

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

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**Interview Transcript: Jen Kaines – Head of Collections Services (Royal Armouries),  
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SB: Hello. May I ask what is your name please?

JK: My name is Jen Kaines and I am the Head of Collections Services for Royal Armouries.

SB: Thank you very much. When did you start working in this current role?

JK: I started working for Royal Armouries in August 2018, so just over three years, three and a bit years now.

SB: Nice engagement with the collections there, I'm sure. And have you occupied any other collections-oriented roles at the Royal Armouries?

JK: No, this is my first time for venturing into the world of the Royal Armouries, although I've worked in partnership with the organisation for ten-plus years in my former role, so I'm aware quite a bit of the organisation and it's history and everything else.

SB: Lovely, thank you. Moving on to the nitty-gritty of today's session. The first question is what do you consider to be the principal legislative restrictions on the collections of the Armouries?

JK: We're governed by a huge amount of legislation and some of which is directly museum-related, so things like the *National Heritage Act* [1983] which created us back in the 1980s. But in terms of the restrictions on collections, the majority of them that give us restrictions are more to do with the collection type, i.e., the weaponry, so in terms of firearms and explosives, and offensive weapons, i.e., sharp things basically. So, those are key areas that we have tighter restrictions than perhaps some other collection types because of the material type that we look after, really.

SB: Thank you. Are there any particular examples that you could elaborate on, whether that's certain specific pieces of legislation?

JK: Yeah, I mean the *Firearms Act* [1968] details things like who can access, whether you're a prohibited person or not, and also age limits on various items. So unlike other collection types in

the sector, we are somewhat restricted into whom can access our material. It's not that everybody can access the material, it's just that some people for very different reasons may not be able to access those firearm collections.

SB: Thank you very much. How do you discern the impacts of legislation in the course of your daily duties? Is it something that covers all range of activities you carry out, or is it something that impacts on particular processes and procedures?

JK: Underneath our legislative framework, we operate policy and procedure underneath that. So, when we're looking at developing that policy and how we carry out that policy through procedure and any changes in legislation, that's where it is a key driver. So anytime we're aware that there's some change in legislation or some amendment to any of the Acts, we make sure that we really have a detailed look at that and then convert that into the policy and then the procedures underneath that. Those policies and procedures are something that we work with and on regularly, and how we undertake all our activities are governed by policy and procedures. So any kind of collections tasks that we do is pretty much covered by a procedure, which is governed by a policy, which is dictated to by legislation, so it's everything that we do every day. It's maybe not explicit in that I'm not referring to, for example, the *Firearms Act* [1968] every day of my working life. But what I am referring to are the policies and procedures that we've got in place.

SB: Thank you for that. Could you explain a little bit more about how they're formulated, the policies and procedures? Who's involved in it? How you develop them, especially if you're developing things from scratch? Most of it you'll have previous incarnations, and you're just rearticulating it, but I'd be interested to find out more.

JK: Yeah, I mean most museums have been going for a huge amount of time. I mean we especially have been going, we say that we date back to Henry the Eighth in terms of our museum and on our practice, and practice has really developed a huge amount. I mean, even in the time that I've been working within museums, which is now coming up to twenty-five, thirty years, practice has changed quite considerably. And absolutely, we have got better at writing things down and following that rather than going, oh well, I feel like doing it this way today or I feel like doing it that way. So whilst I've written pieces of policy from scratch as it were, there's usually other frameworks that are around. You would start, if I was looking at policy that we

didn't have that was going completely from no basis whatsoever, I'd start with looking at what legislative framework I'd be working within. What international statutes might be governed and then tease out from there what we would do in terms of what our policy is as an organisation. That being said, in the UK, I mean collections management has been professionalised dramatically over the last twenty, thirty years. So, there are examples of pretty much everything out there, and there's this standard guidance around Spectrum [standards for museum documentation] and guidance from out of Collections Trust. Then using examples from other colleagues. So, whilst Royal Armouries may not have a policy on whatever it is, you can bet that one of my other colleagues in national museums across the UK will have already done this, would have already thought about it. And whilst we wouldn't take it wholesale and just copy and paste or find and replace National Gallery for Royal Armouries – that wouldn't be appropriate because we're completely different organisations – they're a really good basis to start working from. But mostly, the policies and procedures that that I've been working on since I've been with Royal Armouries. The last dramatic policy changes in 2016 and before that, usually you can see where our applications for accreditation hit, because usually that's the opportunity, the driver that makes you really review everything in terms of your policies and/or procedures to make sure that they are meeting best practice guidelines before you submit your accreditation application to Arts Council England.

SB: Yes.

JK: So, there's a lot of things around that. When we reviewed them last, wholesale in 2019, before our submission to accreditation was to really hone down those policy documents. So, policy has to be just that, policy. It should be short and sharp and clear and very plain in terms of its English so that everybody can pick it up and understand it, and be really clear as to what the organisation's policy is on whatever topic it is. And then underneath that, that's when you go into more detail. So, in terms of procedure it is, and how do you do that? How do you carry out that task? Who carries out that task? At what stage of a whole workflow of items, you must do this before you can do this, before you can do that and the approvals? And that's much more of a day-to-day, this is how you do it, these are the tools that you need to do that. Whether it's forms or the database or approvals or emails that you need to send, all of that is documented within the procedures. Those are much more live documents, so those are regularly updated. Especially as

we've been moving towards a more virtual environment, a lot of our procedures have changed because we're now not operating on, for example, forms, physical hard copy forms would go from one desk to another for signature. Well, we're not doing that because we're not all in one building anymore. So we've actually had to rewrite the procedure to say this is how we are going to do this, these kind of signatures are okay for internal use, those kind of signatures are not okay for external contract use, all of that kind of thing. So those are very much more living documents that are being tweaked on a, not weekly basis, but as and when necessary I guess.

SB: Yes. Incremental change, really.

JK: Yeah, exactly. So, you go, oh actually, we could find a better way of doing that, let's do that, right, let's reissue that, we'll tweak that in the procedure and see if that works, and then reissue it for everyone. Whereas the policies are very much, we've reviewed those, that's where we're sat, and those've been signed off. Those get signed off by exec[utive] board and then by Board of Trustees, so they're signed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Because those go through that process, basically we only review those every three to five years, whereas procedures are very live. I sign those off as Head of Collection Services or the Director of Collections depending on what the procedure is and that's all documented as well. Those could be very live and it could be a conversation between Katie [Robson], the Registrar, and myself in terms of, oh, I've found a better way of doing that, or actually, we need to adjust this to do that. Okay, that's fine, reissue the procedure and then we send it out to collections colleagues.

SB: Excellent, thank you. That was really illuminating on the whole process behind it. One of the other things that you mentioned earlier is how legislative change is quite an impetus for changes in policy and review and all that sort of thing. Have there been any major legislative amendments that have really changed practice at the Armouries, certainly whilst you've been there?

JK: I mean, there's been tweaks to various bits of legislation, I guess. But nothing quite as dramatic as the *Firearms (Amendment) Acts* from 1997 and I think that was a key one. There are tweaks that have happened in things like explosive legislation and also in terms of how, and this is quite interesting, how the legislation is then interpreted by various people who have to do that. So, for things like the *Explosives Act* [1875], there's an interpretation by the HSE [Health and Safety Executive] because they're the ones who manage it closely. Then underneath that there's a slightly different interpretation by all the different police authorities and because Royal

Armouries acts across the country, and we have obviously venues in Leeds and in London and in Hampshire, we come under three different police authorities. So their interpretation and their requirements are slightly different because they're different, because they act in different ways in the kinds of police authority, which is quite interesting when you're dealing with that, when our licence as such for things like that is an overarching organisational licence. But on a day-to-day basis, we might have to do things in a slightly different way, depending on the police authority.

SB: Yes. That's good to know. That's something that hopefully we'll come back to later on in the interview and discuss in a bit more depth. Thank you very much. Moving on now to some of the more subject specific parts of the interview. I'd like to ask, what are the key measures that the Armouries and its registrar staff implement to manage its collections in line with the requirements of offensive weapons law, to start off with?

JK: The things that we put in place to manage collections in line with most of the legislation is quite similar, whether you're dealing with offensive weapons, firearms. Explosives slightly differently, I guess. But the other two, most of the thing is that we restrict down in terms of our collection security and it's that collections security policy and procedure that's the really key one in terms of how we manage in relation to those Acts. Whilst other museums across the sector will have collection security to a certain level, in terms of they will make sure that they've restricted who goes into which area or whatever, it's not free access into stores. For us, it's even more controlled and partly that's because of the legislation, and partly it's because the material that we hold, and in order to protect the staff who are working within it, both in terms of from potential attack from others, but also in terms of from themselves. In terms of making sure, for example, that you cannot draw a firearm and piece of ammunition, a piece of live ammunition, that you could use together. That kind of thing. So our collection security policy and procedure really details all of that in terms of how and who can have access to which areas, what material is more restricted than others. Some of that is legislative, some of that is around health and safety because the irony is that actually I am probably more worried about people having access to Japanese swords, on a practical level, than I am necessarily to a Brown Bess musket or something like that. Because actually the damage that you can do with the Brown Bess musket, it's using it as a club really.

SB: Yeah, which it's not really designed for.

JK: No, as a practical weapon. Whereas the Japanese sword is always really sharp and has massive harm potential. So it's interesting, isn't it? How, yes, we are driven by legislation, but actually there are some things that actually worry me more than the legislation.

SB: Yeah, so it's having that extra layer on top, because legislation has very specific terms and stipulations. Whereas, obviously, the policy will be a bit broader and cover things in more depth that you can't do in legislation.

JK: Yeah, and there's a real difference, as well, in terms of what we can do as a museum under most of this legislation, and what individuals can do with things. So, for example, under the *Firearms Act* because we have a Museum Firearms Licence and we are also registered firearms dealers, that gives us scope to hold anything and everything. There are really no bounds and no restrictions on us in terms of what material we can hold, so we can hold machine guns and pistols and all the rest of it, which, actually, members of the public and other institutions cannot. That's partly because of what we are and who we are and the fact that actually people don't want to see all these things completely destroyed. But actually, as a member of the public or in a different organisation, if you're not an accredited museum, you can't hold that material and that's tightly governed under that legislation. That's why we also need to be really careful because our staff can access this material, and the same checks and balances that go into looking at our staff are potentially less than those checks and balances. If you were an individual and you were applying for a firearms licence or any kind of a shotgun licence, for example, there's a huge amount of scrutiny on you and your background and your mental health and everything else. Whereas, actually in a museum, the museum just dictates who can go in and what they can do with the material. I think there's going to be, especially after the fairly recent case in Plymouth of the shooting, the really tragic shooting there, I think there is going to be some questions asked around the police and in terms of their scrutiny of individuals and their mental health. Then it gives us a question which we've already started looking at the Armouries in terms of what are we going to do and how are we going to make sure that colleagues are in the right place mentally in order to deal with this material? And to make sure that we do not have any opportunity where colleagues can, as I say, draw ammunition as well as a firearm, at any point. So those checks and balances I think are really key.

SB: Obviously you mentioned about the Museum Firearms Licence being a crucial part of how the Armouries can interact and indeed possess its collections of firearms. But I know that the legislation stipulates that conditions are often attached to Museum Firearms Licence. Could you discuss those in relation to the Armouries if that's alright?

JK: Yeah, a lot of it's around security, in terms of physical security presence. So, there is in some detail and the police make sure that they inspect your armoury and ask questions of who can access what material. So, for our firearms licence we are inspected by West Yorkshire, the Met [the Metropolitan Police], and Hampshire, respectively, at all our sites. And they look at our physical security, so looking at things like how do we control access during the day, but also at night and what you do 365 days of the year. So looking at CCTV, our alarm security or fire alarm security. Who has detailed access, so who can access the material when things are on display? How secure they are? Most small arms are in sat within cases and are very securely displayed. For artillery pieces it's bit harder, I guess. But then, because we recently did an inspection with our colleagues at Hampshire Police at the Fort [Nelson] and we were discussing, they said, all your firearms are within the curtilage of the Fort, aren't they? I was like, well no, they're not because actually, we've got a 17-inch and the Mallet's mortar sat outside the Fort. Those are live firearms in theory, because they've not been deactivated in any way, but the practicalities of anybody stealing them and/or using them, that's just ridiculous.

SB: Very slim.

JK: But it's those kind of things that you look on paper and actually we have got firearms that are sat outside the curtilage of the Fort. And then, in practicality, actually, what does that mean? Well, there's no way that those could be used, as they are in that location, so that's fine, but they do look at all of that stuff. They look at whether we control access to keys to stores. Who has access? Can we log all of that? All of that kind of thing, so that's all detailed and documented. Then also whether we vet our staff or not, what level of vetting we have on staff, all of those things. So that's the police's view on that, and that's how we work through those security aspects with the museum firearms legislation. The other thing they look at is whether you are an accredited museum, and obviously within that accreditation scheme, there's a lot more questions that we answer in terms of security and environments and access to users and all of that kind of thing. As a national museum and having loans to and from nationals, then we are also subject to

the National Security Adviser's inspection, as well. So it's a multi-layered inspection and security to make sure that we are fit people within that Museum Firearms Licence. So it's not something that you can easily get hold of. Your stores need to meet a very high standard in terms of security and in terms of fire. All your doors need to be a certain specification, so there's all those specifications that you actually have to meet, whether you are a small museum with a tiny collection or, for us, so hundreds and thousands of firearms. That's the Firearms Licence aspect.

SB: Thank you, that's really interesting. It's such a crucial aspect to any regulation of firearms. Just to clarify, how often do the inspections by, say, the police or the National Security Adviser? How often do they take place?

JK: So, the police ones are every time you renew your Firearms Licence, and in theory that's every five years. Again, National Security Adviser, I think in theory he should be visiting more often than he does. Within the accreditation scheme, one of the questions is, has the National Security Adviser assessed your premises in the last five years? Accreditation feel that their best practice is within five years. When I arrived at Royal Armouries, three years ago, I realised that actually the National Security Adviser hadn't visited us for quite some time and we've done quite a lot of changes and there were quite a lot of changes planned to the building fabric, especially at Leeds in terms of where we've got new CCTV security system, new roller shutters, fire and all the rest of it. Then at the Tower [of London] we had some improvements on the fire system, so we invited him to come and inspect us outwith his normal cycle because we wanted to make sure that he was happy with what we were proposing to do in terms of those works, whether he could offer us any advice on any of those things. I guess in theory it should be every five years, but actually in practicalities, it's when you've had any or proposing any changes to your building fabric. My view is always that he's a useful person to have on your side and in your corner, and it's best to ask his advice rather than beg his forgiveness.

SB: Very sensible. Continuing the theme of firearms, because the relevant legislation is based on a graded framework really with the different levels of stringency, how does the Armouries go about applying the correct grade, for example Section 5 [of the *Firearms Act 1968*], to an individual firearm?

JK: Yeah, so the sectioning is interesting and that's a very much a moveable feast, in that items can move in and out of being sectioned and/or antiques and there is no definitive list because the



list changes. The irony in a way is that, so for some things West Yorkshire Police will come to us and ask our advice, and yet we're still governed by them. Most of it's around calibre of weapon, and in terms of whether ammunition is readily available. Now, all ammunition in theory is available and that you can make it yourself. However, what they mean is that basically, can you go and buy it off the shelf, and that's really where things are coming from. Obviously that depends, so [with] modern weapons obviously you can go to any gunsmith and buy rounds for those weapons. But some of the older ones it's more difficult and for things like black powder weapons, that's mostly more difficult. So, we utilise our internal firearms curators and their expertise to determine which section weapon they would be determined under. All our weapons are live, in that we don't deactivate any of our weapons.

SB: Yeah.

JK: The ones that we use for demonstration purposes within our Interps [Interpretations] team, we would never allow them to use the Section 5. They would have to be a replica or reproduction item, but those items are very specific for their requirements, and we would not be firing machine guns or anything else. We only fire blanks, we don't ever fire live weapons when we're demonstrating out in the public realm. It's slightly different when we're doing research and on the firing range, we have fired live items, small arms this is. Yeah, it's an internal [process] how we would detail and there are lists available from the Home Office in terms of what could be Section 1 [of the *Firearms Act 1968*] or Section 5. But basically it's internal. We normally determine what those weapons are, it's all lodged on the collections management database, so it's very clear to everyone what section this firearm would fall under. And if we're going to use it or loan it, then we would review that and make sure that that's still the case at any point, because things move in and out of antique or non-antique. We would review it at that point so that we can be clear as to if we're lending something, whether we are lending it and how we are lending it. So, in terms of, can we lend it to a museum because it's an antique and therefore they don't need a Museum Firearms Licence and all the stringent things that go along with that. Or are we lending it? It is a Section 5, okay. Because then we need to make sure that actually, there's only a certain number of carriers in terms of transport, the security needs to be a certain level, they need to be licenced. All of that stuff needs to be in place, so we review it regularly, but on use rather than wholesale. Unless there's something that comes up and understandingly,

they say this type of weapon has been removed from the list, then we can update that. But usually it's on use, so we determine, as I say, when it goes out on loan, right okay, what section is this? Are we still happy that that is a section whatever? And then go from there really.

SB: Yeah, so would you conduct an audit of the whole firearms collection, if new legislation was introduced? Such as the *Antique Firearms Regulations* [2021] earlier this year.

JK: Yeah, potentially. I mean that didn't really affect us because we're holding weapons on a different basis to a lot of places. But yes, we have done that. We do regulate, so part of our audit programme we always have a firearms part of that audit. That's because of the concerns, rightly, from trustees that we have got controlled collections, so they want to be assured that we are continually on top of our locations for our firearms. Obviously, we prioritise the more important Sections. So, Section 5s are the ones that we would prioritise in terms of that audit programme, because they are more tightly governed than, for example, a Section 1, and the antiques less so again. We are constantly auditing firearms to make sure that they are in the right place and we've got them, they are the right Section and all the documentation is up to date, so that's an added layer of things that we do. If there was a major change in legislation, absolutely, we would just then pick that up and then have to adjust everything to that effect.

SB: Excellent, thank you. That really cleared a lot of things up. I think time to move on now onto explosives because the legislation surrounding explosives is formatted in a bit of a different way. It treats explosives, certainly in relation to the Armouries, in a different way. What do you think the distinct health and safety focus of explosives, how does that impact on the Armouries' approach to public safety and how it's implemented in practice, really?

JK: I guess there's different aspects here, isn't there. So we have a research collection of ammunition. Now some of it's very old and some of the explosive material held within those nominally live rounds is not likely, or is less likely, to be active to be honest, because black powder does degrade over time. So it may be that some of those live rounds aren't live because they don't have the capability to ignite, basically the propellant wouldn't work anymore. However, that small arms ammunition is something that we wouldn't want to make free from explosive because it's about that research of ammunition and I think we have one of the best, if not *the* best in the world, collection of small arms ammunition of different types and various things. Obviously, that is governed under the *Explosives Regulations* [2014], because it is

explosive material. Now, under that regulation, you can hold a certain level, I think it's 5 or 7 kilos, I can't remember off top of my head, but you can hold a certain amount of black powder as an individual without any licensing requirement whatsoever.

SB: Yeah.

JK: So that's fine. I would say that in our small arms ammunition store at Leeds we probably are getting to over that level of explosive material, in which case we have got an explosive licence, the site licence for that venue. But, as I say, we wouldn't want to make that free from explosive, and that then gives us a hazard. So our ammunition store is further restricted than our other stores, so very few people, as in, I can count the fingers of one hand of who has access to that area. So that's really key. We have to make it completely spark-proof. Make sure that we were not taking anything in there that could create any kind of spark, any kind of reaction. Everything stored in specific cabinets in order to reduce that potential risk. The light fittings will have to be a certain type and comply with the legislation on that, make sure that they're not going to give us a problem. The small arms ammunition is controlled in that sense. We also have got a large munition collection of artillery shells. Now for that collection, which is detailing something in excess of 500 items based at the Fort [Nelson], that goes from anything that would be fired from an artillery piece up to the level of mortars like Mallet's mortar, those kind of shells. Again, those have a mixture of propellant within them, and most of them, again, may well be inert in terms of their longevity of black powder. However, we made a decision with those, because of the amounts of powder that is likely to be contained, powder or propellant, contained within those munitions that we have decided to make those free from explosives.

SB: Right.

JK: We've been in process for, I think it's now nearly eighteen months, of a company who comes in and basically is certifying whether things are free from explosive or not. That's quite a slow process, so you can't determine from just from looking at a piece of artillery shell, projectile, whether it's live or not. I've learnt a lot about this, the last wee while. Some of it could be high explosive as well as just black powder. That does degrade overtime and has potential to be very explosive because it's degrading, which is why we've taken the decision to make it free from explosive. So they're coming in and working through every single item and giving us a certificate to say that it is free from explosive, having either determined that it is not

live, that it has no explosive in it, or are removing the explosive material from the munition itself. There is going to be a handful, because we're getting near to the end of the process and we have talked about how we would do this, there are going to be a number of items, probably detailing about twenty, I'm not sure exactly yet about the numbers, that we cannot remove the explosive propellant from them and in which case we will need to make a decision. Well, there is no decision to be made because the legislation dictates that we can't hold that material and therefore it will need to be disposed of by destruction. So we are working on how we facilitate that. Some of these items, where they are not hugely dangerous, could be removed from site to be disposed of by the company at their premises. There is likely to be some items that we can't even do that with and that we will need to create an enclosure and have a controlled explosion on site to remove the hazard. The other hazard involved in ammunition and small arms, ammunition specifically, isn't governed under the *Explosives Act* [1875] at all, is lead. So obviously, bullet lead is actually the hazard, in terms of from a people point of view, for us, the hazard for small arms is more lead corrosion and ingestion of lead than it is around explosives. So that's a whole other set, but that's slightly different for that. That's our historic collection.

SB: Yes.

JK: Then, of course, in Royal Armouries we like to work our items, to demonstrate them and so we have, it varies, we have at Leeds and we have at the Fort, got a site licence so that we can hold black powder, so that we can demonstrate weapons. Now at Leeds, that has been entirely small arms related, usually with the Interps team, specifically. At the Fort, it's basically artillery pieces. Then in terms of how we manage that, so everybody who has contact with black powder has to have an acquire licence under that. They are all vetted by the police under that legislation, so that if you handle any form of black powder you have to have an acquire licence. We have a site licence at both RAM [Royal Armouries Museum, in Leeds] and at the Fort, which is very detailed in terms of how the store, the magazine is dealt with, what type of powder we can have, how much powder we can have, and that's very controlled in terms of depending on where you are, it depends on how much you can have. At Leeds it's less of a problem because it's small arms related. Most of the powder and the cartridges and things are being used, it's a low risk because it's low amounts, so it's kilos worth because each cartridge is a tiny amount of powder.

SB: Just a few grammes.

JK: Yeah, exactly. Whereas at the Fort, we've historically fired 25 pounders every day in daily gun firing and that has a third of a kilo per charge. So you're talking about a huge amount, more material in terms of just the amount that you're dealing with, and because it's a bigger thing, bigger risk. The powder magazine at Leeds is a small box, which is locked. Again, lots of security around it, but it's a relatively low risk, and, as I say, under a certain kilos – I think it's five, maybe it's seven – you can hold that without a licence anyway, because that's for shooting purposes.

SB: Is that held separately to the ammunition store?

JK: Absolutely. So, the Interps' working powder, as it were, is held by Interps within their locked spaces rather than anywhere near ammunition, our historic ammunition store. We've got a little stock of that within the Interps, within Leeds, within RAM. Then the NFC [National Firearms Centre] has its own ammunition store, ammunition magazines, sorry, which is used for the working collection. When they're firing on their range in the NFC, they have powder in the NFC that they use for that, which is separate again from any historic ammunition, so the two activities occur very separately. But it's small amounts at both those venues. At the Fort, the magazine is a very large magazine because of the quantities, as I say, we've been dealing with there, or potential quantities. The magazine is controlled and it's sat within the confines of the Fort by that exterior, very secure area and then we have, what's referred to as a processing area as well, so we historically have made our own cartridges and our own charges for firing at the Fort. All of that is at the moment is under review. We stopped firing because, basically, the staff who were firing retired and so then we had big review about that. Then of course COVID hit so that has put things on wait slightly, so we haven't actually fired anything since January 2019, and we're still in review and we haven't got any staff that can fire things.

SB: Yeah, so that's a bit of an obstacle.

JK: A bit of a difficulty. So our magazine is still separate from our processing area, and the processing area is very highly controlled because obviously you don't want any sparks in there at all, and that's got to be really detailed. At the moment, what we've done is we've removed that requirement for processing on a temporary basis with the HSE so that we know that we can just improve the magazine. The legislation somewhat changed since we occupied our site licence, and whilst we are not in contravention of any legislation, best practice has moved on somewhat.

So the distances we had between the magazine and the processing area and then where we fired, that was all detailed and fine when we applied for the site licence, but that was in 2011, and so best practice has moved on since then. We've taken a view with HSE of actually we're going to reduce the amount of powder that we've got in store because of where we've got the powder magazine and the processing area and the firing space. But the risks, obviously, are somewhat higher there because of the quantities involved, and the fact that we're still firing historic pieces.

SB: Thank you. Just regarding the licences that the Armouries have, and I know that there's a licence to acquire and a separate licence to store, what does the Armouries as an institution possess? Does it have both for both Fort Nelson and Leeds? Or is it a different set up?

JK: No, so we have an explosive site licence at the Fort. And then we have, what is referred to as, an acquire and keep licence. So there's a site licence, there's an acquire and keep licence which enables us to acquire and keep. It says exactly what it does on the tin. Explosives, as an organisation at the Fort and then each member of staff who would be handling would need to have an acquire licence. That also means that we have that check and balance because the staff involved in any of those processes will have been vetted by the police, so it gives us an added layer of security, as it were, or confidence of staff. So, for example, at the moment, even though we haven't got any powder on site at the Fort, for example, only two members of staff have their names on the acquire and keep licence, and both have been through that vetting process to make sure that [they're] sensible people that can have access to the magazine. So [they are] the only people who can have access to the magazine keys at present, because [they're] the only ones on the licence.

SB: Yeah.

JK: At Leeds it's slightly different in that, obviously, we've got different numbers of people associated with. But in terms of the Interps, so whoever's on the list of what firing they're going to do, they all have acquire licences if they're using black powder, and they're all listed within that the document, the same as they're all listed as part of our firearms legislation. So, anyone who has access and is likely to handle [them] is listed under that legislation with the police, so they're aware of who is there with that. Then we have other checks and balances. For example, all the Interps, we have a training programme with them, so it's not just because you're, you know Andy Deane [a long-serving member of the Armouries' Interpretation team] and you can't

just go and decide I'm going to fire any one of the weapons that is in the Interps' pool of weaponry, as it were. You have to have been trained and certified on that particular weapon by our NFC team basically, who will make sure that people are safe, who understand that particular firearm type and how to safely fire it, and that's all documented and they have a certificate. I mean it's an internal certificate, but it's a certificate saying you are able to safely fire a Brown Bess musket and an SMLE [Short Model Lee-Enfield rifle], that's all documented. They should not, they do not fire anything else because they're not qualified to do so within our practices. So that's where we are with it, that you have to be authorised to be firing a specific type, even though it's blank firing.

SB: Yeah, and then you can show that to HSE, saying this is what we're doing to comply with the regulations.

JK: Yeah, and I think there's the difficulty because we're governed under that and we have a duty of care, and the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*, to our employees. It's around the employees and the public. One, I don't want anyone to be hurt in any of this. It's inherently a risky activity, let alone the reputational effects of what happens for us as the Royal Armouries to be involved in a firing incident of any sort, it would just be unthinkable, really. I mean that would be horrific. Let alone the personal thing of actually hurting somebody or somebody getting hurt. Or potentially a fatal accident, which is what you would be facing. But you're right, we need to prove beyond reasonable doubt, in a court of law potentially, that we've done everything that we could possibly have done in order to stop an accident happening.

SB: Yes, thank you. Moving on now, so a few more of the general questions again. So, has the Armouries ever been required to substantially revise its collections management strategies in response to new interpretations of existing weapons law?

JK: Not that I can think of. I mean not substantially, at all. I think because we're so heavily involved in talking with, and consulting with, and being experts in firearms, we know what the legislation is going to be, almost before it's enacted, because actually the Home Office talk to us as the experts in the field. The same with any other legislation that's with HSE or anything else, is that, actually, we are the national museum of arms and armour and therefore we would hope that we would have been consulted and we're ahead of the game. Or we're saying to the Home Office, actually, we feel that actually this kind of legislation, or this would be useful to add in

from a museum perspective. As I say, we try and strive for best practice and leading that best practice and therefore almost dictating some of the legislative requirements.

SB: So it's more of a process of negotiation rather than unilateral imposition then.

JK: Yeah, I mean we'd like to think so, and we've had an incident fairly recently. It's a mixture because museums are so small within the legislation and it's not actually written for us, it's written for a wider audience and we happen to be in that mix. So there was an incident where we lent a firearm to another institution under the correct everything, and then it turns out that they couldn't return it to us, in theory, because the legislation does not account for museum loans in the same way. And so, part of our normal practice is that obviously we would lend things and then you would get it back, but there's no ownership. But the firearms legislation doesn't work on ownership, it works on who has possession, and that was the complication. So, we then went back to the Home Office and said hang on a minute, this is a major issue. We can get around it in this instance because, actually, we could go and get it back because we're a registered firearms dealer and we can then just do that, that's fine. But for museums this is a problem, our core business is borrowing and lending and that's what we do, and you're now saying that actually that's illegal. Well, no. We've got to get that understood, and so we talked to the Home Office about how we would do that. It's an interpretation of the law again, so it's not necessarily that we need to revise legislation, it's the Home Office's interpretation of [it]. If they have an understanding of this is what museums' core business is, we can do that under the Museums Firearms Licence and we make that explicit, so everybody is aware of that, that's great. But yeah, I'd like to think it's a negotiation and us being consulted and consulting. Being proactive about it and that's part of our role as a national museum, it's that we should be. We are the voice of the museums with these legislative bodies and as I've indicated before, our impression is that we should be talking and asking advice and being that voice and raising these issues before something comes back at us. So it's us talking to them and going, actually, if we did this, that's not really clear. Rather than they say, actually well no, you've broken the law, because that's what we don't want to do.

SB: Yeah, it's the fact that you're learning these things by practice and you know what you need to do and how to do it. Then it's speaking with the relevant agencies and saying, look, this is how



you can do it, this how you can do it safely, and then they formulate the regulations and then back and forth, and so on.

JK: Yeah, I think the thing is, as I say, most of this legislation is not written with museums in mind. Sometimes the legislation mentions us, which is great, because other times legislation doesn't even mention museums and our activity. You come up against things when you start to do things because you start working it through and thinking, oh actually, that means that we can't do that, but that's what we've always done. Okay, maybe we aren't able to do that anymore, but is there a way we can do that? I think a lot of the legislation is written, has been written, as a knee-jerk reaction to an event or a series of events, actually then there are holes in the legislation. But that's the case with all legislation. There are definite holes in it and until you start to work through and work through that practice, you can't think of everything before in an abstract manner. It doesn't always work like that. Sometimes these things will only come out as you work through it. I think that's the problem.

SB: On that point, are there any specific parts of the current legislative framework that there are problems with, in of need addressing? Particularly in relation, obviously, to the Armouries and museums more generally.

JK: From our point of view, because we are so well licensed it isn't an issue for us. We are in a very fortunate position, in a way, to be well funded and we've got all the security in place. It's not a major issue for us. I think for other museums, I think potentially it is and a lot of people get very worried by the rest of the legislation. I think things like knowing that you have to use a specific carrier for an authorised transport for moving certain weapons. I know other museums been caught out by that in the past, where they've moved things because they've just used their own transport. Well actually, that's not right. But not to say that, actually, it's probably okay. I think that check and balance needs to be in place in that you don't want just anybody being able to move Section 5s in the back of their vehicle. Though, you could do that, as an individual thing. Yeah, I don't think there's anything. I guess none of the legislation is stopping us doing anything that we would want to do because we know the legislation inside out and therefore we can work around it and through it. I guess it could be more... It's difficult, isn't it? Because we can hold anything we like, really, and we can pretty much use it in whatever and however we want to.

SB: Yeah. I suppose it's more the conditions that are imposed on you by the licences, that's where the structure is really. But have there been any instances where the licensing conditions have changed? Particularly, where you had to respond to that as an institution.

JK: Yeah. The licensing conditions are always slightly being tweaked, but the difficulty is that – well they're interesting things as well – is that it's not just licensing that's changing, that we need to keep up to date with, it's all the accreditation stuff. So some of that best practice and guideline stuff is more stringent in a way and there's a lot of the legislative stuff that puts on top of us. Because of the way that we're insured in terms of Government Indemnity Scheme, actually, there are more stringent conditions on that than there would be in terms of the security, as regards to the legislation. So we have three key things. I mean, it's always being improved and security levels always need to go up and we've got different access controls and it's a fully auditable electronic system now, which it never used to be. Yeah, CCTV is super-duper and extended, and in all places, and the cameras are better quality, and all of that stuff. That's not necessarily detailed within the legislation, but there's an expectation of us as the national museum to be keeping up with that best practice in security aspects. So making sure that we comply with European, though we're not in Europe anymore, but European Level 4 security if we can, where it's available. That's where we should be aiming for. As I say, it's not detailed within the legislation, but it's inherently good practice for us to do that. In a way, the legislation is the minimum requirement. We should be better than the legislation because we should be striving for being the best of the best in this area.

SB: I suppose that's one of the meanings of a national museum, isn't it?

JK: I think so. I don't think, historically, we've been... and there are some places where we're not, we're definitely not meeting that, the best of the best, but that's our ambition is to be that in all instances. Because we should be leading in that in the field and we should be there to be then advising others on all aspects of that practice, really.

SB: That's really useful, thank you. Now for the last ten or so minutes, if it's alright with you, discuss the case study of the *Firearms Amendment Act 1997*. To start off with, how do you think the prohibition of most handguns by those two Acts have shaped the Armouries' subsequent management of these objects, either in existing collections or ones that have come in as a result of the new legislation?

JK: I wasn't at the Armouries doing the time, but I remember it quite well and when the Act came in and the sheer quantities of handguns that appeared. Being honest, we're still working through that amnesty, and that backlog of material that came in. So there was an amnesty and people submitted them. The difficulty is that, so we went through and looked through and took items that were unusual, that would extend the collection, but they didn't come with provenance. So we've got lovely things, but because it was an amnesty collection, most of them we have no idea where they came from. Well, we know what police force they came from, but that's it. It doesn't make those objects as rich as they could be, and I think that's the issue. We've got the material culture, but we haven't got the stories behind them, and I think that's often what's missing within our firearms collection is, and where did this come from? Whose collection? Was it used? Who had it? I remember when I first went into the Armouries store – and it would have been not long after the first amnesty – on a visit, and seeing the crates of material and thinking, I don't know how they're going to get through that backlog.

SB: Little did you know that you'd be doing it.

JK: Yeah, exactly. We're still working through some of that and there's good reason why we would take a lot of this material, a lot of the material was unique and very important and so it should be. But, as I say, it's not as rich as it could have been and I think that's the problem for us. It just means that actually it's very difficult, isn't it? You can't hold a handgun as an individual, in the UK, and therefore that means that anybody who does is problematic. We've had to revise things like [when] somebody brings in a handgun, what we do? Because, actually, that's problematic as well. Yeah, and I think there was a worry or there has been a bit of a worry around the latest changes in terms of knives in the *Offensive Weapons Act* [2019]. I don't think it's going to be on the same scale, in terms of that amnesty, and in terms of what material might come in. I don't think it will be on the same scale, bizarrely, as the [19]97 *Firearms [(Amendment)] Act*. Which is odd, isn't it? Because, actually, anything could be classed as an offensive weapon in a way.

SB: Yes. The legislation is very broad, but I suppose it has to be, for criminal purposes at least.

JK: Yeah, and it's interesting because we're working currently with the West Yorkshire Police's Violent Reduction Unit and we're going to be having a display opening in January, which actually shows the sheer amount of knives and sharp things that have been used in crimes. Most

of those are knives from Wilkinsons [the retailer], and you can buy a kitchen knife or paper craft knives, or all of those things where you just think, actually, I don't know how you stop that kind of material. You can't stop people having a knife, because how do you cut your vegetables for your tea? But at the same time that could be used – a craft knife, absolutely – can be used as an offensive weapon. It's about intent, isn't it? That's what we're trying to work with the Unit, who are doing a huge amount of great stuff here within West Yorkshire around trying to educate and stop that kind of activity, but it's so hard. Whereas handguns are very specific and that was easy. You just take them away and then that removes the issue, in theory.

SB: There's very little alternative use you can have for a handgun.

JK: Exactly. Yeah, so I think it's a different animal all the time. Other than the sheer quantity of material that arrived and the fact that, actually, now it's obviously illegal for you to hold a handgun outside the kind of context that we work within.

SB: You're saying that the Armouries are still processing? What do you specifically mean by that? Is it still documenting collections? Is it more provenance research? Is it just the whole thing?

JK: Yeah, taking the items through that full documentation process, so we're still working through some of that. The provenance issues, it's really hard for us because, actually, any acquisition that we make, obviously we try and carry out all our due diligence checks and our checks can't go usually any further than the police authority that have given them to us. So we are trying to make sure that we document them as fully as we can without having any prior donor, as it were, to come back to. It's just finishing off those things and making sure that we've classified them and documented them as thoroughly as we can with the information, or rather lack of it, we've got. That's why we're still working through some of those items, and there were so many I think it's just been a difficult process. But as I say, I don't think there would be the same again in terms of this latest round of changes in legislation not going to affect us in quite the same way. We've had some material being offered because of the legislation changes. But so far it's four or five items, it's not like it's in the thousands as it was with handguns.

SB: Yes, a bit less paperwork to do. Has much of the work regarding handguns, has that been undertaken by the National Firearms Centre or is there a split between the Armouries 'proper' and the Firearms Centre? How's that worked?

JK: So the National Firearms Centre is a venue in a way, and it holds the remnants of the Pattern Collection [reference collection for the history of British firearms]. The staff within it, there's some nominal National Firearms Centre staff who basically are there, who help us to facilitate our Service Level Agreement with the MoD [Ministry of Defence]. So as part of that Pattern Room collection, when we acquired it, there was a memorandum of understanding as part of the acquisition that we would continue to do the training requirements and the service level requirements with MoD and other government agencies, so things like Border Force and police. So those staff are mostly occupied by training MoD colleagues, Border Force colleagues in all sorts of the weaponry. The collection itself is owned by the nation and owned by Royal Armouries itself and our firearms curatorial team are the ones who carry out that documentation of the whole collection, as it were. So those handguns are part of the Royal Armouries and the national collection. There's nothing specifically that's governed really under the National Firearms Centre. It's a term. It's another [place] where we hold the material in a super secure bunker, basically. But it's the remnants of this Pattern Room collection that was historically in Nottingham and prior to that in Enfield.

SB: Are the handguns being stored in the Firearms Centre or are they across both sites?

JK: It's a mixture really. So most of our more modern items are sat within the National Firearms Centre in terms of storage, and that's mostly because of the type of material that is wanting to be accessed by MoD, Border Force, that kind of thing. I guess a lot of our firearms are stored in there, whereas the stores in the main building are more historic. But that's not to say that handguns were not distributed across the stores, basically.

SB: Okay. So there's no definitive boundaries saying Section 5 go in the National Firearms Centre and then [other] Sections [go elsewhere]?

JK: No, that could be a way we did it, but we didn't. In fact, I'm not really sure what the rationale is behind it, a lot of it's around practicalities in terms of space. Most of the handguns are probably in the National Firearm Centre because they've got lots of drawers and that's an

easier way of storing the handguns. Whereas we've got quite a lot of large racks for small arms in the stores in the main building. Things do move between the two sites very easily, obviously with detailed security provision in between. But as far as I'm aware – and again I don't know what the rationale was when the National Firearms Centre was created – I don't think it was like, well these are over there, all of that material must be there. In a way it doesn't matter where they're stored, as long as we've got a location and we know where they are. It's neither here nor there. But I think a lot of it was around practicalities of most of the material that came up from Nottingham and the Pattern Room. There was no room for it in the main building, so it had to go in the National Firearms Centre because that was the space that was created for it. I think it's mostly a practicality issue rather than I've thought about this. I mean, in a way, it would make sense to store all your Section 5s in one place and your Section 1s in one place, but...

SB: Organisation doesn't work like that.

JK: No, and I think it's done much more on a very practical basis of space. But, as I say, I'm not sure whether that is the case or whether that's just how it looks for me. Nobody's ever explained any other way of how it's ended up like that.

SB: Fair enough. Historical accident.

JK: I mean, that would be interesting to know.

SB: Yes, well hopefully, something we might be able to find out. I think we've come to the end really. Just before we finish, are there any other things that you'd like to say on the topics that we've discussed?

JK: I don't think so, nothing massively comes to mind, Stuart. I mean, I just think it's all really interesting and I'm really keen to see how you bring it all together.

SB: Thank you very much and with that I shall stop the recording.