

A Visit To HOLLAND & HOLLAND

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #235 –



Picking the stock blank(s) can be an exciting part of ordering a gun or pair of guns. This is English walnut, imported from Turkey, for a pair of guns to be made in England for an American customer - me.

For someone who likes to hunt with or collect side-by-side shotguns and is fortunate enough in life to be able to seek out the very best, London is considered to be the Holy Mecca of fine shotgun makers – one of which is the great firm of Holland and Holland, sometimes called just “Holland” or “H&H” – established in 1835.

Our visit to Holland was enhanced, partly because we had a good historical perspective of the company and a decent understanding of the development of the side-by-side shotgun in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century. Holland and Holland was a major innovator and contributor to the gunmaking trade during this period, and today their side by side shotgun action is the most copied in the world – by other gunmakers in England, Spain and Italy. Much of the

above information comes from an excellent book by Donald Dallas, titled “Holland and Holland The Royal Gunmaker”.

We began at their headquarters and showroom, at 33 Bruton St, in the Mayfair district of West London. The buildings

the Holland and Holland Shooting Grounds. If you want to be “fitted” for a bespoke gun, shoot some sporting clays for entertainment or sharpen up your eye for the upcoming seasons, this is a great place to visit. Holland has owned and operated their “Shooting Grounds” since 1880, considering it an integral part of their business

The workshops are located at 906 Harrow Road in Kensal Green – just 3-4 miles west of central London, where they have

“...the Holy Mecca of fine shotgun makers...”

been in the same three-story building since 1898. This is where all aspects of gunmaking are carried out, from the initial selection of the stock blank, to the final polishing and finishing of the wood and metal. We observed the making of the locks, stocks and barrels – accomplished almost entirely by hand. Interestingly, Mr. Harris Holland, the founder (1806-1896), is buried in the cemetery just across the A404 highway.



Larry Potterfield
Holland and Holland
London, England
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Son Russell and daughter Sara, about to enter the Holland and Holland plant, to see how they make guns. Sara had a minor incident with her horse a few days before the trip.

and streets are all modern today, but the Company has been in this area of London since the mid-1800s — horse and buggy days. At the showroom, we viewed a nice selection of new and pre-owned guns as well as a great collection of sporting clothing and accessories – and a quaint museum.

But there’s more to Holland and Holland than their showroom; a few miles to the northwest, in Northwood, is



Christopher Bird, chief instructor at the H&H Shooting Grounds, explains his latest adjustment to the try-gun, so the stock fits Sara perfectly.