

	QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS	FACTUAL ANSWERS
1.	<i>If the Firearm Certificate system doesn't stop mass murderers, like Ryan ('87, Hungerford, UK), Hamilton ('96, Dunblane, UK), Steinhäuser ('02, Erfurt, Germany), or Bryant ('96, Port Arthur, Australia), surely the guns themselves should be banned?</i>	No Certificate System, or ban, has ever stopped criminals from getting guns. Their principal effects are to disarm law-abiding victims, absorb police resources and restrict or destroy sport shooting. In any event, alternatives such as petrol, paraffin or simple bombs can easily be used and may well lead to even more deaths. <i>Please see item E overleaf.</i>
2.	<i>Can you guarantee a mass shooting won't happen again?</i>	No. But the latest research (e.g. John Lott, jr., 1996 & later) indicates that the only policy that actually reduces both the frequency and severity of such events – and reduces them very substantially indeed – is to allow the public to carry guns for self-defence. Mass shootings typically happen in “gun-free” zones.
3.	<i>How can you compare a sport with a child's life?</i>	You can't. But there is no evidence to suggest that restricting or banning the sport will save even 1 life. On the contrary, a '93 US Dept of Justice Report showed that boys with legal guns were less likely to commit crime than non-owners and hugely less likely than boys with illegal guns.
4.	<i>Large calibre pistols are not in the Olympics, so they're not needed for sport and should be banned.</i>	There are far more sports outside the Olympics than inside. Large calibre pistols are much more popular than small and there are, in fact, many more competitions for them at all levels, right up to World Championships.
5.	<i>America has no gun control and has very high murder and crime levels. We have nothing to learn from them.</i>	Actually America has thousands of gun laws. Their laws warrant serious study because of their wide variety, from extremely strict to non-existent. This allows thorough comparative research & the results are both clear & consistent: strict gun laws produce more crime than light ones. Strict gun laws don't disarm criminals, only victims. Most violent crime rates are lower in America than UK. Even the murder rate has been declining for many years, as more States allow the public to carry guns for self-defence. As English gun laws have become more onerous, violent crime rates, including murder, are rising.
6.	<i>Guns and ammunition should be held at Clubs or in Armouries.</i>	The cost of such places would be very high. They would become prime targets for thieves and terrorists. Operating such clubs would be very bureaucratic and travelling to competitions even worse. Club officials, who would not be trusted to have their guns/ammunition at home, would have to be trusted to operate the system. The costs and inconvenience would drive people out of the sport, without any benefits at all.
7.	<i>A balance has to be struck between freedom of the individual to possess guns and public safety; and the present balance is wrong.</i>	This is a false analogy. There is no such balance. In other words, civilian gun ownership is on the same side of the equation as public safety. So widespread public gun ownership increases public safety, while strict gun control reduces public safety. <i>Please see Question 2.</i>
8.	<i>Why do you need guns anyway?</i>	Gamekeepers, stalkers, farmers, gun designers and manufacturers, bodyguards, etc., need guns as part of their work. Military and police personnel often wish to improve their skills with tools on which their lives might depend, in their own time and at their own expense. Many people would like them as defensive insurance. A lot have them as a hobby, such as collecting, or a sport, like target shooting.
9.	<i>Stricter gun laws will of course make society safer.</i>	There is no factual evidence to support that. For example, England was a much safer place up to 1920 when there was effectively no gun control and defensive gun ownership was common, than it is now. And the stricter UK gun laws in 1968, '88 and '97 all resulted in much worse gun crime trends.
10.	<i>Guns are dangerous.</i>	Target shooting has an incredibly good safety record, probably the best of any activity sport and over 1,000 times better than, say, cricket or rugby.
11.	<i>Guns are only made to kill people.</i>	Not true. A great many guns are made especially for target shooting. In any event, it's surely what they are actually used for that counts. In addition, using a gun to stop crime, or to defend oneself, one's family, or one's community, from criminal violence, are brave, praiseworthy things to do, that a sensible society should encourage. It would have been a brave, difficult, but good thing, if a Dunblane teacher had shot Hamilton before he had killed those children in 1996.
12.	<i>Guns are evil.</i>	They aren't. They are tools; inanimate objects that are neither good nor evil. Only human activity is good or bad. And banning guns does not get rid of evil people.

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13.	<i>Only the police and the army should have guns.</i>	That's what happens in dictatorships. It 's a sombre thought that far more people (160+m.) were killed in the 20th century by their own governments, than in wars with other countries. Genocide is virtually always preceded by strict gun control. And soldiers and policemen run amok occasionally too. For example, in 1982 a South Korean policeman, Woo Bum Kong, killed 57 people and wounded 38, before killing himself. South Korea has very strict gun control. In 1994 a Swedish army officer killed 7 civilians.
14.	<i>Why are some targets in human shape?</i>	It's traditional. They nearly all come from training matches by the military and/or police. The civilian adoption of them is simply a reflection of the long & honourable tradition of a civilian militia, ready to help in times of trouble.
15.	<i>Why not use lasers or blanks?</i>	These can be and are used as partial training aids, but they cannot replace actual shooting any more than computer simulators can substitute for the actual experience of driving a car.
16.	<i>The cost of compensation for banning guns is not important when life is at stake.</i>	It is certainly very difficult to put a price on human life. But that is not the point; all the factual evidence suggests that banning guns increases crime. Ireland confiscated all legal pistols and centre fire rifles in 1972 and both murder and armed robbery increased very substantially.
17.	<i>Politicians must “do something”.</i>	But it cannot be good government to “do something” that has been tried before, many times, in many places and has always produced perverse results.
18.	<i>If one life is saved, it is worth banning guns.</i>	But banning doesn't save lives, it costs lives. <i>Please see Questions 2, 5, 7 and 16.</i>

	QUESTIONS THAT NEED ASKING	Supplementary Comments/Information
A	Every form of gun control has been tried already somewhere, usually in several countries and for long periods. Do you know anywhere in the world where the introduction of strict gun control has produced measurable and sustained social benefits - e.g. lower trends for murder or armed robbery?	Restrictive laws in the UK in 1968, '88 and '97 increased crime. There were no benefits even in 1920 when the UK went from virtually no gun control to strict control. The Republic of Ireland confiscated all legal pistols and centre-fire rifles in 1972; both murder and armed robbery rates increased substantially. And the proportion of Irish murders by shooting is double that of the UK.
B	What do you think is the purpose of government registration of firearm serial numbers? As it is an expensive and inconvenient control procedure, do you think it should be possible to demonstrate some measurable, cost-effective benefits after, say, 10 or 15 years? Why do you think every published analysis, including those done by and for the police in New Zealand and Australia, failed to show any benefits and recommended abandoning the procedure?	Registration makes no meaningful contribution to solving violent crimes or catching criminals. What it does do, is generate “technical” crimes where there is no criminal intent. It consumes very large amounts of money and resource that could be used much more effectively in other ways. In practise its principal use is to confiscate lawfully-owned firearms. Registration has been in use in the UK, Jersey and much of the British Commonwealth since 1920, as well as in many other countries for very long periods. Its lack of effectiveness is readily verifiable. e.g. Chief Inspector Newgreen, Registrar of Firearms for the State of Victoria, after 3 years of study, in 1987 recommended “that Firearms Registration be forthwith abolished ... “
C	Do you think that guilt by association is a just concept?	i.e. if a driver of, say, a Ford, mows down a queue at a bus stop, should all owners of Fords be punished?
D	Do you think it is appropriate to punish large numbers of people who have committed no crime, for the acts of a madman?	Banning pistols in the UK in '97 after Dunblane, bankrupted many small businesses. 57,000 people had their lawful property confiscated. None of these people had committed any crime.
E	Did you know that the most prolific British mass murderers in recent years were 2 arsonists and a licensed doctor using a syringe? Do you think hypodermic syringes, petrol, paraffin and fertiliser, should all be banned? If not, why not?	Dr Shipman is believed to have killed well over 200 patients between about 1970 and 1997. John Thompson killed 37 people in one London petrol fire in 1981 and Bruce Lee killed 26 in several paraffin fires between 1973 and 1980. Despite very heavy controls, over a thousand people have been killed with simple bombs in N. Ireland since 1970.