

Home to the world's finest shotguns and rifles

On 1 January 1883, James Purdey & Sons relocated to Audley House, 57-58 South Audley Street, Mayfair.

The building, designed by architect William Lambert and completed by B.E. Nightingale, was fast acknowledged as the most prestigious gun shop in the country. *Land and Water* called it a 'Palace amongst Gun Manufactories' – for originally, guns were stocked, finished and engraved on the premises.

Looking down into a 'well' in the Long Room, James Purdey the Younger could follow the progress of the craftsmen below. In photographs of the time, piles of wooden 'blanks' can be seen alongside it, waiting to be turned into stocks.



The Long Room, 1883, with the "well" in the centre



The Long Room, present day

The greatest shots of the past two centuries have visited the Long Room, and many are immortalised here through portraits and memorabilia. In 1938, the well was

closed over, and a long table installed, which is still in place today. At one stage, two pianos and a harmonium were moved in; Tom Purdey was a keen musician.

Audley House has earned its place in British history. Not only does the building bear the scars of a WWII air raid – you can still see the great shrapnel marks in the marble pillars outside – it even played a role in the D-Day landings. In 1942, Eisenhower's Deputy Chief of Staff, General Bedell-Smith, used the Long Room for battle planning. General Eisenhower was often at these meetings.

Then in 1975, an IRA bomb destroyed every pane of glass in the east-facing side of the building. But restored, resplendent, Audley House retains its magnetic appeal for any lover of the sporting gun or rifle. It is a chance to experience a different age, the values of which we are proud to preserve.