

## Further written evidence submitted by Mr R E FLOOK (OWB152)

### Additional written evidence to submission OWB65 by Mr R.E.FLOOK

1. Further to my earlier submission I wish to submit further evidence to the Committee. Particularly in respect of the lack of defences for Clause 20 of the proposed Bill and whether this is necessary, proportionate or justified.
2. The increasing levels of knife crime is deplored and all the evidence clearly points to the vast majority of this being carried out with kitchen knives. The Home Office however fails to provide any evidence as to why it has targeted certain other weapons for an outright ban on ownership. Clearly recognising that any attempt to ban kitchen knives would be futile.
3. Whilst modern Italian and German manufactured, flick and gravity knives have no reason to be owned the failure to provide a defence, typically antique i.e. 100 years old or historic importance, like that to be applied to items covered by Clause 22, to rare and important examples cannot however be justified when taken against the types of weapons used in knife crime. This would result in an antique piece of significant financial and historic value being considered more dangerous and less worthy of protection under the law than a 10 inch kitchen knife.
4. The reporting of previous knife amnesties and weapons used in the current wave of knife crime all point to the vast majority being either improvised weapons, such a sharpened screwdrivers, fantasy knives or kitchen knives. This amply illustrated by reference to the Annexes. The types of knives used being also illustrated on the cover of the Home Office briefing papers.
5. In no cases that I have found is there any evidence to show that gravity or flick knives are being used. But in imposing blanket ban items of historic value will become illegal and have to be handed in. This would also impact on Museums as there are no provision under Clause 20 to provide Museums with a defence. This seems odd given the submission made on behalf of the National Museum Directors' Council, the Museums Association and the Association of Independent Museums in response to the consultation. This highlights the case for Museums to have the same defences as under current legislation.
6. Banning the private ownership of gravity and flick knives is also not proportionate given the lack of evidence to show that they present a problem. As acknowledged in para 3 although there can be no reason for modern items to be owned, rare antique and historic items are in many cases held by private collectors who do as much to protect our heritage as do Museums. For example the exceedingly rare British World war 2 Gravity Knife is known from a small handful of examples in private hands with there being only one Museum example.
7. One of the reason given in the consultation phase for banning such items was that they could be targeted and or taken in burglary. Those of an historic nature are so rare in private

hands that the odds of one being taken are so small as to be highly improbable. Compare that with the number of households whose kitchen drawer contains a veritable

armoury of knives suitable as weapons. A fact again illustrated by the types of knives shown in the Annexes and highlighted by Judge Madge in Annex B.

8. In conclusion there is no evidence that banning gravity and flick knives of antique or historic value will have any impact on knife crime. Such a ban not being necessary, proportionate or justified when compared to the types of weapons used in knife crime i.e. kitchen knives. What however would be a 'heritage crime' would be for these items to be declared illegal leading to their loss and destruction.

9. Protection for such items could however readily be given by extending to Gravity and flick knives the antique defence contained in the Offensive Weapons Order 1988, along with the historic importance defence contained in Clause 22. This could also be done in conjunction with applying a date based cut-off for such a defence along similar lines to that applied for swords i.e. pre 1954. It is however suggested that given that the historically important items date from World War 2 that pre 1945 may be a preferred date as this would eliminate the 1950's knife used by the Teddy Boy gangs.

*August 2018*

## **ANNEXES**

A. Date 2008, Source:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1022734/Kitchen-knives-common-stabbing-weapon-police-reveal-haul-200-weapons-seized-blitz.html>

The most common knife used in teenage stabbings is taken from the kitchen, Sir Ian Blair has said. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner unveiled some of the deadly weapons seized during a two-week blitz on knife-carrying criminals at New Scotland Yard.

Sir Ian revealed that the majority of those weapons discovered on the streets of the capital were ordinary domestic knives.



B. Date 2018. Source:

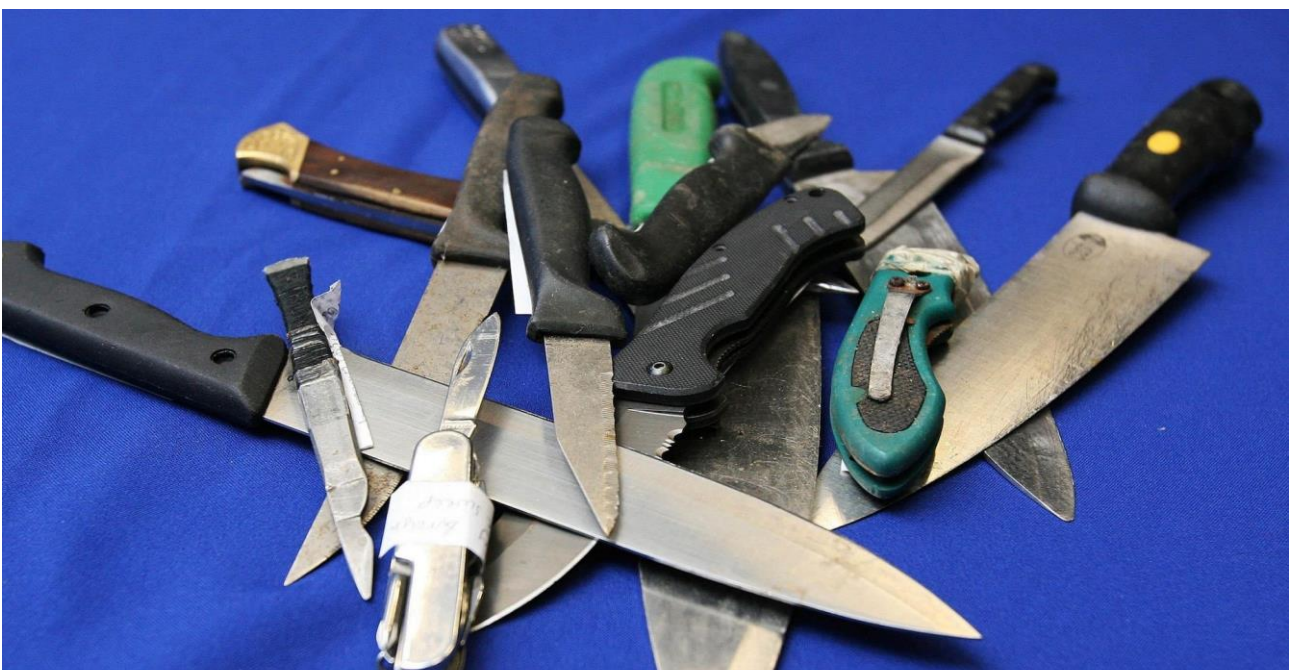
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/27/knives-sharp-filing-solution-soaring-violent-crime-judge-says/>

Judge Madge told the assembled judges, barristers and court staff: “These offences often seem motiveless - one boy was stabbed because he had an argument a couple of years before at his junior school.”

He said laws designed to reduce the availability of weapons to young would-be offenders had had “almost no effect”, since the vast majority had merely taken knives from a cutlery drawer.

He said: “A few of the blades carried by youths are so called ‘Rambo knives’ or samurai swords. They though are a very small minority.

“The reason why these measures have little effect is that the vast majority of knives carried by youths are ordinary kitchen knives. Every kitchen contains lethal knives which are potential murder weapons.



Knives that have been seized by the police.

C. Illustration from cover of Briefing Paper. Number 08349, 25 June 2018 The Offensive Weapons Bill 2017-19



D, 2013 Redcar knife Amnesty



E. Date 2018. Source: <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/knives-guns-tasers-children-police-14269140>

