

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

In Memoriam 2014 was delighted to welcome War Memorials Trust's Patron HRH The Duchess of Rothesay to Powrie Brae. Her Royal Highness marked the Black Watch memorial with SmartWater as part of a national campaign to protect war memorials.

Metal theft is currently estimated to be costing Scotland £12million every year and 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.

[In Memoriam 2014](#) is a partnership between War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation to provide greater protection to war memorials across Scotland and the rest of the UK. Each sculpture and plaque on the memorial will be forensically marked with SmartWater, assigning them with a state-of-the-art forensic signature that can only be seen under UV light. Once applied SmartWater is virtually impossible to remove and can withstand burning, sand blasting and long term exposure to UV.

Launched in November 2011 In Memoriam 2014 is offering SmartWater free of charge to the custodians of the estimated 6,000 war memorials in Scotland. 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. Memorials coded with SmartWater are forensically traceable, representing an increased risk of arrest and prosecution to thieves.

HRH The Duchess of Rothesay met representatives of War Memorials Trust, the SmartWater Foundation, Historic Scotland, War Memorials Trust's Regional Volunteers who have been promoting the project in their communities, veterans of the Black Watch and schoolchildren engaged with war memorials through the Trust's educational work.

In Memoriam 2014 was launched to coincide with the forthcoming centenary of the First World War. The nation's valued war memorials are under increasing threat from thieves and vandals attempting to steal metal from monuments. Despite the metal having relatively little monetary value it is 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 a peak of metal theft around war memorials in 2011 the number of incidents reported to War Memorials Trust fell by 60% in 2012.

Supporting communities who have experienced metal theft is one aspect of War Memorials Trust's work. The recently launched Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund making £1 million available to support war memorial conservation in Scotland can provide grants to repair damage caused by theft or anti-social behaviour as well other works to improve condition. The Trust has a Conservation Officer based in Edinburgh to administer this scheme and support Scotland's war memorial custodians ensure their memorials are fit for events to commemorate the centenary in the years ahead.

The Black Watch Association and Dundee Council are custodians of the memorial and have given permission for the memorial to be marked.

**War Memorials Trust's Director, Frances Moreton, said:** "War Memorials Trust greatly appreciates the support of HRH The Duchess of Rothesay. With the approaching centenary interest in war memorials is growing significantly and the charity is delighted that people in Scotland are engaging with In Memoriam 2014 to pro-actively protect their war

memorials. We hope this scheme, alongside the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund, will help ensure the people of Scotland have protected, secure and conserved war memorials at which to pay their respects.”

**Sir Keith Povey QPM, Chairman of the SmartWater Foundation, said:** “In Memoriam 2014 is an exceptionally important project, and The SmartWater Foundation is delighted to be part of such a worthwhile cause. War Memorials are focal points for commemoration and this project is committed to doing everything possible to protect these important symbols of our heritage. We are hugely grateful to HRH The Duchess of Rothesay for her support of In Memoriam 2014 and to everyone that continues to play a part in its ongoing success.”

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

**ENDS**

For more information, please contact

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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.
- Metal theft is currently estimated to be costing the Scottish Economy approximately £12million every year
- 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](http://www.smartwater.com)).

**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.

In April 2013 the charity undertook the administration of the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund on behalf of the Scottish Government. This scheme is making available £1 million between April 2013 and March 2018 to support the repair and conservation of war memorials, of all types and dates, in Scotland. A War Memorials Trust Conservation Officer will be based in Edinburgh to administer this funding and undertake, where possible, site visits to assess works and support custodians. Full details of the scheme can be found at [www.warmemorials.org/grants-scotland](http://www.warmemorials.org/grants-scotland).

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.

