

Study Name: How do ethics influence the development of policies for accessing public collections which are essentially restricted by law: A case study of the Royal Armouries.

Depositor: Stuart Bowes

Date of Interview: 29/11/2021

Interview Transcript: Laura Bell – Director of Collections (Royal Armouries), 29/11/2021

SB: Just to start off with, what is your name?

LB: My name is Laura Bell.

SB: What is your current role title, please?

LB: It is Director of Collections at the Royal Armouries.

SB: When did you start in this particular role?

LB: In this role it's been about three and a half years, I think. Yeah, about three and a half years.

SB: Have you occupied any other collections-oriented roles at the Royal Armouries specifically?

LB: Yes, before this I was Head of Collections Services. Before that I was Registrar and Conservation Manager. Before that I was Registrar and Display Technicians Manager. Before that I was Assistant Registrar.

SB: Quite a number of titles, quite a history. Could you offer any dates for those or is it just not worth asking?

LB: I started in 2011 as Assistant Registrar. Became Registrar, I think it was the following year. I took up an acting position when my boss left and then, after being interviewed, got that role permanently. Then, Registrar and Display Technician Manager maybe a couple years after that. Including the conservation management maybe a year after that. Then Head of Collections Services was 2017. Then I got the acting position as Director of Collections at the end of 2017 and in 2018 I got the permanent position after being interviewed.

SB: Thank you very much. To get started now on the main body of the questions. Just to start with, what do you consider to be the principle legislative restrictions on the collections of the Armouries?

LB: Ah, gosh. Are we just relating this to the weapons aspect of it, or are we relating it to all elements of collections management?

SB: Specifically, the weapons aspects rather than the more general *National Heritage Act* [1983], that sort of thing.

LB: Yeah, okay. Obviously *Firearms Act 1968* and all the subsequent amendments. *Knives Act 1997* and subsequent amendments. *Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006* and subsequent amendments. *Explosive Acts*, so of 1875 and then the new [Explosives] Regulations in 2014. We'd quite often say the *Offensive Weapons Act 2019*, but actually, while we take account of everything, it doesn't have a big impact. I'm trying to think of any others. No, so I think those are the main weapons-related ones. There's stuff that's associated like radiation and other hazards, but not specific to weapons necessarily.

SB: How do you discern the impact of either all of this legislation or any particular examples of this legislation during your daily duties?

LB: So I'm not sure my daily duties now would be that significant because I don't do the management side of it. For example, the *Offensive Weapons Act* [2019], the impact isn't that big because we're exempt and it's more to do with the offences and how they govern private sales. That sort of thing. Our shop, for example, it has an impact on that and the replica items it sells, and we worked with them on that. But in terms of the collections specifically, it hasn't changed any of our management of it because we're exempt.

SB: Yeah. Following on from that question, have there been any instances, certainly whilst you've been at the Armouries, where an introduction of new legislation has markedly impacted upon the Armouries' collections management strategies?

LB: Not while I've been here. What has had an impact is new staff entering the organisation and their interpretation of that law and, therefore, occasionally things might get slightly more restricted, or we might have different levels of access, which we call Red Zone Access for access to the weapons and the collection generally. Depending on the new person who comes in, they might take a slightly different take to it, but all in all, the management is pretty similar. We have had instances, I think it was following the Paris shootings, is that 2015?

SB: I think so.

LB: We had to work with government to try and avoid them deactivating all weapons and that included weapons in museums. We took a long time persuading them that we should be exempt and the millions of pounds of public money that would have to go into doing that for a really poor return. There's been those instances where we've worked with others to ensure that we maintain an exemption, but we haven't had anything big impact our measures. We've had different deactivations specifications, making sure we've got the right deactivation certificate for items we're purchasing, if they are deactivated. That sort of thing. But that's prior to me starting and we haven't had a new deactivation specification, I don't think since I've been here.

SB: I understand that the Armouries tries to collect live weapons where possible, so I assume that there won't be a huge amount of impact anyway.

LB: We do, exactly. I mean there are some items we would collect and they would be deactivated, but there would be good reason for that. But we wouldn't specifically look for that, we have all the licences to not do that, and keeping an item working is much better for our knowledge and educational purposes. Absolutely right.

SB: Excellent, thank you. Going onto the more specific aspects of the law, what are the key measures that the Armouries and its registrar staff implement to manage its collections in line with offensive weapons law? Just to start off with.

LB: Offensive weapons law. There isn't really an act, as I was saying, that has a big impact on us. We're exempt, we can hold all of those items. The shop has an issue with the ID and selling to a certain extent, but we've got round that. The *Offensive Weapons Act* [2019], again, we worked hard to ensure that we've got those exemptions, so it didn't have an impact. Unless there's something that you're specifically referring to that I'm not thinking of.

SB: I was thinking more, how do the exemptions work in practice? Is it like a blanket exemption? I know for firearms and for explosives there are particular licences and conditions. Are there any equivalents for offensive weapons law as far as you know?

LB: No, there aren't specific licences for those types of items other than the firearms, which is covered by other legislation and other practices. The only thing I can think of is the handling of those items and public perception of a new law coming out that surrounds those items. We might

consider the sensitivities around it, but the measures are quite stringent just from the *Firearms Act* [1968]. That's really where the biggest impact lies, I'd say.

SB: Of course. To define offensive weapons, I'm going more for the edged weapons in relation to the Armouries' collections at least. But I know that the law makes a distinction between public spaces and private spaces within that. What would be a public and a private space in relation to the Armouries' sites?

LB: Ah, well, we're publicly funded. That's a really good question. I don't know how it technically is defined. My view on it would be that they're all public spaces, but how we allow access to them is a different matter. We are not a private institution, we're publicly funded and governed by a *National Heritage Act* [1983], so it's very public. But there's rules and restrictions that sit separately to all of that, that you have to abide by.

SB: Yeah, thank you. It's probably a good time to move on to firearms law and so, the same question really, what are the key measures that the Armouries and its registrar staff implement in order to comply with firearms law?

LB: Well, all sorts. There is access of course, so restricted physical access to our collections, specifically the firearms and edged weapons, and that is through access requests, then an access form that you provide details to ensure that you are the person that you say you are. There's no criminal convictions that make you a prohibited person, and you're not under 14. There's those restrictions in place. We also have ratios on numbers that can go through into stores, so that we make sure there's line of sight. Storage, of course, generally and the security around that, the restricted access to keys. Training, required handling training, other sorts of conservation type training, but that tends to be more to do with the handling of the items, not pointing the weapon at someone, being sensible, that sort of thing. We've got all of our licences in place, Museum Firearms Licence, and then for the work that we do at the National Firearms Centre [NFC] we're a registered firearms dealer and we have Section 5 authority [ability to hold firearms prohibited under Section 5 of the *Firearms Act 1968*]. Display. We ensure that we don't have multiple licensable weapons in one case, and if we do we put extra security measures in place, such as CCTV, extra invigilation, line of sight, better cases. Again, restricted access. Transport licences and the use of appropriate shippers, shippers specifically related to Section 5 material, generally we use a Section 5 shipper. Ensuring checks on those that are taking a loan of a weapon are done

so they have the appropriate licences, that you ensure that any constabulary or the Home Office are told if necessary. Constant liaison with the police and the Home Office because of the levels of weapons that we hold and that type of weapons we hold. Restricted access even further at the NFC because of the amount of items in one place, all namely licensable, and working with an armourer on site. We do have some items that are deactivated and we would consider it in certain circumstances, but as we've talked about we don't do that as a matter of course. Trying to think of anything else. We don't restrict intellectual access to the collection, but there could be more research into that. I don't know if the report's come out yet, but the Met Police and all of their posting of edged weapons on Twitter, that actually made other people want to hold an edged weapon more than if they didn't post on Twitter that they'd found all these items. Because people are trying to protect themselves, so it's a threat and response situation. I think there's much more research that could be done into understanding the sensitivities around providing a lot of information on these types of items readily or the way that you interpret them for different audiences and how that's done. But at the moment we just tell people what we've got, we just don't tell them the location of it.

SB: No, for obvious reasons. That could be a PhD in of itself.

LB: Yes, that's the next one, Stuart!

SB: Oh gosh. One is enough, I think.

LB: Then at the NFC, of course, it is restricted access. But we also provide a service for other government bodies that was part of us taking on that collection, so Border Force, MoD [Ministry of Defence], NABIS [National Ballistics Intelligence Service], NCA [National Crime Agency], and various serious crime units that we support. Any other bona-fide research projects can come in. Otherwise, you can't bring your family and friends or the public generally around.

SB: Thank you for that. That was all very comprehensive.

LB: Oh, was it? I'm sure I've missed something.

SB: I was just thinking about antique firearms specifically, because obviously under firearms law they are their own class. But has the recent introduction of the new *Antique Firearms*

Regulations in 2021 influenced or shaped the practice at the Armouries in any substantial way or have things gone on more or less as before?

LB: I don't think it has, but that would be a question that might be better put to Mark Murray-Flutter [Senior Curator of Firearms] or Jonathan Ferguson [Keeper of Firearms and Artillery] or Katie Robson [Registrar], because I'm not fully across that at this stage. I know that they changed the definition. I'm not sure if that has an impact on how we define those items beforehand. I very much doubt it does but better ask them, I'd say.

SB: Fair enough. It seems a good point now to move onto explosives law because it's got quite a different perspective and focus than offensive weapons law or firearms law. Do you think the health and safety focus of explosives law shapes the management of these collections in a different way to other collections like firearms or edged weapons?

LB: Absolutely yeah, and I think not just from a legal perspective, but from, as you say, a health and safety perspective. We as an organisation know that those items are readily dangerous. A firearm could be used as a stick to hit you, but it isn't something that's going to explode and cause serious bodily harm or shouldn't. We ensure that we check our firearms for that reason, and they don't stay stored loaded or with ammunition next to them. But ammunition could do just that, so it is stored separately and has restricted access. I mean very similar things are in place, but the health and safety around it and the risk assessing of it are slightly different. The licences and certificates, of course, they're slightly different too.

SB: Could you elaborate on that, if that's possible, about the differences between the various certificates?

LB: There is only the one, I think. The explosives certificates which you get through HSE [Health and Safety Executive] for the manufacture and storage, I think it is of explosives is what we call it. We have those at the sites that we have live ammo, so that's the Fort [Nelson] and Leeds. In terms of the licences, it's not done through the Home Office. It doesn't have the same, I would say, level of restrictions. Explosives can be used for fireworks, lots of people can buy fireworks with the right ID. Firearms are much more restricted in their law, I guess because they're the vehicle. But the licence itself doesn't really dictate other than the type of explosives you can have in terms of manufacturing, storage and use. It doesn't dictate what you can and

cannot do. Whereas to a certain extent the firearms ones do, or there's implications and perceptions around them from the Home Office.

SB: Yes. Related to both firearms licence and the explosives licences, have there been any times where the conditions on those licences, specifically in relation to the Armouries, where they've changed particularly drastically, or has it been more piecemeal?

LB: No, not any specific changes. The only things I can think of is when a new person comes in at the Home Office and they interpret what you need to do around that slightly differently. Occasionally you'll get someone who asks for a full list of all firearms that you hold.

SB: Oh gosh.

LB: We'll go back to them and say, that's a bit ridiculous. Where are you going to store this? Why do you actually need to know this? Our police authority are fully aware of what we've got, there's no need for you to see a separate list, and it's more difficult for us. But other smaller institutions do end up giving up that information and they actually shouldn't have to, so we do support smaller institutions around that too. So in terms of the licences, I can't remember any changes that we've had in my time. Not any drastic changes I know of.

SB: Okay, fair enough. I suppose the main change will have been the introduction of them in first place rather than their development.

LB: Yeah, I think the fee changed for getting the licence. I think it went up to £500 now or something like that [actually £200] for five years, and you have to apply for it online. But in terms of what it's asking you to do in any restrictions, it's not changed.

SB: Yeah. Going back to the theme on explosives, how does the Museum go about identifying what sorts of explosives it holds? Because there are a lot of different types of explosives in the law and all have different requirements. I assume there's a process behind that at the Armouries?

LB: Yeah, we do checks on our ammunition for ensuring certain parts of it are free from explosives and we're getting contractors to do that, Ramora. I've seen the procedure before and we could probably send it to you, but I couldn't go through it with you today, unfortunately. Then, in terms of the ammunition that we have for firing, it's brought in specifically of the grades and types that we need to do just that, so there's no retrospective identification required

on that because it's what we've bought. It's checked by our armourer before it's fired. There's two types, really, we've got the historic ammunition and the live firing ammunition.

SB: Is that mostly black powder in both cases?

LB: Yes.

SB: Okay. That's definitely good to know.

LB: Although we did just buy an Indian rocket with sword and we think the ammunition in that, eighteenth-century, seventeenth century, is real and potentially live. But obviously so old it's probably inert, so we're going to send it through a specific lab to test it, so that'll be interesting. We know enough to identify that could potentially be black powder, but we tend to get specialists off site to provide that support.

SB: Yeah, that makes sense. Going back to firearms again, the regulations and legislation are based on a series of gradings from Section 5 downwards. How does the Armouries go about grading those and applying those to its own firearms collections?

LB: Identifying it using the definitions, ultimately. Your prohibited weapons are made to fire quickly and often, without much pressure on the trigger, that sort of thing. They tend to be your machine guns. Section 2 tend to be your shotguns. There's various bores and calibres that are obsolete, of course, so you have to double check those. Section 1 are your rifles, tend to be anyway. There is a Section 7 which relates to handguns, but it tends to be more restricted around private use, so we don't tend to use that.

SB: Yeah, so who would be responsible for that process then?

LB: Our firearms curators. I mean there's a lot of people in the institution that could do a quick ID, most people in the collection team could, but the firearms team would do the specific cataloguing identification.

SB: I assume that'll be recorded and documented?

LB: Yeah. As soon as it goes anywhere near us, it's on the object entry form, it's on the transport forms. We have to know what licence category it is to know what precautions we need to take

and what we need to do. So before we do anything with it, we would check that. If we weren't sure, we'd always go for worst case scenario.

SB: Yeah, that makes sense. Moving on now back to the broader questions. Has the Armouries ever been required to substantially revise its collections management strategies in response to new interpretations? Over the existing weapons law? I know you've picked up on that a little bit before, but could you expand on that or possibly offer alternative examples?

LB: I can't think of anything that we have majorly had to change. We've had things from the National Security Advisor, for example, suggesting that we should cable all of our weapons on display, like they're bolted down, ultimately, and I know IWM [Imperial War Museum] do that. But we think that would ruin the display and the interpretation, so we've pushed back on that. We've not done that. Again, it comes down to those interpreting it rather than law specifically itself. Again, the Home Office have asked for a full list of our weapons, we've said no, it's not good use of your time or our time. Again, new people coming into the Armouries have slightly adapted the Red Zone policies and procedures to suit, as necessary, but not any major changes to the storage or display or access to those items. It perhaps comes down to sensitivities. There is the Alec Baldwin incident that happened recently in the USA on a film set and we knew that public perception would change around handguns. We knew the use for educational purposes, although blank firing we might be scrutinised around our processes around that, so we looked at our paperwork. We do have the appropriate training, we're just not sure we've got it on record. There's things like that where we double check ourselves, we audit ourselves and will ensure that we're doing things appropriately, but I can't think of any major changes in the way that we manage the collection, specifically.

SB: That's fair enough.

LB: I got thinking there must be something, but not in my time that I can remember now.

SB: If you're keeping on top of it and doing it as you go, there's no need to respond to someone else doing it. If you're doing it proactively. One thing you spoke about, Alec Baldwin, another issue on that theme, do you think that the Plymouth incident this year will have any impact on firearms law more generally, and on the Armouries specifically?

LB: I don't think so, no. I think what will happen is that those who hold private licences, for shooting purposes, they will be asked a different set of questions. Or what will happen is that the Home Office will mandate that all authorities who are licensing have to do the same thing. Certain authorities did ask for medical information, obviously Plymouth, I don't know what constabulary is near that, didn't. Again, that was their interpretation, they weren't forced to do anything specifically. So the law may change around that or their procedures around that may be shaped more by the Home Office, but I don't think it will have an impact on Museums Firearms Licence because I think medical information is asked of our main licence holder. It's a good point, actually. We're pretty risk averse when it comes to anything to do with firearms.

SB: Of course. You said that the Armouries has a main licence holder, could you say who that is? Or is it confidential?

LB: It's the Accounting Officer, so it's the Director General. He goes on the Licence, but possibly just has to hope that we're all managing it properly, which we do. It's the Director General or the CEO at the time.

SB: That's really good to know. Moving on now, do you think the weapons law, as it stands, accounts for the needs of museums who hold collections of arms and armour like the Armouries?

LB: It's a really difficult question. It's a yes and no. Because yes, it does account for the safety of the public, so you can't really quibble with that. Does it allow us to provide great access to a public collection? No, but I'm not sure it should. It's one of those things. Are there other ways that we could do things that would provide greater access to that public collection that we're not already doing? I don't think it would be right to send a hundred people round stores and children handling things and pointing guns, and that sort of thing, so the law probably is right. It's the guidance that sits around it, and what the grey areas are that we can push into that we need to figure out together across all these institutions that have the same types of collections. The problem will come that you can't actually be that definitive on what you can and cannot do. That's where risk averse comes in. We shouldn't do that, but how far could we push the boundaries to allow for slightly greater access? Or is there a different way of providing that access that we've not thought up? So the law is fine, how we interpret it and provide guidance around it and allow the public to access it, I don't think we've quite got that right.

SB: Are there initiatives within the museum sector that are pushing this?

LB: Not that I've heard of. I mean mostly museums put things on display, and we could do more of that. We could provide an open store, but we'd have to reduce the numbers of weapons in it, I think, because the police wouldn't be happy with us even having an open store that was secure. Basically, a display area behind the scenes with lots of weapons. Or do we put in more invigilation? I don't know. The problem comes with the NFC. We can't split it up because it's required for a Service Level Agreement, activities with other government bodies. But unless we split it up, we can't provide great access to it, so it's always balancing. But there's no initiatives that I've thought of and, to be honest, we should be the ones leading on that.

SB: Yeah. Are there any groups or like Subject Specialist Networks that are working on the issue or is it very much still a nebulous idea that just individual institutions are developing?

LB: We have the Museum Weapons Group, which I chair. That specifically is a group and body that the Home Office can consult for the impact on museums for various things or we would work together to make amendments to some of the guidance to make it easier for museums. For example, not sending in your list of objects, that sort of thing. But if we're talking about Subject Specialist Networks, the type that are funded through the Arts Council and listed on their website, no there is not one. But we've talked about it, we're just not sure that would be the right route, or whether actually just having more information on our website would be better.

SB: Right. Something that that links to is the idea of consultation, what do you think the role of the Armouries should be in consultation with government on future legislation?

LB: Well, we've led on it for museums when it comes to arms and armour legislation.

SB: Okay, so could you clarify the process that's involved in that then?

LB: So, the Home Office would probably contact us. DCMS [Department for Culture, Media and Sport] have contacted us in the past. Sometimes we catch wind of a process happening that we've not been asked to support, so we've weighed in. Then we work with DCMS, NMDC [National Museum Directors' Council], the Museum Weapons Group, gather information, examples, and clarifications, and we would send that through me as Chair of the Weapons Group, supported by the firearms team.

SB: Are there any specific examples that you can give where this process has been particularly effective?

LB: This is an interpretation not an amendment to the law, but recently we had a new person start at the Home Office in the firearms team. He requested that the Science Museum Group needed a Section 5 authority to return a Section 5 item, I think it was to IWM. I can't quite remember who was involved, but basically one museum was returning a Section 5 to another after a loan period, and it was all to do with the interpretation of 'transfer' and the need to have the appropriate licence. Because it was felt that the Museum Firearms Licence didn't cover a loan of, transport of, or transfer of and therefore it needed a higher authority and that the police needed to be informed. We waded in to not add extra hoops to jump through for all museums. But this particular person said no, we need to do this from now on. What we did win was it was just an email from the Home Office. While we need to let them know what was happening, which we didn't use to have to do, they would just send a quick approval, unless it was something crazy, to say you can transfer that Section 5 for loan purposes to another museum.

SB: That's really interesting. I suppose it's such a hard one when there's so many people involved and so many stakeholders, especially when one of them is government.

LB: Yeah, what tends to happen is that we as museums, but also as firearms specialists, know more than the Home Office. So we're quite often trying to educate them and we always make sure that they come to the NFC, they see the place and they have some form of training because they change positions every two years. They're civil servants, following the guidance, which is absolutely right. But if they decide to make a change based on their interpretation, it can have a pretty big impact, so we've always got to look out for that.

SB: Yeah, that's very useful. Thank you.

LB: Jen has the ins and outs of that one if you need more detail. Did she mention it?

SB: Yeah, we did discuss that a bit. The two accounts together will be enough.

LB: Hopefully, we've covered all bases.

SB: Yes. I think now's a good time to move on to the case study, so that is the impact of the *Firearms (Amendment) Acts* of 1997. The initial question for that is how has the prohibition of

the majority of handguns by the *Firearms (Amendment) Acts* of 1997 shaped the Armouries' subsequent management of these objects?

LB: It's difficult to say, because I wasn't there at the time, if it did have a big impact. But my understanding was it didn't in terms of the management of the items, because it really related to private use, as far as I remember and so the management of firearms didn't specifically change. I think your future questions cover what the impact did have in terms of the management of the items themselves, I don't think it did have a change. But again, worth checking with Mark Murray-Flutter, who was there when the NFC was put together, but also has been at the Armouries for, I don't know, thirty years.

SB: Yes, one of those very long-serving members of staff. There are quite a few.

LB: Yeah, he's your firearms expert as well, so he might just have some interesting stories around what happened when that came in. If there was any sensitivities around it, never mind changes for us in the management of items. I can't think there would be.

SB: What have been the longstanding impacts of the *Firearms (Amendment) Acts*? Because obviously there was the amnesty and the compulsory surrender following that. What do you consider the impact of that to be on the Armouries?

LB: Well we got some stuff. Yeah, it's interesting. Whenever there's an amnesty people have this tendency to walk into the Armouries and think they'll get around going to the police by dropping it off as a donation. We always have to turn people around saying that you have to go to the police, we will get it eventually. At the time, I believe that we became the main repository for items or, what happened was, the team went to go through the items with other national institutions, and they were divvied up based on collecting remits. But we were the lead for it, I believe, and we supported that process. What ended up happening was we got quite a few items through and we're still dealing with the backlog of some of those items today, so they've still not been fully processed.

SB: Yeah, thousands and thousands of handguns. It's going to take time to document and do provenance research, all of those important things.

LB: Yeah, absolutely. It's deciding whether we want it or not, whether we dispose of it, and then disposing of it appropriately or giving it elsewhere if not. We're still working through, I think it's maybe another 500 items left. We've had a project on for the past four or five years where we've been going through it to make the space. They came in big bins, loads of them. It's great that we have this opportunity and we just have to say that they've come from that constabulary, that police authority. We don't have more information than that unless the police want to give it up, the history of the items. While you can think hey are from this type or they're from this part of the country or they've gone here or there, we don't know. Whereas, generally as a museum we'd want full provenance history. We're clear it's because it's coming from the police, so we don't need to do it from a risk perspective. But it would be nice to know the story.

SB: Yes, that's one of the difficult but also interesting things about weapons collections is that their histories can be challenging. But it's a history that should be told, ultimately.

LB: Absolutely, yeah. That's why we always look out for personal stories or associations when we're acquiring items and it's really exciting when that happens. But, of course, we were an arsenal. While we know men, and possibly women, fought with various things, we don't know specifically a lot of the time who they are attributed to.

SB: Yeah, I suppose that's just an issue with history in general, isn't it?

LB: Well, to a certain extent. I don't think art galleries have the same problem, necessarily.

SB: True, your Old Masters and things. We've touched on this a little bit already, but what role do you think that the *Firearms (Amendment) Acts* of 1997 played in the development of the National Firearms Centre as part of the Armouries? But obviously a distinct part of it.

LB: Again, I don't think it had an impact because that was pre- us getting it. Other than those items being processed through the NFC and having a safe space to reside, the NFC opened in 2005. Anything that would have happened to the management of, our thoughts around it being built would have been done as part of that and later not because of the *Firearms (Amendment) Acts* in 1997. Again, huge backlog. We processed a lot, and still collecting items. But I can't think of anything that would have had an impact based on that, not specifically related to the NFC and its management.

SB: Right. What about the general legislation? Do you think the firearms legislation in general had an impact on the development of the National Firearm Centre? Or was it more the fact that it was a separate collection coming in? Do you think that shapes it as a separate bit of the institution?

LB: I think the latter. It's the association with the MoD. It's the type of items, it's the amount of items. Then we had to work with West Yorkshire Police, and again, it was their interpretation of what we needed to do, how we should restrict things, how it should be manned, and how we could use it. That was all developed at that time when it was being put in. I think again more to do with interpretation and the perception of having so many Section 5s essentially in one place, and the risks that that brought, potentially. I think there was more to do with that rather than anything specifically in the firearms legislation. I think it's more to do with perception of the amount of items, because there is nothing in law that says because you have 30,000 firearms you have to treat them differently and this is what you have to do. It's more managing the risk and risk appetite for your stakeholders such as West Yorkshire Police and making sure you keep them onside because they give you your licence.

SB: You have to be seen to be making a proportionate response.

LB: Exactly, yeah.

SB: Excellent, thank you very much. I think that's all my specific questions answered, but are there any other any other points that you'd like to discuss further or are there any issues that you think that should be raised that I haven't covered at all?

LB: Just thinking through. Just trying to think about guidance around edged weapons, perhaps we've not touched on them too much.

SB: Yeah, I suppose there isn't actually any specific conditions that the Armouries has to meet in that respect. I formulated these questions as a general overview, before I got stuck in, and then as I read the legislation I kept seeing that museums are exempted.

LB: Yeah, it's the same as basically what I've said throughout, it comes down to interpretation, sensitivities, stakeholders, and public perception in particular around all these things and your response to that. It's the same for edged weapons, really. As you say, there's nothing really

written down to say, if you do this we'll remove your licence. Are you looking into that side of it as well, the perception side, or is that just a step too far?

SB: There's going to be a part on interpretation, so going into that and that will be a concluding part of this chapter on legislation, bringing together the three strands of the legislation.

LB: Good.

SB: But is there anything you'd like to conclude with? Or do you think that that's everything?

LB: I can't think of anything. Are we going to do another interview set at a different stage under a different heading?

SB: I hope so.

LB: Once you get there, of course.

SB: Are we finished, then? Would you like me to stop the recording?

LB: Yes, I think that's everything. I can't think of anything else.