



The team members who visited Longthorne came with a view to possibly working in the gun trade one day.

Opening new doors

The Help for Heroes shooting team continue their foray into the world of game shooting with a visit to Longthorne Gunmakers.

Having been exposed to various aspects of shooting, game and land management, many of the Shooting for Heroes members have been considering what their longer-term interests are. Some are keen to look at gamekeeping as a future profession, others will investigate contract stalking opportunities, pest control or shooting coaching, and a select few are interested in the more technical aspects of gun manufacturing, servicing, gun engraving and stock shaping and carving.

It was therefore timely of James and Elaine Stewart of Longthorne Gunmakers to offer to host a team from the Shooting for Heroes programme at their factory in Preston, Lancashire. Longthorne is a family-run gunmakers that has combined modern materials and



The Help For Heroes shooting team learns about Longthorne's unique barrel making process.



technology with traditional methods to produce a classic English shotgun (for a full feature on Longthorne see pages 70-72 of this issue).

On arrival Elaine had taken into account the long drive from Wiltshire and the course was greeted with the most welcoming barbecue breakfast. Being shown around a working gunmakers is a privilege at the best of times but when exposed to some truly cutting-edge technology and techniques this was quite a treat for some rather excited members of the Band of Brothers. Although some of the more sensitive technology was understandably withheld, the much-

discussed Longthorne barrel technology was shown. The barrels are manufactured from one single block of steel, although again the whole story could not be fully divulged for business reasons – despite the group's best efforts to wrangle the information out of James.

“Many of the Shooting for Heroes members are seriously considering a career in the shooting world.”

The laser bore sighting test was another interesting area and the team were able to test their own guns against those at Longthorne. As a passionate engineer, James was delighted to have such an interested team of budding gunmakers who were keen to learn all they could about how he has mastered his craft and is able to produce such an interesting and individual product.

Elaine had to break up the party to ensure we met our clay shooting timing and the opportunity the team had been waiting for: to test the guns they had seen that morning. James talked us through in practical terms why the Longthornes are able to perform as they are, and what makes them different from their counterparts. Enabled by some excellent shooting instruction by John Sage, the course members had a fantastic afternoon and are now eagerly saving their pennies for their ultimate goal: a Longthorne in the gun cabinet.

The course is now looking forward to a day of shoot organisation and management at Stockton, Wiltshire, and some driven duck shooting in October, both courtesy of very generous support from readers. 🦋

All support, recommendations and good ideas to Michael Payne (michael.payne@helpforheroes.org.uk), operations director at Help for Heroes and coordinator of the Shooting for Heroes programme.

CORPORAL PHILIP MEADOWS



Philip Meadows enjoying the tour of the Longthorne premises.

Philip served with the 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards before being medically discharged in 2012. During his tour of Afghanistan in 2008, Philip was hit by an IED strike while commanding a Mastiff vehicle in Garmsir in southern Helmand province which resulted in him losing his right leg above the knee. After his injury, Philip went through significant rehab and had to learn to walk again within six weeks. He managed to learn to drive with the help of adaptations in his car and tried to start his new life beyond injury. In 2009 he went on a skiing trip with Battle Back, a UK Military initiative funded by Help for Heroes which uses Adaptive Adventure Training and Sports Rehabilitation to help seriously wounded service personnel and veterans, and loved every minute of it. He married his now-wife Louise in May 2009 before returning to work with the military. He was then medically discharged in 2012.

When he left the army Philip had some well-earned family time before retraining in health and safety. He is delighted to have just secured a job within the NHS as a health and safety advisor covering the north west of England. He was first involved with Help for Heroes and The Band of Brothers fellowship after his injury in 2008 and he took part in a US/ British

forces Paralympic talent week in San Diego.

Philip has always been into shooting and is keen to learn more about the industry as a whole. “While serving in Germany, I was introduced to shooting by members of the regiment and successfully passed my Jagdshin – a German hunting license – and went from there. I gave it up when I left Germany because I didn't understand the British laws regarding shooting and hunting, plus I didn't know anyone who was really in to it. When this opportunity arose with Shooting for Heroes I put my name down straight away to get back involved.

“So far the programme has been able to offer different opportunities from gamekeeping all the way up to running a commercial shoot. I would love to gain more experience in the shooting world in the UK, including gamekeeping roles. And I would like to understand more about the time and effort that has to be put in during the close season to make a successful season of shooting, and to get to know people who follow the same interest in my local area of Chester. The course has been really interesting, rewarding and a great experience. Thanks to all those who have made it possible, mainly the public who have donated so much to this programme.”