

News statement



War Memorials Trust

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

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Status: Immediate release

Starts

War Memorials Trust (WMT) today announces a further fall in the number of war memorials that it believes have fallen victim to theft and a welcome reduction in the number reported as being vandalised.

Theft from war memorials peaked in 2011 when 40 memorials were targeted. WMT has announced a reduction in the number of thefts every year since and just four memorials have been victims so far this year.

In 2013 there was a worrying trend with an increase in vandalism attacks from six in 2012 to 18 in 2013. WMT is pleased to announce that so far in 2014 this number has also decreased and it is aware of 10 vandalism attacks; nearly a 50% reduction from the same point in 2013. Many of these cases once again relate to graffiti which can not only be disfiguring but also very difficult to remove.

War Memorials Trust's Director, Frances Moreton, commented "The continued reduction in theft from war memorials and the decrease in vandalism attacks is very welcome, particularly in this centenary year. However, we should not become complacent as any case of theft or vandalism is one too many. It is important that there is local vigilance and engagement with war memorials as this is the best form of protection. We encourage communities to regularly check their war memorials and share details of their condition on War Memorials Online. War memorial custodians 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 local war memorial heritage."

Ends

Contact

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Notes to editors

1. For details of specific cases of theft and vandalism in 2014 please see the associated appendix which will be updated with any new cases until Friday 14th November. Details of specific cases released in October 2012 and 2013 are also available on the Trust's website www.warmemorials.org/news/.

The numbers are provided below for recent years.

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

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.
3. For further information on the In Memoriam 2014 project please visit www.warmemorials.org/im2014-press/.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. War Memorials Trust and English Heritage have guidance to prevent theft which is available on the English Heritage website www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/war-memorial-theft-prevention-solutions.
7. 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.
8. 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.