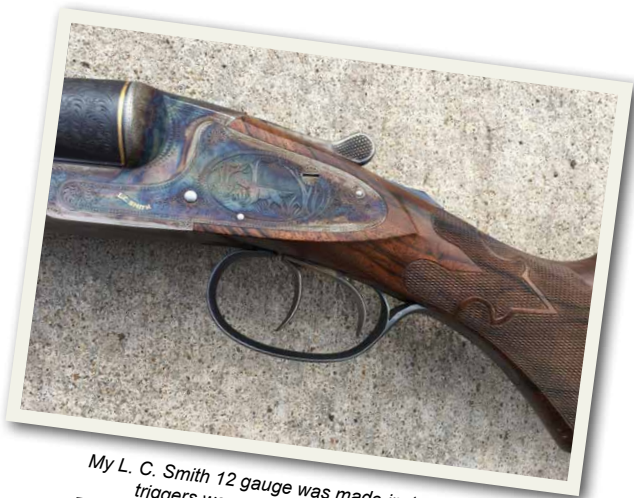


# DOUBLE TRIGGERS

## and Automatic Safeties

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #248 —



*My L. C. Smith 12 gauge was made in 1928, when single triggers were an extra-cost option. Starting life as a Field Grade, I had it restocked and engraved in the 1990s.*

My awakening came several years ago when I bought an English side-by-side shotgun, a Birmingham boxlock, 12 gauge, bearing the name William Cashmore. It was a lightweight gun (5 pounds, 12 ounces), built in the 1930's, and featured 26" barrels. It was an absolute delight to carry and shoulder, but shooting standard 12 gauge 1-1/8 ounce reloads was no fun at all. At this point, I started loading 7/8 ounces of shot (standard 20 gauge load); this was a 1/4 oz (25%) reduction in shot and made the lightweight 12 a pleasure to shoot.

The Cashmore was also my first side-by-side – two barrels, two chokes, and two triggers – with an automatic safety. Wow, it was a lot different than my Remington 870; and required an entirely new approach to shooting.

With two barrels, two chokes and two triggers, there was the opportunity to select the front trigger (improved cylinder choke in the right barrel) for up close shots and the back trigger (full choke in the left barrel) for farther shots. There was even the opportunity to put a light load of 7-1/2s in the right



*An automatic safety looks the same as any other safety, the difference is that it automatically moves back to the "safe" position every time the gun is opened. A great safety feature for a field gun, but a nuisance for many people, on the skeet, trap or clays range.*

barrel and a heavier load of #6s in the left barrel. Some people think two triggers make shooting more complicated, but frankly, it's like riding a bike. When flushing pheasants, I'm making the decision "near shot or far shot" as I turn and mount the gun. By the time the stock hits my shoulder, my finger is on the correct trigger and I make the shot – easy! If there's another shot, my finger moves just as quickly to the other trigger.

Safety must always be top of mind when handling any firearm. W. W. Greener, an early designer and builder of shotguns in 19th century England, patented the first automatic safety in 1879 (Patent #769). Opening the gun causes the safety to be pushed from the "fire" position back to "SAFE". Today we simply call it an "Automatic Safety", and it's a wonderful feature for a field gun – and can be gunsmith disabled, if desired.

**"...an absolute delight to carry and shoulder..."**

Single triggers came on the scene in the 1890s, generally with some type of selector to allow the shooter to select the left or right barrel for firing first. Unfortunately, my brain, and apparently that of many others, doesn't adapt well to sliding off the safety, then selecting the barrel/choke. Double triggers in the field are the right choice for me.



Larry Potterfield

My Gunroom  
Columbia, MO  
February 12, 2020



*Somewhere along the way, American shooters began to believe that heavier loads are better than lighter loads – the bigger the better. The manufacturers have introduced and cranked out the ammo to meet demand. However, in a great many cases, a 7/8 oz load in 12 gauge is just as effective as a 1-1/4 oz load. It also kicks and costs less.*