

Trivia: The RECOIL PAD

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #251 —

The introduction of "modern" shotgun shells, about 1860, allowed for much more and faster shooting than in the earlier muzzleloading era. Since that time, firearms designers have tried to reduce the felt recoil by placing some type of pad on the butt end of the stock. Innovation came first from the driven bird shoots in England, with the first such recoil taming device patented there in 1874. It was called an "Anti-Recoil Heel Plate"; today, we simply call it a Recoil Pad.

H. A. Silver Company of England was the original inventor. Their recoil pad featured a thin, hard rubber base, vulcanized to a thick, solid rubber "cushion". The "unit" was attached to the end of the buttstock with two screws, and the edges were ground down to continue the lines of the stock. The Silver's pad is still made in England today, pretty much the same way it was made

in 1874, and is most often seen today on fine English guns.

In the United States, likely the introduction of the single barrel trap guns by the Baker Gun & Forging Company in 1909 created an increased awareness of recoil – and a desire to tame it. Many of the early recoil pads had direct ties to trap shooters. The single barrel guns are lighter than their double barrel counterparts, of course; also, the popularity of repeating shotguns, like the Winchester 1897 and Model 12 pumps and

the Remington Model 11 semi-automatic, likely facilitated more shooting and more awareness of recoil.

Recoil pad development activity began here in the early part of the 20th century; the first patent I've found was #1,123,180, issued to Mr. James Day, on 29 December 1914, assigned to the

One of the world's first recoil pad; patent # 2938 was issued to Mr. H. Silver in London, England on August 27, 1874. It is solid rubber, not hollow. The "Silver's pad" is "the pad" used on English guns of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries – and a few American guns, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Jostam Manufacturing Company of Chicago. Soon after that, Mr. Frank Hawkins of South Dakota (a trapshooter) patented The Hawkins pad, # 1,325,152 on 16 December 1919. Both pads were thought to be an improvement over the solid Silvers pad, in that the styles of openings on the sides were claimed to reduce the felt recoil.

"Both pads were thought to be an improvement..."

One of the last major developments in recoil pads came about in the early 1930s, at which time Mershon Co., Inc. entered the recoil pad market, later to become the Pachmayr pad. It featured an integral white line and more openings in the side of the pad, called "multiple-x". Today, Pachmayr, owned by Lyman, is the marked leader in recoil pads.



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The Hawkins recoil pad was one of the first America pads. It was patented December 16, 1919 – #1,325,152; pictured above on a Browning Superposed 20 gauge, made in 1949.

Introduced in the early 1930s, the integral white line spacer and the "multi-X" pattern of the side holes on the Pachmayr pad was the basis of two lawsuits – both of which were won by the owners of the Pachmayr pad.

