

ARTISAN

Aiming High

An insight into the most celebrated works of Lancashire's most celebrated Gunmakers, Longthorne Guns

From a somewhat understated location in the small Lancastrian village of Hesketh Bank, in what was once an old barn, the manufacturing warehouse of Longthorne Gunmakers houses several million pounds worth of high tech equipment.

These slightly cramped confines are hardly the sort of set-up you would expect to find such a thriving manufacturing business, especially considering the company's last acquisition, on a cold February morning cost around £500,000 and was delivered through the roof in between snow showers because it was not possible to get it through the door, and this was to replace a machine which had to be removed the same way beforehand - via a 120 tonne crane that is.

However, such colossal efforts are all in a day's work at Longthorne Gunmakers, as it is here that James Longthorne Stewart, aided by his wife Elaine and Daughter Chloe and their small team, manufacture the Longthorne shotguns.

Longthorne has rapidly become a brand synonymous with quality and luxury and this is acknowledged by way of the number of high profile clients this small company currently has on its books, from Heads of State to Leaders in Industry, to name but a few.

The family are originally from Lancashire: James hails from a tool making background; Elaine from technical sales and marketing; and have operated their own precision engineering companies both in Australia and England for the past 30 years.

James started designing his guns in 2006 with an aim of producing an innovative English shotgun of uncompromising quality. His plans gathered momentum as the recession hit allowing Longthorne to launch the first model in 2010 at that years CLA Games Fair and has been overwhelmed by the response and support they have had for their products ever since.

The signature gun, known as, 'The Hesketh'

12-bore over/under, is named after its birthplace and is their entry-level gun. Like all Longthorne guns it has a true side lock mechanism, 3lb trigger pulls, 3" chamber, has assisted opening and closing and London proofed for magnum steel up to 7/8th choke. Longthorne are the only English gun manufacturer currently proofing their guns for Superior Steel in the UK.

The team behind Longthorne attribute some of their success to The London Proof House who has been instrumental in aiding their progress. "Without the stringent tests performed at the proof house it would have been difficult to excel to our current level of proofing and using the approved proof cartridges as supplied by the proof house", James states.

The company launched their 'Deluxe' model in 2011, which incorporates all the above attributes and a deep acanthus style scroll engraving.

In the same year, Longthorne were commissioned to make four guns celebrating the heritage of Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire for The Duchess of Rutland, these guns Known as 'The Rutland' now form part of their premium range, along with any bespoke guns. An exciting commission indeed, the final piece took inspiration from the castle. The Rutland guns incorporate the Manners family crest, ducal coronet and the Peacock, which symbolises Belvoir Castle, combined with florets and scrollwork found within Belvoir.

Longthorne are currently working on a number of very special exclusive commissions for clients and a limited edition Damascus barrelled gun.

The company also does all its own engraving work which is the responsibility of James and Elaine's daughter Chloe, 27 who completed a degree at Manchester, after studying at Lancashire's Runshaw College before joining the family business in 2007. She has a natural artistic talent and is responsible for the designs, which

can include anything from a totally bespoke design to personalisation of an existing style. Chloe was fortunate and privileged to have been mentored for several months by one of England's top engravers, who shall remain nameless by request, when she started designing guns and her skills have flourished ever since.

Unlike other 'English' gunmakers, the Longthorne team's aim has always been to manufacture and assemble every part of their guns in house including their now renowned barrels; they do not rebrand any imported parts.

The Longthorne guns are 'special' in a number of ways; their most unique and intriguing feature being their barrels, which are quite unlike any others ever made. Each gun is a precision instrument, which is light and yet strong. They are constructed from a single piece of high specification steel with absolutely no soldered joints and manufactured to exacting tolerances, as are the rest of the Longthorne range.

The most noticeable significant benefit of this method of barrel construction is that the guns have virtually no recoil or muzzle flip and shoot with amazing ease, as many will testify. Their guns are also well balanced and pointable and do not have the heat retention properties of conventional shotguns. Further more, due to the improved accuracy of the barrel manufacturing method, the shot pattern is significantly improved.

The company has recently released an extra lightweight ribless model and currently have orders for 410, 12,20,16 and 28 bores.

Onwards and upward, the company concede that they have outgrown their current premises and are currently looking for larger more exclusive premises to augment their future plans.

Longthorne Guns
Tel: 01772 811215
Email: enquiries@longthorneguns.com
www.longthorneguns.com

