

IN THE GUNROOM

HOLLAND & HOLLAND MINIATURE DOUBLE RIFLE

By Donald Dallas

From time to time a rifle or gun appears in the gunroom that always elicits great interest. This can be on account of its condition, provenance, rarity or very occasionally due to its enigma that can be a puzzle for all the experts at Holts.

Lot 610 was one of these enigmas and elicited much comment and discussion and eventually we all agreed on one thing – we didn't actually have a definitive answer but we all came to the same educated guess.

Lot 610 is a very beautiful Holland & Holland Miniature black powder Express .360 sidelock non-ejector double rifle. It utilises the .360 black powder Express 2 ¼ in. round so favoured on these diminutive rifles around the turn of the 19th century. Numbered 16117 it was completed around 1894 most probably for a European client.

It is a very elegant tiny little double rifle in comparison to its far bigger .500 and .577 cousins and its lines are further enhanced by its rounded bar action, quite unusual on a rifle of this period. It is sighted from 100 – 300yds. and is a No 2 Royal of the highest quality. It weighs just 7lbs 10oz. and must be one of the most attractive double rifles Holland & Holland have ever built due to its small size and graceful lines.

But what of the enigma? On the top of the action above each breech are two small protuberances about ¼ in. high. They are rounded and engraved and appear to serve no useful purpose whatsoever. It was these two protuberances that caused so much comment. In this catalogue they are described as "raised ears" a description that fits them perfectly. But what are they and what is their purpose? I have never seen such additions before and they certainly created a lot of interest.

We took the rifle along to the Game Fair at Ragley Hall and here the little rifle elicited much comment with most visitors coming to the same conclusion about the raised ears as we did.

The small protuberances were a sighting aid jutting out above the top of each breech. Since the rifle was sold on the Continent it was most probably used for running boar and the raised ears were employed as a quick sighting aid in this fast moving sport where there might not be time for the conventional sight.

The date of the rifle 1894 gives a further clue. Hammerless guns had only come into

general use about 15 years before and sportsmen had always been used to the spurs of the hammers aiding the sighting of a rifle or gun. Famous sportsmen like Lord Ripon, Lord Walsingham and King George V continued to use hammer guns long after they had become obsolete on account of the hammers aiding the line of sight. The original customer of this rifle might have been used to hammers and asked Holland & Holland to incorporate the raised ears as a sighting aid that he was familiar with.

Contained in its original case, this .360 miniature Express rifle is a beautiful little Holland & Holland double rifle and of course it has the addition of the raised ears that makes it that little bit quirky and just that little bit more desirable.

**98, New Bond Street, LONDON, W.**



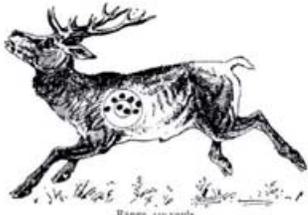
*Miniature  
Double Express  
Rifles, .360 Bore*

Hammer or Hammerless.



*.360 Miniature Express Cartridge. Full Size.*

We strongly recommend these miniature rifles as a supplement to an ordinary battery for sport in India and other countries. They will be found quite powerful enough for the smaller kinds of deer, antelope, seal, kangaroo, etc. These rifles have a flat trajectory, great accuracy and freedom from recoil. They are sighted for two kinds of cartridges—the Express, shooting 1½ to 2 drams and conical ball (quite powerful enough for deer up to 150 yards), or the equivalent charge of Cordite powder and 200 grain bullet.



Range, 110 yards.  
Score (6) made by LORD CAIRNS with HOLLAND'S Double .360 Rifle, at Bilsby. Four runs of deer, two shots each run.



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*Our Double .360 Rifles have been most successful at Wimbledon and Bilsby, in Running Deer, Martin Smith, and other similar competitions. The two extraordinary scores, as shown in the above illustrations, were made with one of our Double .360 Express Sporting Rifles.*

<b>PRICES.</b>	
Best Quality Royal Hammerless	75 Guineas
Second Quality	55 Guineas
Single-Barrelled Rifles	16 to 30 Guineas
<small>If fitted with Ejectors, 5 Guineas extra.</small>	

**Awarded Grand Prix Paris 1900, St. Louis 1904, and Highest Award Vienna 1910.**

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A page from Holland & Holland's 1904 catalogue displaying their .360 Miniature Express rifles.