

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.

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**Interview Transcript: Claire Lambert – Documentation Officer (Royal Armouries),
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SB: Hello, good morning. Could I just ask what is your name please?

CL: Good morning. My name is Claire Lambert.

SB: And what is your current role title at the Royal Armouries?

CL: I am the Documentation Officer.

SB: Perfect. And what would you consider to be your main responsibilities in this role?

CL: This is in no particular order, okay. I've quickly just jotted some bits down, and as I'm reading now I'm thinking of this more. When you read something, you think there's probably more there to add. But yeah, so it's basically the documentation of EMu [the Armouries' collections management system], the records on EMu, especially the object records. But I also look after or help and assist with the Archivist, with the archive records. He takes care of those himself, but he does need my help with some things on EMu. That sort of relates as well to the multimedia and digital assets as well. The idea is to bring everything up to a minimum standard, so that we've got as much information in there as possible. So I set the standards for the curators, how they will bring the records up to minimum standard. So I work with every department, conservation as well, how they're going to be bringing their records or work on their records to ensure we're getting as much information as possible, because my attitude is get as much information in now and then we're future-proofing it as much as we can.

SB: Yes.

CL: So also I train all the staff on EMu – so a new starter, they get more training – and then regular updates. And I'm also there for problem solving within EMu. People have worked on it for years, I still find things and I'm like, why is that doing that? I have to work out, especially the new version of [EMu] 8, I keep discovering things all the time because of problems when we were upgrading and I didn't have the time to sit and play on it that I wanted to. I had to go straight into work into it and, yeah, I'm still discovering things now, Stuart.

SB: A work in progress.

CL: Yeah, it is a work in progress. I think it's going to be work in progress for many years actually. Yeah, I'm responsible for the Documentation Assistant. And the photography of the collection as well, I organise that. Also, the audits. All the audits, but the firearms audit is particularly one which I know this is a part you're interested in. We've got an audit at the moment that's going completely through the NFC [National Firearms Centre], because obviously that's where we have the majority of Section 5s [firearms prohibited under the *Firearms Act 1968*] and things like that. So yeah, we need to make sure. And then with the firearms audit as well, we're doing some documentation on it as well, some basic documentation, which would include a photograph, its weights and measurements, calibre, making sure the serial number's showing, everything like that. So, obviously you'll have come across this now, we need that information in there because we need that for the [Museum] Firearms Licence from the police. We need to make sure we've got everything up to date, it's just one of the things we've got to keep up to date. And then we have a rolling audit as well of all the objects, so that's sort of looking through all the stores, working through all the collection in the galleries, everywhere we've got objects. And then with the loan objects that come in and also go out, usually the registrars will do the audits on those when they go and visit, or whoever is going to visit those. I'd say that's basically, it's not basically it, but that's the main remit of it that I'd say.

SB: No, that's a really comprehensive overview. Thank you.

CL: Okay, I was thinking how much do you need?

SB: No, that's great.

CL: It's often the thing when someone puts you on the spot and says, oh, so what do you do in your job, you go, erm... And then every day, you're there on the computer and you're going, ah, there's so much to do. It's quite nice to sit down and think, actually, what do I do?

SB: Emails, lots of emails.

CL: Lots of emails, yes. So many emails.

SB: That's what it seems to be mainly.

CL: It is.

SB: That's great. That's really interesting, thank you. If you want to speak to your other roles that you've done at the Armouries, please do.

CL: Yeah, I'm wondering because in everything you're doing, I don't know whether you're looking at how people progress as well through a museum. I don't know if that's coming into what you're working on or anything.

SB: It's not a specific thing that I'm looking at, but obviously [it's] useful information and [I'll] maybe draw on it for future projects so it'd be great to listen to anything you can share.

CL: Great, amazing. Yeah, I'm happy to say, if you want. And also for yourself when you start looking for jobs and things like that, it's often the case of you do start at the bottom and what you're doing at the moment. I originally came to the Armouries as an intern because I completely changed careers in my late 20s. I used to be a graphic designer, had enough, changed career, went and did a history degree, and then an MA in Art Gallery and Museum Studies. I did some intern work while I was doing my masters, and then I got a job as a web content researcher with them, then Documentation Assistant of Edged Weapons, then Documentation Assistant of Firearms, and then the job I am now. So, there has been some sort of progression going up.

SB: It's interesting, actually, that there were specific posts for documentation in firearms and in edged weapons. I know now that it's [a single post]...

CL: Yeah, in edged weapons. Originally it was before they moved to EMu, it was from the old system and it was bringing it up [to date]. They took on three of us initially: one for edged weapons, one for armour, and one for firearms. And we were trying to bring the records up to speed in the old system, so when they migrated across to the new system, EMu, they would be better filled should I say, populated. But unfortunately, they didn't give us a lot of time and there were a lot of records. So we did do quite a lot, but that was what it was originally.

SB: No, that's interesting to hear.

CL: I should say that's when they originally created the documentation roles. There had not previously been at the Armouries before, any documentation roles.

SB: So what date was that then?

CL: That was 2012-14, I think it was.

SB: Okay, so quite a recent development then.

CL: Yeah.

SB: Interesting. Well, it's good that they've got them now. Obviously, documentation is a key part of collections management and the Armouries' use of its collections overall, so really good.

CL: Yeah.

SB: So what are the limitations that you generally face during your work with the Armouries' weapons collections at the present moment?

CL: Yeah, I'd say I don't feel limited by the current framework. I think that's more to do with my difference working within the registrars because I don't make decisions on loans coming in and out. I think Katie [Robson, Registrar] and Jill [McKnight, Assistant Registrar], they experience more limitations, obviously, than I do. When I'm working with the collection we're working on site, we're working either in the stores or we're in the galleries or something like that. So we do obviously have limitations as in the way that we would handle objects, especially firearms, especially objects that have hazards on them and things like that. But yeah, I don't feel [limited], this is the thing. I think it's probably because I automatically work within the framework. I've been doing it for so long now, it's quite good when somebody new does start because it makes me question, because I just work within Spectrum [a collections management standard developed by Collections Trust]. You do it for so long it just becomes natural. And then it's good, like I said, somebody starts and it makes you stop and relook at it, re-evaluate it, because every year you think, oh yeah, I should relook at all these things and you just don't have time, unless it's something that has to be redone like safety procedures and things like that. I mean, when you say limitations, what do you mean by limitations? See, I'm presuming that you mean the way that we [manage] loans in and out and things like that, and how, where they can go, what we can take in and things like that.

SB: So I think perhaps [instead of] limitations, I could use an alternative word. So what are the requirements that weapons law, for example, places on your work. So things like, what specific policies and procedures do you have to implement in relation to the weapons collections specifically?

CL: It's really the same as everybody else and it's the manual handling, you would go through all the policies and procedures that are set by registrars. So, manual handling, firearms training with the handling. I'm trying to think what else we do.

SB: What about in terms of documentation, in terms of EMu?

CL: With EMu, it's really coming from Spectrum, the majority of it is from Spectrum 5.1 I think it is now. So we work within Spectrum, but we work over and above the minimum standard for Spectrum. We also then set our own standard, which I think's higher than probably the general Spectrum that they set. Yeah, I keep looking at the word limitations, I don't feel I have limitations. I don't think that's really answering your question.

SB: I think that's probably just the phrasing of the question maybe needs to be adapted a little bit. But the thing that it brought to mind, to me at least, was the firearms tab that you have on EMu and that's a specific requirement that you've introduced in order to meet the Armouries' legislative obligations. So could you speak a little more about that?

CL: Yeah, the firearms tab was created, as far as I'm aware we still are the only museum that has that tab, just for firearms on EMu. I don't know about any other systems. Yeah, we do. So we have to have all the information on there, like you said, it has to be up to a certain standard, we have to have the serial number, if it has a serial number, and we have to have the calibre, and the cartridge type, because these determine what the FLC [firearms licensing classification] is. The FLC, of course, we need to have that correct. Yeah, all the things we have, like you said, it's to meet legislation and it's to make sure that we can have the [Musuem] Firearms Licence that we do have. Because, obviously, our firearms licence allows us to do a lot more things than a person who's got a rifle, firearms licence. We've got one that we can move objects around, we can move to different places and things like that, not just within our own sites, to other museums. We also have on there the SLA, the Service Loan [Level] Agreement, because we loan objects out as well to specific bodies. We also have on there whether a firearm's been shot, and when and where and everything like that, we keep a record of that. We didn't used to, again, these are things that have come in since we've had EMu, before it might have been a paper trail, or it might have been, just purely, oh do you remember when we shot the so and so. Unfortunately, I think it was a bit like that. Thankfully, we're a bit more on top of things these days. Then we also have, I'm thinking, I haven't got it in front of me, so I'm just thinking what else we've got on

there. We've added new things on there as well. We've got the twist rate [of rifling] on, and then also we've got the artillery calibre on, which is obviously different to a small arms or firearms calibre. We need to record that information in there and have it right, and this is a big part of the firearms audit so that we can keep our Accreditation and keep our Licence. The other big part is locations.

SB: Yeah.

CL: We know that anytime the police or any specific body could come into the Armouries, and say, take me to this object, and we should be able to take them straight to it. If we can't take them to something or we go and it's not there, and it's something like a Section 5 or any firearm, we're in big trouble. We could get our Licence revoked. So we need to make sure everything's there. So that's really why we have that one. And as well because we have such a lot of firearms, we have a big collection of firearms.

SB: Yeah. Would you say that there's sort of a hierarchy of need in that case, so Section 5 at the top and then you work your way down through the sections when auditing and things like that?

CL: Definitely. Yeah. Well, I mean, a firearm's a firearm. The way I look at it is in a simplistic term is if you walked into a bank or a post office, even if you were holding an old seventeenth-century pistol, a flintlock pistol or something like that, people would take you seriously still. Nobody's going to stand there and go like, well that's not going to do a lot, I think you can only shoot once or twice out of that thing. It's still a deadly weapon. I mean, obviously Section 5, when you're covering semi-automatic, automatic weapons, obviously if something like that got lost, yeah, it's a major worry. We need to locate it straight away because I mean obviously something like that is immensely dangerous. I mean we do keep ammunition, but the ammunition is nowhere near the firearms. That's the other thing, you cannot access ammunition when you're with the firearms, you've got to go through more doors, more security, things like that. So we keep security tight on it. Does that help?

SB: Yeah, that's great, really interesting. How do you go about working with other departments in ensuring that? Because I assume that curatorial plays a big part in identifying the weapons and what class they might be in or should be in. How does that play out in practice, really?

CL: Yeah, when we're doing the firearms audit, when the Documentation Assistant does the majority of that, they will go on the firearms course, so it will help you identify what would be a Section 5, Section 1, an antique. So when they're working through, everything actually in the NFC does have the licensing FLC already on the EMu document, I know that. But they're going to double check that. So if it's a Section 5 weapon they've got in front of them and they're measuring it, taking a photograph, and they look on EMu and it says antique.

SB: Yeah.

CL: So then you'd go to the experts, the experts are the curators. So they'd go to the curators and would question them and say why is this down as this? It might be a blip, somebody might have changed it by accident. I can find out why, when, how and who changed that on EMu, it could be a blip. I've never had that yet thankfully, we've never had it yet, or I haven't personally had that yet. And then working with the curators, when objects come in now. Like I said, the existing collection has everything in EMu already, so it's more when something new comes in it's the firearms curators who, they first of all would go through the...

SB: Acquisition form.

CL: Yeah, the proposals. So it's got everything in there. We have to trust the curators, there has to be some trust that they know what they're doing. It's their job.

SB: Yeah

CL: Some of them have been doing it for I'd probably say nearly forty years, so we have to trust their judgment. Obviously, we can question things and we do sometimes, and we'll get a, oh no that shouldn't be that or, yeah that's good, the explanation why something is in a certain way. So we do work with curators all the time.

SB: Yeah, that was my impression, but great to hear you talk it through. Moving on to a different aspect of practice, documentation practice specifically. Explosives form a bit of a different challenge, both from a safety perspective and from a legal perspective. How does the Armouries deal with those, particularly from a documentation perspective?

CL: We wouldn't particularly handle [explosives]. We have a separate ammunition store within the museum, there's only certain people allowed to go in there. One of the curators is currently

working through that because it became a [place to] just put things in but not actually document everything. So they are actually working in there with other curators to document the whole of the ammunition in there. We've done photography as well, I wouldn't handle anything that wasn't FFE, so free from explosive. When something is FFE, it's marked, it has a big sticker on it, we have it marked in EMu as well. Just recently we had a good example, as we did have a session across at the NFC, photography, and it was an external person who's just currently writing a book, wanted some images and a couple of the fairly big ammunition bits, and there was a grenade as well.

SB: Right.

CL: The original ones he'd chosen weren't FFE, so we don't want to be taking those about, moving those around, putting them in front of electronic equipment that's going to be flashing at them, things like that. So we looked for alternatives for them that were FFE, so things like that. It's like any hazard, we make sure we're not handling it. If we don't need to handle it, we don't handle it. If it comes to documentation, like going through the ones we've got in the NFC, they're in drawers. We would be able to pull those drawers out, we'd be able to look at them, we'd be able to see what was already marked because it should be clear for us to see without having to handle them all. If we can't see them and they're not clear and we're not happy about them and we don't feel that you can handle them, again, this is why we have the training. If we're not happy, then we would get the relevant curator across and see whether we can handle them and things like that, or we'll get conservation involved. So sometimes this is why things can become quite time-consuming where you think, oh, we should be able to get on with things. But you come across anything dealing with firearms, you've got to be [cautious]. Like I said, we have basic training, the Documentation Assistant with me to start, but they also go on the firearms course as well. Has that answered the question? I'm very aware that I'm probably going off on a tangent.

SB: No, it's great having that overall perspective on it and, yeah, having that detail is really useful. So thank you.

CL: I would say as well, I think from a documentation point of view for myself and the Assistant, we are more cautious when handling certain objects than the curators and conservation, because conservation obviously have further training, full training in things like

this, whereas our training's often more basic. Obviously the curators should be specialists in their areas, whereas we're doing the whole collection so if we do come across something we are more wary.

SB: Yeah, so it's that idea of collaboration, that idea of training, sharing experience. Absolutely central.

CL: Definitely. Yeah, it is. Collaboration definitely, and yeah, training. They are both central.

SB: Perfect, thank you for that. Just going back to something you mentioned earlier, you mentioned Spectrum as one of the key frameworks that guides your practice. Are there any other professional standards of practice and ethical conduct that shape your approach to these collections or is Spectrum from the primary one from your perspective?

CL: From a documentation perspective, it is Spectrum. Yes, Spectrum is the one. I mean I know it's a British standard, it's not obviously law but it's almost like a museum law bible. I was going to say that I've been in touch with some people at museums around the world and things like that, and it's interesting to see how they [view it]. I was talking to somebody in Australia and they don't seem to have national museums like we do. They're not as collaborative between museums I don't feel, so they were telling me that they have started adopting, especially during lockdown, going on more online seminars. And they said that they're now looking at Spectrum and they were starting to adopt it in their museum, and other people in Australian museums had started to adopt it as well because they didn't have a standard. Personally, just talking to other people around the world, it's becoming more worldly used now, which is great. I think that's great, I think it would be great to have some... I mean obviously we've got ICOM [International Council of Museums] as well. But I think from a documentation perspective, I mean I attend a yearly conference run by Axiell who run EMu.

SB: Yes.

CL: And that's a great way as well to talk to people in similar positions to me. Most people are from Britain, British museums, galleries, libraries, or archives. But we do get some European partners coming in as well, so it's interesting to hear how they're working with documentation and their policies, procedures. Again, they can be quite different. For me, personally, from a British museum, I would say Spectrum 5 for documentation would be the key one, definitely.

That's probably a long way around again to Spectrum 5, but it's the best one I think. Oh, I should say the Collections Trust as well. I attend their seminars as well as often as I can, and they do hold some interesting ones.

SB: Yeah. Would you say that any of these frameworks have any particular bearing on weapons management or is it very much broad principles?

CL: They're very broad principles. I know Spectrum keeps it quite broad because they recognise that every museum's different. And the Collections Trust, the MA [Museums Association], actually Spectrum is Collections Trust, and they're very good at if you do have a problem, you can go to them and they could help you and talk you through. The same way that when they've been holding, when we did a lot of online seminars and things, I was attending a few on sort of military, weapons, things like this. And it was interesting, there were a few museums, more local authority museums, where they might have in their collection three or four firearms.

SB: Yes.

CL: Usually, they sounded like they were antique, but they had no idea how they were supposed to be looking after them, what framework they were supposed to be working through. So it was good to talk to them and it was nice, I made quite a few contacts with them and talked through how we do it, how we look after ours, how we get all the information that we need to have and how we keep it on EMu, and how we have to have this for the Licence. Yeah, I think they all had Licences, but they weren't even really sure how they'd... I think that some of them, you get change of personnel and if the information is not passed on that we need a Firearms Licence, even for these antiques in a museum, and they were, we don't know how to even go about this. So I was able to pass them on to Katie, I knew that Katie could give them all the physical things that they needed, telephone numbers, emails, things like that. So I was able to pass them on to Katie, to help them to get themselves sorted, to stay within the law. And that's the biggest thing, staying within the law, keeping people safe inside the organisation, outside the organisation, visitors, staff, and keeping within the law.

SB: Yeah, it's that idea, well it's a couple of things actually, that idea of the Armouries as a sector leader, because it's dealing with these collections day in, day out. And then there's also

that idea of the importance of documenting processes as well as documenting the objects themselves. There's those two levels, really, and both are really key.

CL: Yeah, definitely.

SB: Yeah, that's really great, so thank you for that. Moving on to access now, always a fun subject. How would you define the term 'access' in your capacity as a member of the Armouries collection staff, specifically?

CL: Yeah. When I got to that, I've not actually written anything down, on the others I've just written some notes on the thing you sent me. Yeah, it's an interesting question because it can mean so many things, can't it?

SB: Exactly.

CL: When I see the word access in a museum context, for me, access means access to the collections, allowing access to the collections, allowing the public access, especially as we're a national museum, we're owned by everyone. Yeah, that's what I see when I immediately see that, access to the collection and how we then give people access. I mean in the Armouries we do it in different ways. We have, like a lot of national museums, we have the education, so we're giving access to younger school children of all ages. And then also there's access as in you can just walk into the museum for free and we keep it free, which I think is brilliant. And then there's access, so when you're in the museum, you've got access to the collections that are on display. And then you've got, we give another type of elite level of access via the interpretations, so the talks and interpretations also. Then the thing Mark [Bennett, Research Manager] is doing the Weapons in...

SB: Weapons in Society. I was there.

CL: That was it, thank you. I wanted to do it, but typical, just not had time at all. Yeah, I really wanted to come actually, it was one or two, to come to Lisa's [Traynor, Curator of Firearms] talk, I wanted to watch especially. But there's one or two I would like to have seen. But again, as far as I'm aware they were free to come to, I think, weren't they, the actual talks?

SB: I think as a member of staff, you might have been able to come free. There was a small charge.

CL: Or were they free online? I can't remember.

SB: In previous years, they were. This year it was just in person, and you did have to pay, but it wasn't a huge amount.

CL: Right, okay. So again, it's giving access. I mean obviously we need to make money, because if we don't make money, we can't continue to care for the collection and do everything we need to do with it. If it's a small minimum charge, we have to do it. But again, I suppose there it's giving access, isn't it, it's a different type of access. There's different levels of access. There's your everyday visitor that just wants to have a wander around, oh look at that nice armour, learn something access, then to academic access as well, allowing people into the stores to view objects that might not normally be seen, for whatever reason we might not be able to put them out on display. I'm liking the new idea of doing the temporary exhibitions, more temporary exhibitions. I'm really liking that, and I'm really hoping that we're going to be using more objects from stores to get that out there. And so then also access within departments as well. Even within the collections, we are different departments within the Collections Department, so it's ensuring that I'm on EMu. From my particular point of view, I'm making sure that everybody in the collection staff has access to EMu. Even staff outside the collections have access to EMu, it might only be read only, but it means that they can get a little bit more information than you could get from the website if they need it for their role. And yeah, access for us, for staff that want to know more about what we do, I'm always here to talk, happy to talk to any staff, anybody who wants to talk. Students, we get emails from students, like you at the moment.

SB: Exactly.

CL: It's more information, things like that. That's what access means to me.

SB: That's really great.

CL: It obviously means different things, doesn't it, to different people, I think. So another way of access is, from my point of view as well, from a documentation point of view is making sure we're enriching absolutely every field, as many fields as we can in EMu, so that we can get that information out on the website. And then we've got worldwide access and we're giving it to the world. It's all about allowing people to [access], not being closed, being open.

SB: Yes, I definitely agree with you there. And you've touched on this a little bit at the end, but what would you say is your role in facilitating access, particularly public access?

CL: Okay yeah, like I said before, it's putting, enriching, populating the fields. Well, we do some enrichment, but the curators do most of the enrichment. Yeah, making sure that we've got everything populated. Enrichment comes more from curatorial, like they are the minimum standard, we're working to our minimum standard. But we facilitate that, we tell them what we want populating, we tell them what information we want into the fields and things like that throughout EMu. And by doing that, like I said, I set it and then went through everybody else to make sure that everybody else was happy with it, the higher standard, so that they can get it. Obviously only putting in information that they have, because some objects we don't always have all the information. We might have had something in the collection for sort of 200-300 years and it's limited information on it, we might know it's just been there for 200-300 years, and we have an idea of where it came from or we should know where it came from. But even then, we can still put as much information in as we know about it, and it's putting that all in there. Then it goes out online, because we try to get lots of fields out online, apart from obviously personal information and things like that. Yeah, getting it out online. So that's given for better public engagement, as you put it on there. One other area as well is actual Public Engagement, the department – well, there's just two of them – use EMu to work with the curators to create stories around the objects. Well not like actually creating, like I've just made-up a nice story about this object, but actually what we call creating stories so they would give the bigger, wider picture about an object rather than tidbits, which is often what comes out of EMu. And so, again, that's a great idea. We don't use it enough at the moment, it comes from the narratives module, I personally don't think we use it enough and we need to be using it more. But as you know, with all the IT issues we had and then upgrading, things like that, it's something that's still there on the agenda, but it's going to be a little while doing it. Go back to the original question, I think I'm going off on one again.

SB: Again, that's really great having sort of that overview of access. What about in relation to the weapons collections, specifically, do you do anything different in that respect?

CL: Yeah, when you say weapons, do you mean firearms? Or do you mean well like weapons as in because we've got all sorts of weapons, haven't we?

SB: So the way I've defined it is that [there's] three categories. So, firearms, edged weapons, and explosives. That's my definition of weapons in this case.

CL: Okay, so you want to know about those in respect of?

SB: Just would you do anything differently in your provision of access to those weapons?

CL: Yes, we do. Obviously, we have a limited access to the NFC. But anybody coming to access the stores anyway, would need to provide certain...

SB: Identification?

CL: Yeah, identification, that we can then use if we need to. Well not me personally, but that security can use to check to make sure that you've got something against you the police or something. So we do have to limit access to that. We also have to limit access as well, because you can't just go out and say like we're here, look at this big store we've got here, it's right here everybody, look at what we've got inside it. So again, we have to limit access for that. There's also objects that we have within what you call the weapons, which we can't have going out online because it could be sensitive.

SB: Yeah.

CL: They might have a sensitive background to them, where we've got them, how we acquired them or how they've been used, so those actual objects, they can't go out online. Most of the people in the Armouries don't know about them. There's only like a small section in the Armouries, within the collections [department], really, would know that we have them.

SB: It's a need-to-know basis.

CL: It is, and it's not because we are going, we just want to know more than everybody else and we've got these things. It's more a case that they really do have sensitive issues around them. It wouldn't be nice or good or ethical to go showing these things in public. That's when we'd restrict access really. And from a documentation point of view, on the EMu record, we restrict the access via what goes out online. So you'll know from when you look at an EMu record, so if you've got a little world symbol that's a record that goes out online. If there's no symbol there it doesn't go out online. So again, I restrict access then to who can turn that on and off, if that makes sense. So every new record made when a new object comes into the Armouries, it's

automatically not on, until it's gone through this process, because obviously we get deposits as well. When a new object comes into the Armouries comes in as a deposit, it's a B number and it doesn't go out online, we don't put information out online because we don't legally own it at that point. So until we got all the paperwork, until it's fully ours, we've got all the legal documentation in place and it's given its official object number, Class XII.5 or something, then it can go out online as long as it isn't a sensitive object. So I restrict access there who can turn on that button. So it's a different type of access, but it is access.

SB: It's always that balancing act really.

CL: Yeah.

SB: That's really interesting, thank you. One thing you did raise is that idea of sensitivity. Alongside that, what do you think are the main challenges that the Armouries will face going forwards in providing access to weapons collections specifically, but also its collections more generally?

CL: I think as thinking and attitudes change, I'm not sure if this would happen within my lifetime to be honest, but I think certain things could become more sensitive. I mean, in an ideal world, there will never be a war again, and there'd be no weapons. That's an ideal world, that would be the perfect world. And everybody got on, nobody argued over land, over oil, and everybody worked together. Unfortunately, as much as I would love that to happen, it's not going to happen, is it, as humans. We're a weird animal, a unique, weird animal. So I think there's always going to be a role for a museum like the Armouries, because until war is completely eradicated or owning a firearm, owning weapons, or anything like that, because people have them for different reasons as well, lots of different reasons. A big part of our collection is collecting new weapons as well as older weapons, interesting weapons, that come up that we don't have any of already, or a limited amount. So I was going to say that because the way attitudes are changing and sensitivities around certain subjects, it could become more difficult for the Armouries. It could become an obsolete museum. But I don't think realistically that would happen for a long, long time because of these other factors. So, and I think also, I know I'm going off on a tangent a bit here, but I think it will keep going because people still have an interest in historical figures like Henry the Eighth, because we have got lots of his [objects], I mean he started the Armouries. So people have a big interest in that. But people also

have a big interest in First, Second World War, different wars and things like that, and we have things from most eras. So I think there'll always be an interest. If it's not a historical one, there's also the interest in modern firearms as well, especially around game playing.

SB: Yes.

CL: I've got a fifteen-year-old son. My oldest son wasn't interested. My fifteen-year-old son unfortunately does enjoy playing, what I call, the shoot-em-up games, I'm showing my age now saying the shoot-em-up games, and he'll say to me, mum, have you got one of these in your collection? Is there one of these at the Armouries of this, and I'm just like I have no idea, I don't know. I'm like, yeah, probably, but we've got that many, I've said, I don't know.

SB: I have to say my knowledge of modern firearms does come quite a lot from playing video games.

CL: Yeah, it is scary, actually, the amount of knowledge, well not knowledge, but, oh this shoots at this, and I can get this out of this from this game, and things. But you see, that's keeping modern firearms in the public's interest, isn't it? Especially people who play those, I'm going to sound really old now, video games, not video games, but play the games sort of thing. So I think there's all sorts of reasons, the sensitive objects and the sensitivity around the museum collection as a whole can continue, or why it might not continue. There's arguments and reasons for both, isn't there? Has that answered the question?

SB: I think that that was really interesting, so thank you for that. Just to end really and speaking to that, how do you think the Armouries can improve collections management to better enable public engagement with its weapons collections? Looking forward now.

CL: Probably as I've said before, my first thoughts are to make sure we've got as much information in EMu, from my perspective, as much information on EMu so we can get that online. Then getting that out online means people can access it, use it academically or however they want to use it, or just an interest they have in it, a hobby or something. And also, for me, a big thing for me to improve is getting images online which you will have seen. We have a lot of objects online that don't have images and so if we can get images out online as well, that's a huge bit, because it's not just to let people see what an actual object looks like in real life, because I know again, coming back to game playing, sometimes they change bits on them, on the

guns. So to see what it actually looks like, especially things like coming back to Star Wars, you know the ones they used there, they used old actual guns and added bits onto them, didn't they?

SB: Yeah.

CL: And I would say there's not many people in the world who have never heard of Star Wars or don't recognise some of those guns. So to be able to give people the opportunity to see these, and to the wider audience online, of how things actually are, the realism of it. I think another good thing would be adding, like I said before, the stories behind them, more about the stories and the histories, and just not about the older objects but the modern ones too because everything's evolving all the time as well. I mean, and that's why we keep collecting, because things evolve and they change. Modern weapons now, they make them or they're trying to make them more so that you don't even need a person on the front line anymore if you are in a war, you don't need to be on the frontline, you're trying to do everything from miles away. It's scary. So again, things are changing, evolving. So it's getting all that information there, it's showing the progression as well, I think. So that's from my perspective, is getting all that information, like I said before, into EMu, so we can get it out online. I mean during lockdown, just thinking from like the Education-Interps [Interpretation] point of view, they did do a little snippets of YouTube bits, they were putting things like that online. Now I'm not sure if they've stopped doing that anymore, or they're going to get back into doing that. But again, it's just a way of somebody like an actor which might resonate more with some people than just looking at a static object, of somebody stood dressed up in a costume talking about something, an object. Basically, it's an online presence, isn't it, it's having a bigger, better online presence is the way forward, and I know they are because we've got the digital...

SB: The digital strategy.

CL: Yes. There's a few strands off that and I can't remember the full names of them. But we're looking into all sorts of things. Personally, at the moment, I'm looking into a permanent photography studio and a place where we can have it, because we don't have one at the moment, we have to set it up every time we need to do photography. So if we have a permanent one, we're going to be able to do more photography, professional photography, which will then get more images online. So that's from my documentation point of view. Also, I'm looking at setting up photography studios for the curators to be able to do better reference shots in each store, so that's

something I'm working on with Jacob [Bishop, Senior Digitisation and IP Manager] at the moment. And then, also, I know they're looking from public engagement about getting a green screen area, so we're looking at now an area called the Studio, so everybody can use it, everybody can access it, we have the latest equipment. And we can then enhance our presence on the web or not on the web. Socially, digitally.

SB: Yeah, that's really great. And I think definitely there's a lot of things that other people I've spoken to have covered as well.

CL: Yeah, I think everybody will have different things or their ideas.

SB: That is wonderful and thank you very much for that.

CL: That's okay.

SB: That's everything I'd like to ask today, but are there any other things that you'd like to say before we wrap up?

CL: No, I don't think so. But I'm more than happy if you do have any more questions, please feel free to ask.

SB: Yes. I'll end the recording now.