

Bromley Police Cadets protect local war memorials as part of In Memoriam 2014

In the build up to Remembrance Sunday, police cadets in Bromley are visiting their local war memorials in support of In Memoriam 2014. The initiative aims to protect local war memorials from metal theft and deter anyone considering vandalism or theft. Teaming up with War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation, the Bromley Police Cadets have been given SmartWater Forensic Marking Solution to discourage criminals from removing metal on war memorials.

Earlier this year, War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation were approached by Bromley Police Cadet Hollie Osborn who wanted to protect her local war memorials. Hollie carried out condition surveys using War Memorials Online and also identified which war memorials could benefit from being protected.

Hollie explained “With an increase in forensic marking and developing crime prevention technologies in the area, I got in contact with Smartwater to see how Police Cadets could become actively involved. As cadets, we believe it is important to remember and respect the sacrifices made by those who have died, fought or have been affected by conflict and it is therefore particularly exciting for us to be involved with the project. We hope that our efforts will deter individuals from damaging war memorials, and that the project will eventually extend across the whole of London.”

War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation then provided free training to over 60 cadets. The cadets will now visit their local war memorials, with permission from the council as the custodian, to apply SmartWater to deter theft and ensure those who lost their lives continue to be remembered.

War Memorials Trust’s Director, Frances Moreton, said: “It is wonderful to see young people engaging with their war memorials and acting as the driving force within the community to protect them. The charity is delighted to be involved in this initiative and thanks Hollie for proposing the project, updating condition information on War Memorials Online and instigating this Borough-wide project to protect memorials in Bromley.”

“Anyone else in Bromley concerned about the condition of a war memorial can contact War Memorials Trust. For war memorial custodians who have not yet applied for or protected their war memorial with SmartWater then visit www.inmemoriam2014.org to apply for yours or contact the Cadets to see if they can assist you.”

Alan Given, Director of SmartWater’s Centre for Infrastructure and Asset Protection, said: “Theft of metal has been a major issue across the United Kingdom for a number of years. In some cases thieves have been so callous as to steal metal from war memorials, selling it on for small amounts of cash, but causing untold hurt and misery to the communities involved.

At SmartWater we recognise the ultimate price paid by those killed in conflict and believe that we should do all we can to protect and preserve war memorials as a lasting memory. SmartWater, through our charitable arm the SmartWater Foundation, is providing free SmartWater protection to war memorials wherever they are in the United Kingdom, ensuring that criminals know that they can be traced back to the scene of the crime. The Metropolitan Police cadets are actively involved in the programme in London and are working tirelessly to identify memorials where SmartWater protection can be utilised.”

Councillor Peter Morgan, Executive Councillor for Renewal and Recreation, said: “War memorials play an important part in remembering the sacrifices that others have made for us. It is particularly poignant that this work has been completed so close to Remembrance events and we would like to thank the Police cadets, War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation for their help and support.”

In 2011 War Memorials Trust recorded around 40 cases of theft from war memorials across the UK, including Penge war memorial in Bromley. To combat the threat of metal theft, In Memoriam 2014 was set up as a partnership between War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation to provide free crime prevent fluid for war memorial custodians. Since then theft from war memorials has dramatically fallen. In 2016 there were just 4 reported cases with 2017 seeing only 2 so far. However, communities should not be complacent as any case is one too many and communities need to be vigilant to ensure they do not suffer loss.

In Memoriam 2014 is open to applications from custodians of all war memorials which contain metal. If you wish to make an application, information can be found online at www.inmemoriam2014.org.

Ends

For more information, please contact

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The SmartWater Foundation is donating a unique SmartWater forensic marking solution for the exclusive use of the 'In Memoriam 2014' project at no cost.
- Metal theft is estimated to be costing the UK economy as much as £770million every yearⁱ
- Cash-strapped local authorities are paying out hundreds of thousands of pounds a year to repair damage caused by metal thieves who have targeted historic buildings, including schools, churches and cemeteries.
- 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).
- 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

About War Memorials Trust

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. For further information visit 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.

ⁱ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37324493

