

Primary resource sheet

War memorial theft



War Memorials Trust

Look at the picture of the war memorial that has had metal plaques stolen. The memorial is in Carshalton in Surrey.



This is an example of a war memorial that have been targeted by thieves so that they can sell on the plaques as scrap metal. Usually the price earned from selling these items is nothing like their actual value. For example, the plaques stolen from one war memorial were estimated at the time of the theft to cost around £7000 to replace but would be worth around £200 when sold as scrap.

Most people who live in the towns where the memorials are situated were very upset when the thefts took place. In Willaston, Cheshire, where the plaques were stolen just before Remembrance Day 2011, one person said, "The people of Willaston are shocked and incredulous that anyone could be capable of showing such contempt for their fellow man." Many people found it hard to understand why people would steal from a memorial to people who had died in the First and Second World Wars.

The war memorial in Carshalton has now had replacement plaques fitted. Instead of being made of the same metal, the new plaques are made of stone. In this case, they are made of stone because the historical records showed that stone was used on the original memorial when it was first built and it is important to keep the memorial the same as what the community chose. However, some people have suggested that metal parts of memorials should be replaced with other, less valuable materials to stop them being stolen again.

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1. Why do you think people were so upset when the plaques were stolen from memorials?

People were upset because: • • •

2. Do you think war memorials are still as important as when they were first built?

War memorials are still important because:
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3. Should the stolen parts of war memorials be replaced with the same materials or different, less valuable ones that will put people off stealing them again?

Stolen parts should be replaced with other materials because:	Stolen parts should be replaced with the same material because: