



### Why war memorials should not be sold:

Unfortunately it is increasing the case that war memorials are being offered for sale at, for example, auctions, on internet auction sites, at architectural salvage yards or in antique shops. War Memorials Trust believes that war memorials should **not** possess a commercial value and that the buying and selling of war memorials is wrong for the following reasons:

- war memorials form part of our shared past and national cultural heritage;
- war memorials should be accessible to the public for commemoration and remembrance of those affected by conflict;
- war memorials bought and sold maybe removed from public display which prevents them being available to people to commemorate those recorded, often including family members of those recorded on the memorial;
- buying and selling war memorials creates a market value for such items which could lead to more being removed from public display and encourage the theft of such pieces for commercial gain.

War Memorials Trust realises that not all sellers or buyers of war memorials will remove them from public display and that, indeed, some buy memorials for sale with the express aim of preserving the items for remembrance. However, The Trust wants to prevent the assignment of a commercial value to all war memorials and so believes that all buying and selling should be discouraged.

### What can be done if you find a war memorial for sale?

- **Contact War Memorials Trust**

Check the object against War Memorials Trust's 'Definition of a war memorial' to ascertain if we would consider the item a war memorial. If it is a war memorial, then providing the Trust with as much detail as possible about the item for sale will help us to contact the seller to explain why we believe it is inappropriate to sell war memorials and to offer help with the relocation of the item for public commemoration.

- **Contact the seller**

You may wish to contact the seller directly to explain why war memorials should not be sold and to highlight the work of War Memorials Trust. Overleaf is a sample letter which maybe of use, but if you choose to compose your own letter please remember to include the Trust's contact details.

If you do contact the seller directly, please remember to be **polite and courteous** as often sellers are not fully aware of the importance and significance of the items they are attempting to sell. Being rude or abusive will only result in sellers refusing to co-operate with War Memorials Trust.

**War Memorials Trust 14 Buckingham Palace Road London SW1W 0QP**

**Telephone: 020 7233 7356/ 0300 123 0764 Fax: 020 7834 0202/ 0300 123 0765**

**Email: [conservation@warmemorials.org](mailto:conservation@warmemorials.org) Website: [www.warmemorials.org](http://www.warmemorials.org)**

**Registered Charity Commission Number: 1062255**

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## Sample letter

The following letter is an example of how you can contact the seller of a war memorial directly, but if you choose to compose your own letter remember to include the Trust's contact details and send a copy of your letter to the Trust.

Dear [SIR/MADAM],

I am writing to you as a [MEMBER/SUPPORTER] of War Memorials Trust, the national charity dedicated to the preservation of our war memorial heritage.

The Trust works for the protection and conservation of war memorials within the UK to ensure these monuments remain part of our communities for future generations. War memorials commemorate our shared past and are an important part of our national cultural heritage.

I note that you are currently offering for sale the [WAR MEMORIAL] on [WEBSITE/AUCTION HOUSE/SALVAGE YARD, ETC]. War Memorials Trust believes that war memorials should not possess commercial value and should be kept accessible to the public for commemoration. In addition the sale of war memorials leads to the further removal of war memorials from public display. The sale of war memorials also encourages the creation of a market which has resulted in many memorials being stolen for commercial gain.

I would like to use this opportunity to alert you to this problem and to encourage you to help in preserving our war memorial heritage. As part of the Trust's work, help can be given in relocating war memorials which are no longer accessible to the public for commemoration. War memorials are researched and every endeavour is made to find a new suitable locations, preferably amongst the community that first erected the memorial.

I would, therefore, urge you to withdraw this war memorial from sale and to contact the Conservation Officer at War Memorials Trust who will be able to assist in ensuring that this war memorial will once again be displayed and those represented commemorated for their brave actions and sacrifices.

The Conservation Officer at War Memorials Trust can be reached at:

War Memorials Trust  
14 Buckingham Palace Road  
London  
SW1W 0QP  
T: 020 7233 7356/ 0300 123 0764  
E: conservation@warmemorials.org

I will be copying War Memorials Trust in on this correspondence so that the Conservation Officer will be aware of the issue. Further information about the Trust is available from their website [www.warmemorials.org](http://www.warmemorials.org).

Yours faithfully,

[MR JOHN DOE]

Please note that this helpsheet is intended to offer informal advice and is a distillation of experience. The information contained in this helpsheet is not exhaustive and other sources of information are available.