

## News statement



War Memorials Trust

# War Memorials Trust reports a fall in theft and vandalism of war memorials

Date: Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015

Status: Immediate release

## Starts

War Memorials Trust (WMT) today announces a small reduction in the number of war memorials subject to theft and a fall in the number reported as being vandalised

Three attempts to steal metal from war memorials, from plaques to sculptural elements, have been noted in 2015 compared to 4 in the same period last year. According to WMT records, theft from war memorials peaked in 2011 when 40 memorials were targeted. WMT has seen a reduction in the number of thefts every year since.

Four memorials have been subject to vandalism in 2015; a fall of more than 50% compared to the 10 in the same period in 2014. These cases vary in type, from graffiti to the daubing of paint, the mutilation of memorial windows in churches, to the smashing of integral features around the setting of a memorial such as lighting.

The statistics quoted above cover the period January to October. They have been extracted from the WMT's Casework Programme which records cases of vandalism and theft when they are reported to, or are picked up through media reports by, WMT. The cases detailed in the appendix therefore provide a snapshot of vandalism and theft activity against war memorials across the UK over a period of ten months. Any cases that WMT becomes aware of during November and December 2015 will be added to the statistics

War Memorials Trust's Director, Frances Moreton, said: "These figures show a reduction in theft from war memorials and a decrease in vandalism which is very welcome, particularly during the centenary commemorations.

However, while the statistics are encouraging, WMT is all too aware of the traumatic impact any type of attack against a war memorial can have on the communities who value them. We appeal for local vigilance and awareness of how these exceptional monuments can be better protected. We encourage communities to regularly check their war memorials and share details of their condition on War Memorials Online.

Custodians of war memorial can obtain free SmartWater through In Memoriam 2014 to apply to memorials with metal elements to help protect them from theft. We urge anyone who has not yet applied for their free SmartWater to do so and help protect their irreplaceable local war memorial heritage."

## Ends

## Contact

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## Notes to editors

1. For details of specific cases of theft and vandalism in 2015 please see the associated appendix which will be updated with any new cases until Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November. Details of specific cases released in October 2012, 2013, and 2014 are also available on the Trust's website [www.warmemorials.org/news/](http://www.warmemorials.org/news/). The numbers are provided below for recent years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Theft or attempted theft</b>	<b>Vandalism</b>
<b>2010</b>	14	7
<b>2011</b>	40	20
<b>2012 (Jan- October)</b>	14	6
<b>2013 (Jan-October)</b>	8	18
<b>2014 (Jan-October)</b>	4	10
<b>2015 (Jan-October)</b>	3	4

2. War Memorials Online is seeking to create a greater understanding of the condition of war memorials. Identifying war memorials in 'Poor' or 'Very bad' condition will help target resources at those memorials that need help. The public can also raise concerns through the website which are passed to War Memorials Trust to follow up. The map search on the website can be searched to show war memorial condition in your local area, [www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorials](http://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorials).
3. In Memoriam 2014 is a partnership between SmartWater and War Memorials Trust. In Memoriam 2014 will protect memorials at risk of theft or damage by marking them with a forensic liquid called SmartWater. The crime prevention fluid, which is being made available at no charge, will not only make memorials uniquely identifiable, it also offers robust traceability should a theft occur. This will act as a significant deterrent to those considering desecrating our war memorials by massively increasing their chances of detection and subsequent arrest. For further information on this please visit [www.inmemoriam2014.org](http://www.inmemoriam2014.org). For further information on the In Memoriam 2014 project please visit [www.warmemorials.org/im2014-press/](http://www.warmemorials.org/im2014-press/).
4. Numbers of reported thefts and vandalism are based on those cases reported directly to WMT and those the charity has picked up as being reported in the press. There is no obligation for anyone to report theft and vandalism to WMT and as such there may be other cases of which we are unaware.
5. War Memorials Trust and Historic England have guidance to prevent theft which is available on the English Heritage website <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/war-memorial-theft-prevention-solutions/>.
6. War Memorials Trust has an educational programme aimed at helping young people in schools and youth groups learn about war memorials. Resources and information can be found at [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org).
7. War Memorials Trust is an independent registered charity. Established in 1997 due to concerns about neglect and vandalism, it works to protect and conserve war memorials. It provides advice, information and administers grants schemes that assist the repair and conservation of war memorials across the UK. As a charity the Trust relies on voluntary contributions to undertake its work. Supporters include annual and life members, donors, charitable trusts and corporate contributors.