

## **Royal support for the national campaign to reduce war memorial theft**

As we continue to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War, In Memoriam 2014 was delighted to welcome War Memorials Trust's Patron HRH The Duchess of Cornwall to the Welsh National War Memorial in Cathays Park, Cardiff. Her Royal Highness marked the war memorial with SmartWater as part of a national campaign to protect war memorials.

According to figures provided by the Pan Wales Metal Theft Group, metal theft incidents across Wales have fallen by 43% since 2012, however metal theft remains a major concern for the police. Local authorities can face significant repair bills due to damage caused by metal thieves who target historic buildings including schools, churches and cemeteries. Local infrastructure including transport, power and telecoms networks are also targets for metal thieves.

Many of the nation's valued war memorials remain at risk from thieves and vandals attempting to steal metal from monuments. Despite the metal having relatively little monetary value, in 2011 it was estimated that on average one war memorial a fortnight is being targeted by thieves looking to illegally remove bronze, copper or other metals to sell on for scrap. Since it reached a peak in 2011, the number of war memorial metal thefts reported to War Memorials Trust has fallen for two consecutive years, although in 2013 incidents of vandalism rose.

[In Memoriam 2014](#) is a partnership between War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation that was established to provide greater protection to war memorials across Wales and the rest of the UK. Launched in November 2011 In Memoriam 2014 is offering SmartWater free of charge to the custodians of the estimated 2-3,000 war memorials in Wales as part of a UK-wide campaign.

SmartWater can be applied to metal sculptures or plaques assigning them with a state-of-the-art forensic code that can only be seen under UV light and provides undeniable traceability. Once SmartWater has been used to mark a war memorial it is virtually impossible to remove and can withstand burning, sand blasting and long term exposure to UV. It therefore represents an increased threat of detection, arrest and subsequent conviction to thieves. Many war memorials have already been protected and In Memoriam 2014 is calling upon anyone yet to take up this offer to ensure their war memorial is marked with the forensic liquid.

Whilst marking the Welsh National War Memorial with SmartWater, HRH The Duchess of Cornwall met representatives of War Memorials Trust, the SmartWater Foundation, Cadw, One Voice Wales, War Memorials Trust's Regional Volunteers who have been promoting the project in their communities, veterans and schoolchildren engaged with war memorials through the Trust's educational work. Cardiff Council is the custodian of the memorial and has given permission for the memorial to be marked.

Supporting communities who have experienced metal theft is one aspect of War Memorials Trust's work. The charity is now working with Cadw to support the recently launched Grants for War Memorials scheme for Welsh war memorials. Applicants to Cadw can receive up to 70% of project costs up to a maximum of £10,000. In cases where projects cost more than £1,000 War Memorials Trust can offer an additional 15% of funds sought. All applications should be submitted directly to Cadw.

**War Memorials Trust's Director, Frances Moreton, said:** "War Memorials Trust greatly appreciates the support of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall. As we start to mark the centenary of World War I this year interest in war memorials has been

at record levels. We hope today we can encourage more communities across Wales to engage with In Memoriam 2014 to pro-actively protect their war memorials. We hope this scheme, alongside Cadw's Grants for War Memorials programme, will help ensure the people of Wales have protected, secure and conserved war memorials at which to pay their respects in the next few years and for many years ahead."

**Sir Keith Povey QPM, Chairman of the SmartWater Foundation, said:** "In this, the centenary year of the start of the First World War, the commemorative role of war memorials has never been more important. In Memoriam 2014 is committed to doing everything within our power to protect these important symbols of our heritage. We are extremely grateful to HRH The Duchess of Cornwall for her continued support of In Memoriam 2014 and to everyone that has contributed to its ongoing success."

Anyone wishing to take part in this project can visit [www.inmemoriam2014.org](http://www.inmemoriam2014.org) for more information.

**ENDS**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

- The SmartWater Foundation is donating a unique SmartWater forensic solution for the exclusive use of the 'In Memoriam 2014' project at no cost.
- The dramatic increase in the price of metals such as copper has been caused by soaring demand around the world, but especially in nations such as China.
- SmartWater solution has been used to convict many criminals for crimes ranging from armed robbery to metal theft throughout the UK (for more information, visit [www.smartwater.com](http://www.smartwater.com)).
- The marking of the Welsh National War Memorial with SmartWater also coincides with the anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme (1<sup>st</sup> July).

**About War Memorials Trust**

War Memorials Trust works for the protection and conservation of war memorials in the UK. They provide advice and information to anyone with a war memorial enquiry as well as running grant schemes for the repair and conservation of war memorials. It is a registered charity with relies entirely on voluntary contributions to undertake its work.

The annual October update on metal theft associated with war memorials can be found at:

[www.warmemorials.org/news](http://www.warmemorials.org/news). The last update with examples is from October 2013.

Details of obtaining grant funding for war memorials in Wales can be found at [www.warmemorials.org/wales](http://www.warmemorials.org/wales).

For further information visit [www.warmemorials.org](http://www.warmemorials.org) or telephone 0300 123 0764.

**About The SmartWater Foundation**

The SmartWater Foundation Ltd is a not for profit company established and funded solely by SmartWater Technology Ltd. The Foundation provides charitable donations of equipment and services to the UK law enforcement agencies in support of local crime reduction initiatives within hard-pressed communities.

**The Pan Wales Metal Theft Group** consists of representatives from all four Welsh Police Forces as well as British Transport Police, Welsh Government, Local Government and major utility companies.

