New Armouries. In addition, walls, floor surfaces, ovens and hearths were found. These belonged to a former series of buildings constructed against the Inner Curtain Wall. The building is constructed of red brick and is 'U' shaped in plan, consisting of two floors and a double attic. The New Armouries building is incredibly important and significant, mainly because it signifies the only surviving Ordnance store at the Tower of London and most likely the oldest surviving Ordnance building in the country.

# FROM THE DIARIES OF SAMUEL PEPYS

TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 1664

At noon, I and Sir J. Minnes and Lord Barkeley (who with Sir J. Duncum, and Mr. Chichly, are made Masters of the Ordnance), to the office of the Ordnance, to discourse about wadding for guns. Thence to dinner, all of us to the Lieutenant's of the Tower; where a good dinner, but disturbed in the middle of it by the King's coming into the Tower: and so we broke up, and to him, and went up and down the store-houses and magazines; which are, with the addition of the new great store-house, a noble sight.

# THE TOWER OF LONDON STATISTICS

2,000,000+

The number of annual visitors to the Tower of London

22

The number of executions that took place inside the Tower of London

# **THREE**

The number of lions kept at the Tower of London during the reign of Henry III

37

The number of Yeoman Warders current serving at the Tower of London

# **SEVEN**

The current number of resident ravens at the Tower of London

23,578

The number of stones withit the Crown Jewels

12 & 9

The ages of Prince Edward and Prince Richard, sons of Edward IV, who were held at the Tower of London

# ONE

ne number of bombs that fell on the Tower of London (in the moat) during the First World War

159

The number of Constables of the Tower (at the time of writing)

21:53

The daily start time of the Ceremony of the Keys, which locks up the Tower of London





# GUNMAKING AROUND THE WORLD

Diggory Hadoke examines the current health of global gunmaking

Gunmaking has, since the Industrial Revolution, inhabited a strange nether-world in manufacturing, neither fully industrial, nor entirely artisanal.

Some elements of the work involve highly specialised engineering, while others require artistic expression of the very highest level. The magic comes in the perfect alignment of the two. A beautiful gun is of no use if it does not work and a rugged gun will not please the most discerning sportsman if it is ugly.

Somehow, the art has to seep into the engineering and the engineering has to blend into the art. A truly fine gun is an imperceptible amalgamation of both. No surprise then, that the best guns have always been made in places where heavy industry rubs shoulders with craft workshops.

There might appear to be a gulf between the dirty, physical work of barrel making and the fine intricacy of engraving, but think of the barrel maker as a sculptor and the engraver as a painter and the link seems more natural.

Wherever demand, creativity, industry and commerce merged historically, gunmaking was sure to be found in the area. In Britain, London always had the upper-hand in marketing terms and the clientele of the capital's famous makers led the way in demand for quality and refinement, but the Midlands city of Birmingham was the true powerhouse of the trade.

Birmingham had all the ingredients: canal and rail links to the country and to the wider Empire, iron ore, coke and steel were readily available, a motivated and a clever workforce, a history of craft trades and family businesses capable of providing any and every facet of gunmaking at whatever level of specialisation required.

As the big factories grew up, so did the proliferation of small workshops, making triggers, locks, springs, engraving; whatever was required.

In 2021, the Birmingham Gun Quarter is much reduced and the big factories long gone but gunmaking in the heart of the city is still robust. Westley Richards stands proud as a Mecca of the craft, producing more double rifles than anyone in the business as well as fine shotguns and bolt-rifles.

In Price Street, Romain Lapinois offers the finest quality stocking services to trade and retail customers and Brian Bateman carries on his traditional gunsmithing business. The job of colour case hardening, as specialist as it ever was, is still carried out by the St. Ledgers in the traditional way.

London also had its own factories and workshops; John Robertson, Edwin Hodges and others made guns for many famous names, while remaining anonymous. Today, Purdey, Rigby, Holland & Holland and Watson Bros. all fly the flag for London gunmaking, which remains the standard by which all others are judged.

### ON THE CONTINENT

One could be forgiven for thinking Britain was the only centre of excellence in the realm of fine Victorian gunmaking, but it was not so in the heyday of the industry and it is not so now.

Liege in Belgium had a centre of manufacture to rival anything in Britain. While much of the focus was on mass-market, low-quality guns, their best was superb. Belgian Damascus barrels were widely used by London's most revered makers and the pigeon guns of the likes of Lebeau Corally and Branquart rivalled those of Purdey.

Elsewhere in Europe, Hartmann & Weiss once set the pace for the very finest in gunmaking at a time when London standards were said to be in danger of dropping under the duress of economic hardship. Their success showed that when top-quality was presented without compromise, the buyers were still there to patronise it.

The Czech Republic and Austria both have roots in fine gun and rifle making, with BRNO the modern manifestation of the Czech industry and Ferlach still housing the cream of Austrian rifle builders like Fanzoj.

Italy is home to the oldest gunmaker in the world and the Brescia region has long been a source of sporting and military weapons of all kinds. Today, it is probably the biggest; delivering not only the most popular and widely-used models but some of the finest and most expensive.

Fabbri and Bosis fly the Italian flag for quality just as well as the giant Beretta and worldbeaters like Perazzi dominate their respective sectors.

Turkey is gaining traction as a gunmaking centre. Every year sees new models and new companies emerge, making use of available labour and modern machinery to produce popular shotguns of surprising quality at remarkably low prices.

Spain led the charge in the 1970s, heralding a foreign invasion of the once impregnable British market for sporting guns, then branching out to become popular all over the world. Competing on price and building copies of the most popular British models was a business plan that saw Spanish makers succeed at the expense of many British ones.



# **EAST AND WEST** While the United States is best known for its That tradition of small volume, specialist

While the United States is best known for its machine-made rifles, its shotguns being generic and relatively crude by British standards, there were American makers producing fine quality hand-built guns in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

These men were usually immigrants from Britain, Ireland and Europe, bringing their gunmaking skills and styles to the East Coast and furnishing very fine sporting guns to wealthy American industrialists and landowners.

That tradition of small volume, specialist makers continues in the modern era, with custom rifle builders and idiosyncratic builders like George Hoenig keeping the tradition alive.

Even Russia, not commonly considered a major gunmaking centre, had its own facility at Tula, making Russian Purdey side-locks of presentation grade, for which Russia should be credited as well as for the 'beater's favourite' Baikal shotguns that were the UK's budget guns of the 1980s.

Another far-away centre of manufacture is Pakistan, where copies of British firearms began to appear in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, faithful versions of all kinds of weapons, even the AK47, make their way into the world from very basic workshops, peopled by very skilled artisans.

# SPECIALISTS IN THEIR FIELD

Much as in the Victorian era, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has given rise to countless specialist gunmakers operating from their own facilities. Improved communications have made visibility to potential customers and industry collaborators more feasible than was the case just two decades ago.

The internet and parcel services make it entirely possible for a gunmaker to make, advertise and sell his wares on whatever basis suits him, be that trade or retail.

Former Purdey finisher Ian Sweetman is a good example, now operating from rural England, building his own rifles, out-working for several major firms, while also carrying out work for the public.

Veteran Holland & Holland engraver Sam Faraway also now works freelance from his own premises, the foremost gunmakers in the country sending him work directly.

This proliferation of small workshops is a departure from the 'big factory' model that was the norm until very recently. Now, as a century ago, the two operate alongside one another, the smaller businesses augmenting the bigger ones and offering specialisation when it is required, as well as furnishing the very highest level of bespoke gunmaking to the world's firearms aficionados.

Wherever you may be in the world, you are closer to a fine gunmaker than you probably think. •



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# DAVID MILES The 28th Proof Master of the Proof House

David Miles first became interested in guns when he caught a glimpse inside his father's shotgun cabinet. Though David wanted to hold one of the guns, he was informed by his father that he would have to wait until he was older.

David started shooting, as youngsters so often do, by firing an air pistol, at the age of six, later progressing to an air rifle, with which he shot his first rabbit. David's fascination with guns and the outdoors flourished, doubtless influenced by a family history in cannon making that dates back to the 1700s. David was soon shooting clays and by his early teens he was being introduced to game shooting by his father.

Later in life, David decided to turn his passion into a full-time career, and after spotting an advert in the shooting press for the role of gunroom assistant at John Rigby & Co., he was determined that this would be his entry point into the gun trade.

"IT HAS BEEN VERY INTERESTING TO SEE HOW WELL THE TRADITIONAL BRITISH BEST GUN TRADE HAS REACTED TO THE TRANSITION TOWARDS NON-TOXIC SHOT IN SUCH A SHORT SPACE OF TIME."

David's enthusiasm and considerable knowledge, borne from his life-long interest in guns, saw him secure the role, and under the guidance of Managing Director Marc Newton, he quickly progressed to become the gunroom manager. His near seven years at Rigby allowed him the chance to expand his knowledge, particularly in rifles, both in and out of the gunroom, by handling repairs and testing whatever came in. He could also be found shooting vintage Rigby rifles in his spare time.

•

In March of this year, David became the 28<sup>th</sup> Proof Master of the Proof House, taking over from Paul Fish. Following his appointment, David, inspired by how the strong team spirit at Rigby had helped it to innovate, said that he hoped to use these lessons to make everyone's job at the Proof House as enjoyable as possible, while at the same time ensuring that its procedures are followed to the highest standards.

"The role has been an incredible eye-opener to how large and varied the UK gun trade is, and a great opportunity to meet so many people from various firearms manufacturers and importers," David said recently. "Of note, it has been great getting to know my team of Proof Assistants, and work alongside them as we continue a tradition since 1637 of ensuring, as best we can, that firearms are safe for use by the public."

He added: "It has been very interesting to see how well the traditional British best gun trade has reacted to the transition towards non-toxic shot in such a short space of time. In the time I have been in post, I have seen several gunmakers adapt their methods of gunmaking to now get their guns to pass high performance steel proof. It has been a fast and impressive development." •







Some of the faces behind the world's leading names in gunmaking, as captured by photographer Terry Allen





DARYL GREATREX
MASTER
Worshipful Company of Gunmakers
British • East Sussex



MATTHEW JOHNSON
BARREL BLACKERS
Johnson (Barrel Browners) & Co Ltd.
British • London



RON JOHNSON
BARREL BLACKERS
Johnson (Barrel Browners) & Co Ltd.
British • London



MICHAEL LOUCA
OWNER & GUNMAKER
Watson Bros.
British • London



MARK SULLIVAN

ACTIONER

Freelance

British • Northolt



JOHANN FANZOJ OWNER & GUNMAKER Johann Fanzoj Austrian • Ferlach



DANIELA KATHARINA FANZOJ

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Johann Fanzoj

Austrian • Ferlach



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CASEMAKER
Traditional English Guncases
British • Kent



JOE TOMLIN

CASEMAKER

Traditional English Guncases

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GUNMAKER, STOCKER & OWNER
Stephen & Son Gunmakers
French • Bedfordshire



MATTHEW WARD
FINISHER & MANAGER
Boss & Co
British • Richmond



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Hartmann & Weiss Gunmakers
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OTTO WEISS
GUNMAKER
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DAVID MCKAY BROWN
RECENTLY RETIRED GUNMAKER
McKay Brown Gunmakers
British • Glasgow



ANDY MILES
ENGRAVER
Freelance
British • Kent



SAIJA KOSKIALHO
ENGRAVER
John Rigby & Co
Finnish • London



PAUL BROWN
ENGRAVER
Freelance
British • Reading



ALAN BROWN
ENGRAVER
Freelance
British • Swindon



MARK RENMANT
CHEQUERING AND WOOD FINISHER
John Rigby & Co
British • Surrey



ANDREW J. MARSHALL
ACTIONER
John Dickson & Son
British • Perthshire

# ART & PERFORMANCE

Simon West, the Executive Director of the Gun Trade Association, explains what makes best guns so special

There is a fundamental reason why we are gathering here tonight to admire and celebrate best guns from around the world: The ultimate manifestation of art and performance. The craftsmen's delivery of mechanical and artistic excellence, providing pride and performance in the hands of the sportsman.

It is exactly 675 years since King Edward III's 'Privy Wardrobe', here in the Tower of London, first sent guns to be deployed with the English Army; securing success at the Siege of Calais in 1346. Since then, there is an unbroken heritage of gunmaking in

the City of London. For centuries gunmakers, blacksmiths and armourers developed their skills and businesses in the environs of the Tower. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, such advances had been made in the specialism of gunmaking, that an approach was made to Elizabeth I for the creation of a specific City organisation to harbour the skills and knowledge. It was actually another 50 years, after extensive wars with Spain and France, that Charles I realised the need to invest in better and more reliable arms and enshrine responsibility for the gunmaking craft in its own guild.



Since a Royal Charter of 1637, the Worshipful Company of Gunmakers has had responsibility to 'better uphold the gunmaking craft' and has run a proof house for the testing of the trade's guns. Furthermore, today it is also the home of the Gunmakers' Company Charitable Trust (GCCT) that supports apprentices in gunmaking crafts with bursaries through their four years of training.

As the British Empire expanded in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was an ever greater need for military guns and a good market for sporting guns for the officer classes abroad. Meanwhile, back at home, with world trade and the Industrial Revolution generating immense wealth, shooting enjoyed a huge expansion. Driven game shooting or *battue* became immensely popular, especially with the encouragement of Prince Albert. This fashionable pastime allowed the wealthy to show off their estates and their skills in shooting. Demands were put on the trade for guns that performed better than ever before: Lighter, faster, quicker and more effective. And of course, ever more beautiful.

This produced the perfect opportunity for the British gunmakers to develop their engineering and artistic crafts to establish great businesses. The most notable gunmaker of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was Joseph Manton, who delivered both quality and innovation. He was the first gunmaker to noticeably deliver the step change in quality from the military grade firearm to one of sporting and aesthetic excellence.

Working under him at different times were James Purdey, Charles Lancaster, Thomas Boss, William Greener and William Moore. They were to become some of the great names of 19<sup>th</sup> century gunmaking and all those names remain with us today. Little surprise.

Development moved at pace and within some of the most important decades in the trade's history, British gunmaking developed breech loading centrefire guns to firmly overtake Europe in the production of the most advanced guns. The standards for shotgun chambers, bores and ammunition were set by the Gun Trade Association in 1896 and have become the world standard today. Some of the global, enduring, best gun technologies appeared in this period: Pape's choke concept, Purdey bolts, Holland & Holland locks and opening mechanisms and Boss and Woodward's over-and-under arrangements.

The 'London best gun' became the most prized gun around the world. Royal Warrants from crowned heads across the globe started appearing on the front of shops throughout the West End of London.

Best guns are epitomised by unsurpassed performance, personalisation, handcraft, longevity, quick handling and extraordinary beauty. Still regularly appearing in the field today are guns made over a century ago. Invest in a fine gun and take a place in history. Contribute to the manifestation of art and performance.





# FIELDSPORTS JOURNAL

### COUNTRY PURSUITS REIMAGINED FOR A MODERN WORLD

By attending The World Gunmakers' Evening, the organisers have gifted you a complementary 12-month subscription worth £60 to *Fieldsports Journal*. Your first issue will be available to take away on the night then you will automatically receive your second issue conveniently through your door around 1 December.



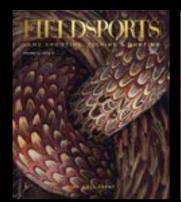
Unlike most traditional format magazines, *Fieldsports Journal* does not have a public-facing editor at the helm. Instead, each issue is overseen by a high profile guest editor who is a well-known luminary in their respective field, bringing fresh perspective and ideas to the audience. To date, it has been guest edited by celebrated chef Michel Roux Jr, champion clay shooter George Digweed MBE, firearms barrister Peter Glenser QC, Dragons' Den's Theo Paphitis, rugby legend Sir Gareth Edwards CBE and Annika Purdey, the great, great, great granddaughter of the founder of James Purdey & Sons. Later this year, we will welcome former cricketer Lord Botham and next year BASC's CEO Ian Bell will take the reins.

Fieldsports Journal's roster of plain-speaking, authoritative writers offers the chance to deep dive knotty subjects and tackle big topics. We know there is an insatiable appetite for quality, long-form

journalism so there's an unwavering commitment to deliver content that exclusively relates to game shooting, fly fishing, gunmaking, sporting art and hunting – there are no fringe topics, no jam making, bunting hanging or tertiary lifestyle fillers. You will not find any competitions, advertorials, prize draws, readers' letters, classified adverts or product reviews. In its place are carefully curated stories, stunning photo essays and punchy opinion pieces. *Fieldsports Journal* is designed for quiet contemplation and relaxation, not shouty commercial messages.

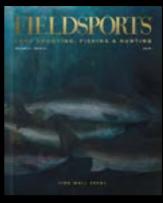
We hope you enjoy your complementary subscription courtesy of The World Gunmakers' Evening. Once you've gotten home with your first issue, make sure you set aside a few hours, pour yourself a dram, light the fire and sink into your favourite wingback for some time well spent. •

### TIME WELL SPENT





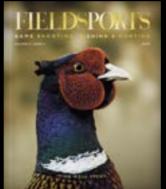


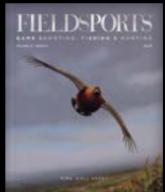


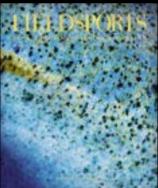












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EST 1812

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# BEAR'S BREECHES The iconic acanthus perennial has been a favourite design element for millenia. Sporting historian Donald Dallas examines why its jagged leaves are often engraved onto guns

I am sure we have all done it; waiting for the drive to begin and in the natural light studying your shotgun, turning it over from angle to angle and admiring the artistry of the engraving. Then wham, a blast of less than complimentary expletives from the peg next to you as a pheasant flies serenely overhead in the midst of your reverie.

From the earliest days when sporting guns came into use in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, guns were embellished with engraving. Whereas continental guns tended to have flamboyant engraving, British engraving was more restrained and these early guns were delightful with motifs of strawberry leaves and sea monsters.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the refinement of the sporting gun, engraving styles were refined too and simple scroll became the norm. Occasionally, a dog, bird or animal would appear in a vignette, often naively engraved as the engraver working in a town had probably never seen an actual example. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century wore on, engraving became more delicate with fine scroll along with makers' names engraved in small Roman lettering.

The really big change to engraving style came in the 1870s at James Purdey & Sons. Purdey's inhouse engraver was James Lucas who had joined the firm in 1855, and by the 1870s, he had developed the quintessentially English engraving style of fine rose and scroll. It was a supremely elegant engraving of bouquets of roses surrounded by tight tiny scroll. Purdey termed it "standard fine" and very quickly most other best makers copied it. This rose and scroll engraving is still available today and is always regarded as the engraving personifying the best British gun.

It is a very human characteristic that just when something comes into fashion, there will be a reaction against it and this is exactly what Holland & Holland did with their very different bold acanthus engraving that they introduced in the 1890s. The two engraving styles became so well known, that fine rose and scroll engraving is known as 'Purdey Engraving' and acanthus scroll as 'Royal Engraving' after it was first introduced on the Holland & Holland Royal gun of around 1890.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Holland & Holland was a different firm from Purdey. Whereas Purdey tended to concentrate on building the highest quality sporting guns, Holland & Holland regarded their firm as being in the forefront of technology and design. They had set up a purpose-built brand new factory at Kensal Green with all the latest machines. They were pioneers in rifle development, winning every class in The Field Rifle Trials of 1883, and they had taken out a far greater array of patents than any other British gun firm. They built all manner of guns, from punt gun to .410, from 4 bore double rifle to rook rifles.

In the 1880s they introduced their famous Royal hammerless ejector and by 1890, The Royal, the flagship of Holland & Holland, had evolved into the gun that they still build today. With their brand new Royal and with the up to the minute technology that they embraced, there was no way that Holland & Holland would engrave their guns with the traditional rose and scroll as found on most other best guns.

They wanted an engraving style of their own and it seemed logical that they would apply the latest fashion in art and design - Art Nouveau - to the embellishment of their guns.

Art Nouveau spans the period roughly 1880-1914. It was a romantic style with its roots in Gothic Art from an earlier era and was essentially curvilinear, straight lines being comparatively rare. Ornament was based on plant form of a bold complex design, the acanthus leaf being the most popular adornment. The beginning of the new movement crystalised around the theories of William Morris (1834-1896) in England. It was primarily an art of ornament and its most typical manifestations occurred in the practical and applied arts. Art Nouveau spread to the continent, chiefly from London, and created a genuine revolution in public taste away from the heavy oppressive Victorian style.

The new style became very fashionable and Holland & Holland intended to embellish their best guns and rifles with this latest taste. They based their new foliate scroll engraving around the acanthus leaf set within a background of curving scrolls – very typical of Art Nouveau.

Who was responsible for the introduction of the new acanthus scroll engraving on the early Royals has been lost to the passage of time. In the 1890s Holland & Holland had several engravers working in the factory and any one of them might have developed it. Again, it could have been Henry Holland himself or James Woodward, the factory manager, no record has been left.

Since its introduction in the 1890s, acanthus scroll engraving became the standard Holland engraving on their best guns and rifles. Look at any gun from a distance and long before you read the makers name, the Holland gun stands out on account of its acanthus scroll. Since the 1890s, Holland & Holland have engraved acanthus scroll as standard on all their Royals, and if imitation is the most sincerest form of flattery, virtually every other maker has at some time copied it.



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# DARYL GREATREX

The Master of The Worshipful Company of Gunmakers on the past, present and future of apprenticeships in the British gun trade Gunmaking has recently been recognised as an endangered skill by the Heritage Crafts Association. What are the issues which adversely affect the ability of gunmakers to take on apprentices and what support is available to them?

"First and foremost is the issue of expense. It's expensive to take on an apprentice and a gunmaker needs to be pretty confident that they are going to stay with the firm for a reasonable amount of time. This is an expensive business and what gunmakers large and small find is that, sadly, there are apprentices who drop out after a couple of years. This is unfortunate because someone has to be found who will train apprentices. Not every craftsman in the workshop can teach, and some are better at communicating than others.

"The £5,000 bursary from the Gunmakers' Company Charitable Trust (GCCT) is available to any gunmaker in the trade, no matter what their size. The GCCT is aware that it's often dealing with firms which don't have the capacity to take on a large administrative burden, so we try to make the application process as simple as possible, but at the same time covering all the necessary areas because we have a responsibility to administer the funds properly.

"The GCCT hopes to have a fundraising push in the coming months to help us to double the number of four-year bursaries we currently issue from five to 10."

What backgrounds do 21<sup>st</sup> century apprentices tend to come from, what are their motivations for entering the trade and how are their outside interests influencing modern gunmaking?

"Gunmaking apprentices tend to be a little older than people might think. People typically think they are between 16 and 18 years of age, but in my experience apprentices come to the trade later in life, having gained experience of working in a different industry. I have often found they loved gunmaking and were being treated better as an apprentice because they were in a position they viewed as a vocation rather than just a job. They seemed to come from an engineering background or a job that involves making things, like musical instruments.

"The skills that come from outside can be of huge benefit to the gun trade. It all brings a fresher look to things and an appreciation of the final product. Having people who are a little more worldly and open to ideas about different manufacturing techniques can only be a good thing. You need to be constantly innovating so if you've got a workforce that is willing to accept improvements and change then it's only to your advantage."

•>

### What can gunmakers do to make apprenticeships appealing to the next generation and are there lessons that can be learned from other craft industries?

"Gunmakers have to try and get across the message that it's a highly specialised industry. There are lots of different options open to apprentices further along in their career, from working for the smaller provincial makers to the larger London makers or eventually running their own business. If you're interested in the subject it's a nice way to make a living. Despite the challenges it faces, I don't think there has been a decline in the popularity of game shooting. There are issues which are causing challenges, but if you're a young gunmaker at the moment this is a time for innovation, because people are going to have problems to which they need to find solutions.

"Part of the apprenticeship scheme that I helped create involved a day release to a technical college. Modern apprenticeships need to offer additional qualifications. You should be able to say to people that if they train as a gunmaker they'll go to further education colleges and achieve other qualifications.

"The Worshipful Company of Gunmakers also has a Certification Panel, where people in the trade, who are at a certain point in their career, are encouraged to submit their work to a panel of experts who will evaluate their work. If it's to the required standard then they'll be officially certified as skilled gunmakers."

## What qualities does a modern workshop need in order to ensure that apprentices flourish?

"In an ideal world, you'd have a workshop where you have gunmaking equipment you generally use on a day-to-day basis and then someone who could train apprentices on them. Sadly, not every gunmaker has a state-of-the art workshop where apprentices can be taught modern industrial techniques.

"The gunmakers within the firm also need to have a welcoming attitude towards new apprentices. Sometimes, older gunmakers can't pass on their knowledge as well as you would hope, so what you need is for there to be a good flow of information from the trainer to the apprentice and back again. Both parties should be able to bounce ideas off one another, rather than have a mindset where older gunmakers are scared to pass on their knowledge because it might cost them their job in six months."

### In the same vein, what qualities do apprentices need to have in order to flourish?

"If you're a young apprentice with a good attitude and a willingness to try things, you will go far. That's what gunmakers want: People who will contribute. That's the difference these days, people are expected to contribute. You need to be involved and take pride in what you're doing. If you've got those attributes and skills then an employer will appreciate you."



As computer-controlled machinery becomes more commonplace in gunmaking, how can gunmakers best balance the training they give to apprentices on high-tech production methods without losing traditional skills?

"We may never get to a point where someone is highly skilled on a bench and also a wizard on computer-controlled machinery. In reality, where you find sophisticated machinery you will find highly skilled 'engineering gunmakers'. It's a balance between the hand skills from the bench and those craftsmen relaying information to their colleagues making the parts with machines. Machinery is there to enhance the quality of the small components and might save a craftsman an hour's work, time that could be spent doing more intricate tasks.

"We've got to get across the idea that it's not engineers versus gunmakers; everyone, regardless of their role, is on the same team, they all take pride in their work and should all acknowledge the contribution everyone else is making. It's important from an apprentice's point of view that they understand how all parts of the gunmaking process work, even if they're not involved in it."

## Where do you think that gunmaking will be in, say, 20 years' time?

"I don't think gunmaking will be massively different than it is today. The bigger houses will still exist, they'll always adapt and always offer best guns, but perhaps they'll diversify a little into guns that are more suitable to steel shot, for example. There is also the potential for exciting innovations too, such as the materials that are used to create the guns. I think there'll still be a demand for traditional, best London, high quality gunmaking where production numbers are low and there's great attention to detail.

"The British gun trade can't afford to take its traditions for granted. It needs to find ways of including diversity in its offering. That's what makes it unique. British gunmakers established themselves as the best in the world in the late 1800s and early 1900s by being creative and using the best technology they had available. People tend to forget that the traditions we have are based on innovation and we need to stay on that path."



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MADE FOR HUNTING

# Is your shotgun suitable for non-lead ammunition? By Diggory Hadoke

Lead is dead. Those, so inclined, will rail against the inevitable, but the gun trade is preparing for the day when the choice will be a simple one for the UK's 600,000 shotgun certificate holders: Buy non-toxic ammunition and go shooting, or don't go shooting.

We came to this juncture when three major areas crucial to shooting collided. Firstly, food policy: Companies selling food have decided that they won't sell game that has been shot with lead. That means if you shoot game with lead, game dealers won't take it because they can't sell it. That affects commercial shoots.

Most commercial shoots rely on game dealers to sell the end product of a day's shooting. Game dealers won't take lead-shot game anymore, so shoots will have to tell Guns not to shoot with lead when they take their booking. It may not be universal this season, but it is coming.

Further down the road, but widely anticipated, legislation is afoot. Within a few years, laws will be passed that will ban the sale and/or use of lead shotgun ammunition in the UK for environmental reasons. When that happens, manufacturers will not be able to sell it, so they won't make it and you won't be able to buy it. Rather than wait for that day, interested parties are acting now.

It is entirely possible that the current season will be the last one in which lead ammunition is used widely across the British Isles for game shooting.

Sportsmen are now faced with a decision. Continue to use the gun they have using alternative, non-toxic, ammunition. Or, buy a new gun.

Whether or not you can continue to use your favourite British game gun depends on what decisions you make. If you decide to swap lead for bismuth, the answer is a simple 'yes'. Any gun currently shooting lead can safely and effectively digest bismuth without the need to alter chokes, forcing cones, chambers or bores. If that works for you, you can stop reading now; your problem has been solved!

However, bismuth is more expensive than lead and steel is cheaper. If you don't want to pay for bismuth and decide to shoot steel then you will first have to do some examination of the gun you have. Depending on the results of that examination, you may need to alter it, accept reduced performance, or sell it and buy something else.

The first thing to do is look at the proof marks on your gun. They will tell you what tests it has passed and give you some crucial measurement and pressure data that will be relevant in informing your ultimate decision about what lead substitute you switch to.

### PROOF STAMPS CURRENTLY IN USE



London (LON), Birmingham (BHAM)

### STEEL SHOT COMPATIBLE PROOF MARKS

If your gun has the proof marks noted on the previous page, you can work out what steel cartridges you may be able to use in it. If it has the proof marks in the 'Standard' and 'Superior' columns, you can shoot standard steel loads. Only shoot superior steel loads in guns stamped with the *Fleur de Lys* as in the third 'Steel' column.

Note that you also need to match case length to chamber length.

If it has the following stamps, it has a

2½" CHAMBER

If it has the following stamps, it has a

2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" CHAMBER

If it has the following stamps, it has a

3" CHAMBER

65mm.

21/2"



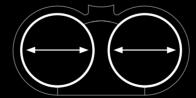


1½ oz

70mm.

23/4"

11/4 oz



76mm.

3"



1½ oz

\*

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Your British side-by-side is old and you decide to sell it and buy a new one

Call a specialist vintage gun dealer and put it on consignment or contact a specialist auctioneer and consign it to the next sporting gun auction. The former will return you more money, the latter may get it sold faster.

Your shotgun is old and you want to keep it as it is and shoot it

Buy a thousand bismuth cartridges from justcartridges.com and put them in the gun room or wherever you keep your ammunition. That way, you will have swallowed the cost in one go and have sufficient ammunition to use when you need it.

You want to replace your British side-by-side with a new one that can shoot steel

Buy a steel shot proof compatible gun (made in Europe) from William Powell (from £4,995), William Evans (from £9,250) or (made in England) Westley Richards (from £80,000) or Rigby (from £78,000).

You want to keep your British side-by-side and buy a back-up gun for pigeon and clay shooting

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The cost of each apprentice supported by the trust, which is paid over a four-year period

12
The number of GCCT trustees

£5,000

The yearly bursary given to gunmakers to help meet costs of training an apprentice Facts and figures illustrating the work of the trust

2003

The year the GCCT was formed to support crafts skills associated with traditional gunmaking 4

The number of years a gunmaker receives support from the bursary scheme

The number of bursaries the GCCT hopes to award each year in the

future

2007

The year the bursary scheme was established to support members of the gun trade seeking to take on an apprentice

£50K

The yearly amount the GCCT will need to raise to cover 10 bursaries

1100227
The GCCT's charity number

Current number of gunmakers receiving support

receiving support from the bursary scheme





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