

Activity sheet: War memorial issues



War Memorials Trust

On this sheet you will learn:

- Find out some activities you can do to help inform other people about some of the current issues facing war memorials.

On our 'Current issues involving war memorials' information sheet (www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/youth-groups/general/11-18) we explain some of the **problems** that affect war memorials today. Some of these are due to their age. Others are due to neglect, either through people not being aware of the memorial or taking responsibility for it. Other problems are caused by people deliberately causing damage to or even stealing war memorials to sell metal from them.

On this sheet we give you ideas of things you can do to **find out** more about these issues and how you can tell other people about them. If you want to get even more **involved** with helping to look after local war memorials, look at the project ideas at www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/youth-groups/projects.

Research local news stories

To help you find out more about **theft** from war memorials, try to find some examples of it happening in your area. In the autumn of 2011 the number of incidents rose from an average of one per week nationally to three per week, and many were reported in local and national **press**, especially with it being so close to Remembrance Day. There are records of articles where War Memorials Trust were mentioned on our main **website** at www.warmemorials.org/press-coverage and many of these stories are related to thefts. You can also search for other stories on **local news** websites.

War Memorials Online is another source of information on the condition and historical treatment of individual war memorials. You can **search** for your local war memorials and see if there is

information recorded about any incidents of **vandalism** to it. You can also update any additional information you might have about the memorial. Details of how to do this can be found at www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/youth-groups/projects.

Write to a local paper or other people in community

If you find out that war memorials in your area have been vandalised, or just want to tell local people about your war memorial and its importance to the community, you could **write** a letter or a short article for a local **newspaper** or **newsletter**. You can use this to persuade locals of the importance of looking out for the memorial and to highlight what you and your group are doing for it. A poster or information leaflet is another way to get information across (although please **remember** not to put posters actually on or around a war memorial as this risks damaging it).

Explore the feelings of those affected

As well as the **physical** damage theft and vandalism does to a war memorial itself, which is obviously shocking, these incidents also have a significant **emotional** impact on the people to whom the war memorial is important. Sometimes a war memorial is the only surviving **record** of those who served in conflicts and losing the record of their names can be devastating, especially if **relatives** of those who fought are still part of the same community. You could try to explore this issue further with your group, possibly by asking a local veterans' association to visit you and explain why war memorials are so important to them. You could also use **drama** or **creative work** to explore the emotions involved in these issues.