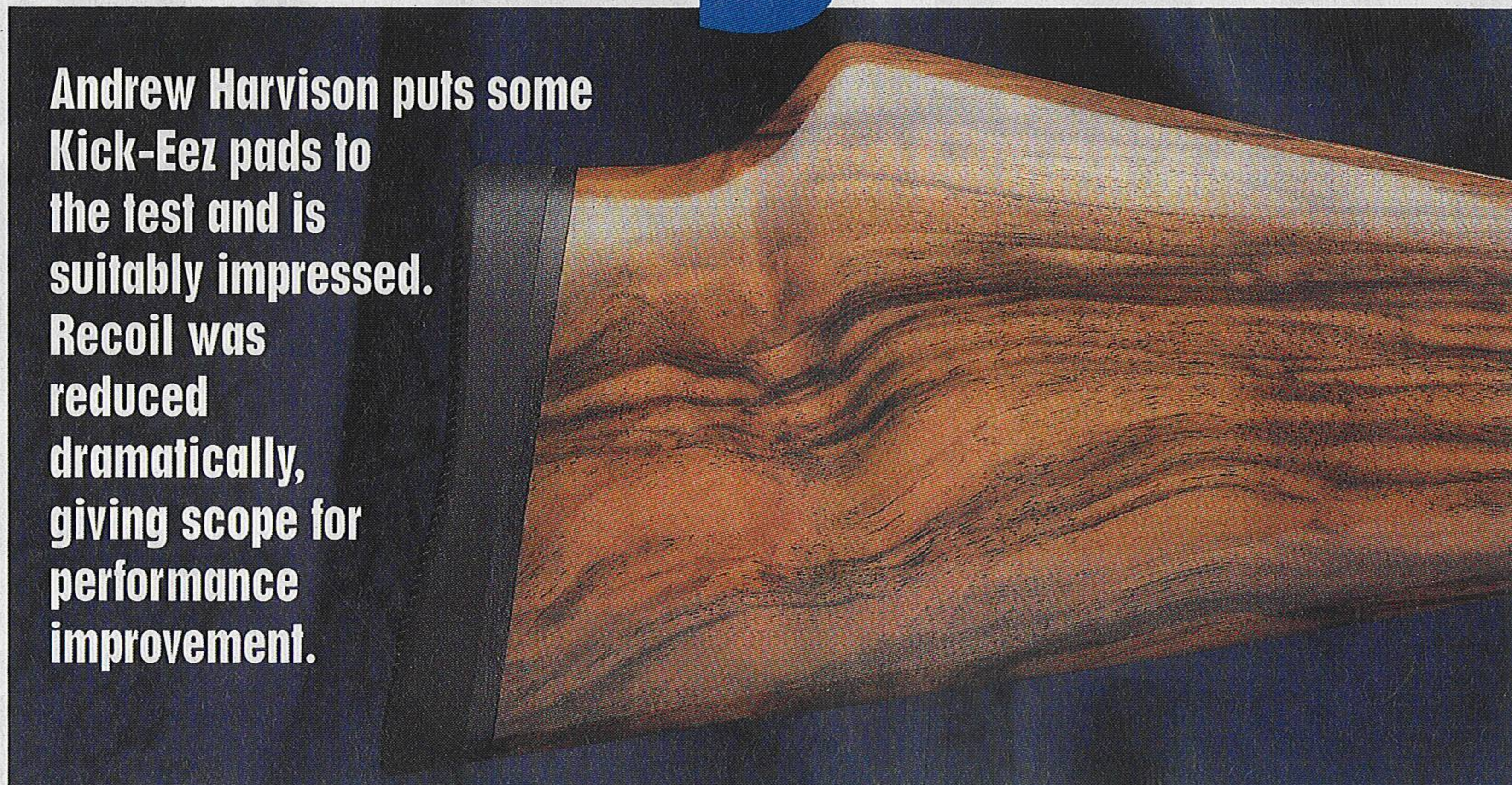


Derek Partridge, who imports Kick-Eez from the USA, was founder Chairman of the CPSA International Board and in 1973 won a gold medal in the Nordic Championships setting a new world record at ABT. He subsequently spent a lot of time in California where he worked extensively in film and television, and where he also won some important trap titles. More recently now living back in the UK he has competed for Britain as a veteran, and remains passionate about the sport.

Killing them

Andrew Harvison puts some Kick-Eez pads to the test and is suitably impressed. Recoil was reduced dramatically, giving scope for performance improvement.



A Kick-Eez pad fitted to a trap gun stock.

In the absence of a new gun to test, I have been turning my attention to a recoil pad which appears to have been embraced with open arms by many, if not most, international trap shooters.

Ian Peel's level of success since having a Kick-Eez recoil pad fitted to his gun is unprecedented. I also discovered that all three members of our Olympic team - Kevin Gill, Peter Boden and Richard Faulds - are also Kick-Eez users, so what exactly, I wondered, is it all about?

Derek Partridge imports the Kick-Eez product range direct from the USA where the company is based, and I invited him down to Kibworth Shooting Ground so we could look at the recoil pads and other items.

The pads are made of Sorbothane, a visco elastic polymer product which has been used for some time now in the manufacture of soles of

running shoes, where its unusual recoil absorption qualities spare limbs and joints from the normal jarring incurred in running or jogging on hard surfaces.

Sorbothane soaks up recoil rather than repels it.

To illustrate his point Derek additionally brought Perazzi and Pachmayr Decelerator pads which I fitted onto my gun. The feeling of both when firing cartridges

party piece. He has a clear perspex tube and a solid metal ball, like a large ball bearing. He held the tube upright over a conventional recoil pad on the clubhouse table, then dropped the metal ball and was able to measure its bounce up the tube after hitting the recoil pad.

He then dropped the ball down the tube but with a Kick-Eez pad at

its base and the bounce was but a fraction of that seen previously - in fact there was very little bounce at all.

That is the key to the success of Sorbothane. Its characteristics on impact are entirely different to conventional rubber - it absorbs recoil instead of repelling it.

As we all know the effect of recoil is for barrels to pitch on their axis, and come back



Left: A selection of some of the Kick-Eez range.

was identical to that when shooting my Miroku (which actually has a leather covered Beretta pad - the 3800 trap pads are not suitable for sporting shooting).

I shot a range of targets - tower, trap and skeet - with all three and could notice no discernible difference.

Derek then produced his

softly...

into the shoulder.

We then put a Kick-Eez pad onto my gun and shooting with it fitted felt quite strange at first. Not only was the recoil much reduced but the gun seemed to stay in very much the same place. In fact I felt I could feel the shot progressing through the gun, a sensation which is normally impossible to discern due to the tremendous blast and the kick that follows. Maybe some people will think I am talking with my head in the clouds, but that was the sensation I experienced.

So what was it like to shoot? Very different, but I quickly got used to it and the benefits conferred were considerable. At skeet I found that I was a yard faster on the second shot of doubles, due simply to the vastly reduced recovery time from the first shot.

Its effectiveness at trap goes without saying and I can well understand why so many trap shooters have had these pads fitted.

But similarly on any round of English sporting there will be a number of flattish quartering targets or pairs where the effects of reduced recoil are an obvious benefit.

Also of course we mustn't forget that recoil can also cause fatigue and headaches - it doesn't bother some people, but it definitely has a negative effect on others. Pads such as these will be a definite help.

Others too suffer neckache or damage through either excessive shooting or being vulnerable in that part of

the body - here again the Kick-Eez pad has a role to play.

There is a selection of sizes. I tried the standard sporter pad and it was ideal. The only drawback I experienced was that it was slightly sticky and caught a little on my shooting vest. I discovered this after Derek had left the ground, and it may be that it would smooth out with use. In any event I am fitting a pad to my own gun and will have it leather covered, as I would any normal pad.

The other interesting Sorbothane device offered by the company is Cheek-Eez, a self-fitting cheek protector. This would certainly have its uses, particularly at a shooting school where instructors like to make the introduction of the sport to beginners as comfortable as possible.

Also as more and more shooters now realise the importance of gunfit, a Cheek-Eez, which is adhesive on the reverse side, can be used to achieve a perfect fit on the pattern plate and whilst shooting, prior to visiting a good gunfitter. It is better to know from experience what kind of fit you are looking for, rather than mounting the gun in the unnatural environment of a gun shop.

Both pad and cheek protector are also very good value, and I found that the time I spent trying them out was quite a revelation. The pads are also simple to fit, though you may need the services of your local gunsmith to achieve the kind of perfect flush fit which we all like. ■

K I C K - E E Z R A N G E

There is a range of black pads 2.03 wide x 5.75 long, of different thicknesses - Magnum (1.4"), Trap (1.2", 1.0", 0.8") All Purpose (1.0", 0.8"), Sporting (1.0", 0.8") and Junior (1.0" x 1.75 x 4.75). All priced £32.

Cheek-Eez £12, Recoil-reducing comb raisers £10.

Also available are spacers and pitch spacer wedges.

All available countrywide at stockists - for details phone
Derek Partridge on 01582 761717.