RAILWAY CABLE THIEVES JAILED FOR 11 YEARS

Four men have been sentenced for conspiracy to commit railway cable theft after forensic evidence provided by SmartWater linked them to multiple crimes across the West Midlands.

During the gang’s first raid, committed outside a Tesco supermarket in Sheffield, a G4S security guard was violently assaulted with a baseball bat. Five days later the gang struck again in Leicester, this time targeting a courier entering a branch of Nationwide Building Society and threatening him with a hammer.

The group’s crimes started to catch up with them after they were traced through stolen banknotes that they used in shops, pubs and clubs in Nottingham, Loughborough and Leicester. The cash was forensically marked with SmartWater and so could be linked back to the individual robberies.

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STOP PRESS

A new specification on the robustness of forensic coding products called PAS 820:2012 has been published, providing a trusted benchmark for both manufacturers and their customers. Read more on page 5.

WAR MEMORIAL THEFTS PLUMMET

Newly released figures have revealed thefts from war memorials have fallen by around two thirds since the launch of an initiative to protect this key piece of the UK’s heritage.

In Memoriam 2014, a partnership between War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation, was launched when reported thefts from memorials were running at an average of three each week. In total the charity identified 60 cases of theft and vandalism during the 12 month period prior to the launch of the project.

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GANG RECEIVES COMBINED 46 YEARS IN JAIL

SmartWater forensic evidence has assisted with the conviction of six men and a woman following two violent robberies against cash-in-transit couriers, during which they stole over £70,000 in cash.

During the gang’s first raid, committed outside a Tesco supermarket in Sheffield, a G4S security guard was violently assaulted with a baseball bat. Five days later the gang struck again in Leicester, this time targeting a courier entering a branch of Nationwide Building Society and threatening him with a hammer.

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SWEDISH POLICE VISIT FORENSIC LABS

Senior representatives from the Swedish Police Service and the Swedish Forensic Science Service (FSS) have visited SmartWater’s forensic laboratories to gain a better understanding of SmartWater’s methods and procedures. The objective of the visit was to help establish proper forensic protocols prior to the launch of SmartWater in Sweden.

COMMENDATION FOR SMARTWATER SPECIALIST

A member of SmartWater’s Special Support Team has been presented with a commendation from the Chief Constable of Gwent Police for his commitment in supporting the Force’s ongoing fight against metal theft.

Steve Lloyd has been recognised for his role in the “No ID, No Cash” campaign which encouraged scrap metal dealers to insist upon seeing the ID of anyone they were buying from. The initiative was launched two-and-a-half years ago when Steve and other SmartWater Investigators conducted overt and covert operations against scrap dealers in the Caerphilly area.

The success of that operation resulted in “No ID, No Cash” being adopted across the whole of Gwent. It has since been incorporated into a national police-led metal theft campaign called Operation Tornado.

SmartWater’s Chief Executive, Phil Cleary, said: “We’re extremely pleased for Steve and proud of his achievement. This success is a testament to his knowledge, enthusiasm, hard work and commitment to the community.”

RAILWAY CABLE THIEVES JAILED FOR 11 YEARS

Four men have been jailed for a combined 11 years after admitting to more than 30 railway cable thefts. The use of prima facie evidence provided by SmartWater played a critical role in the gangs’ conviction.

SmartWater forensic marking is used by Network Rail to protect vulnerable railway infrastructure along the London to North West (LNW) route. Though no stolen cable was recovered from the gang, British Transport Police discovered cutting tools marked with tiny fragments of SmartWater in their homes. Analysis identified the fragments as coming from Network Rail cable used across Nuneaton. This, together with association charts prepared by SmartWater analysts, outlined the extent of the conspiracy.

SmartWater has launched in America following the formation of SmartWater CSI LLC™, with offices already established in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and plans for rapid expansion over the next 18 months.

SmartWater CSI will introduce SmartWater’s award winning crime prevention products, strategies and services to businesses, police departments and homeowners across the United States. Greater Fort Lauderdale was chosen as the preferred location to establish SmartWater CSI by offering an expansive area that welcomes cutting-edge technology and progressive law enforcement agencies that embrace innovative approaches to crime prevention.

SmartWater Strategy back in 2007, will also be re-launching its campaign over the coming months.

Fort Lauderdale Mayor, Jack Seiler, said: “We are very happy to welcome leading international companies such as SmartWater CSI to Fort Lauderdale. Their choice of Fort Lauderdale for their North American headquarters speaks to the growing reputation of Fort Lauderdale as a location of choice for international businesses to serve the North American market, and we wish them all future success.”

Railway cable thefts.

SmartWater CSI has launched Stateside

From persistent residential crime. The Tallahassee Police Department, which successfully tested the SmartWater Strategy back in 2007, will also be re-launching its campaign over the coming months.

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A crowbar marked with flecks of SmartWater

John Gowlond (26) and Dominic Walls (23) pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to steal railway cable. Accomplishes Flame Redshaw (23) and John Brunozzi-Jones (22) pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing. Their sentencing took into account the significant impact of the thefts to both rail commuters and the wider community, with Network Rail reporting costs of £204,000 for repairs and compensation.

Jo Kaye, Route Managing Director for Network Rail, said: “We are protecting our cables with forensic tagging agents - in this case, SmartWater. The evidence which this provides has been an important part of this case and demonstrates the successes we can have through working together.”
METAL RECOVERY LEADS TO SCRAP DEALER ARREST

A Worcester scrap dealer has been arrested for handling stolen lead following a police raid. Officers descended on the Jansen Metco scrap yard in Shrub Hill, arresting one man on suspicion of handling stolen goods and seizing a number of items. The raid followed the forensic analysis of a strip of SmartWater marked lead that was seized from the scrap yard during a previous visit. SmartWater scientists positively identified the lead as belonging to a South Staffordshire church.

Officers were accompanied on the raid by SmartWater Investigators and representatives from BT’s metal theft taskforce. They seized large quantities of high voltage power cable and underground mains cable for further analysis to establish whether or not the items were stolen. The site was also visited by a representative of Western Power Distribution who said some of the cables were “likely” to belong to the company.

Sgt Chris Rhodes, who led the operation on behalf of West Mercia Police said that officers would be checking the record-keeping and paperwork of scrap dealers in the area to ensure they are keeping accurate information, including who they are buying from, vehicle registrations and whether they have performed their own SmartWater checks on metal coming in.

BUNGLING CROOKS JAILED FOR VIOLENT CASH ROBBERY

Two bungling criminals who attempted to destroy evidence from a violent cash-in-transit robbery by torching a bathtub filled with stolen banknotes have been jailed. Despite their best attempts, the banknotes were still identifiable by SmartWater scientists, linking the pair with the robbery.

19-year-old Michael O’Grady was found guilty of being one of two masked men who stole a G4S courier in the arm outside a branch of Lloyds TSB in Kirkby, Merseyside. The pair made off with a cashbox containing £20,000 and fled the scene in a stolen taxi. Shortly afterwards they were seen attempting to forcibly open the cashbox by reversing the stolen vehicle into it. This activated the cashbox’s security system, covering the notes in purple ink containing a SmartWater forensic signature.

That afternoon O’Grady was spotted entering his girlfriend’s home along with 21-year-old William Hunter. Shortly afterwards armed police arrived at the scene and surrounded the house. The gang panicked, setting a bathtub full of stolen banknotes on fire and attempted to flush yet more stolen notes down the toilet. The house quickly became engulfed with smoke, forcing the group to flee the building, straight into the arms of the police.

Despite their best attempts to destroy the evidence, the remains of the banknotes were sent to SmartWater’s forensic laboratories where scientists were able to extract the forensic code and positively identify which cashbox they had come from.

Michael O’Grady was detained for nine years after being found guilty of robbery along with two counts of burglary and three counts of taking a vehicle without permission. William Hunter was jailed for 32 months for handling stolen goods. He was acquitted at an earlier trial of being the second masked robber.

POLICE STING catches thief

A Northumbria Police trap house that was fitted with covert CCTV and SmartWater forensic marking has scored its latest conviction. Leon Haq broke into the Newcastle ‘home’ and stole a television, laptop and mobile phone – but the flat had been rigged up with hidden cameras by police as part of a crackdown on burglaries in the area.

The stolen items had all been marked with SmartWater so they could be irrefutably linked back to the crime scene. Some of these were later recovered in Haq’s possession and identified via forensic analysis as being from the burglary. Haq (31) pleaded guilty to burglary and was jailed for 20 months.

Neighbourhood Inspector Leigh McManus said: “Haq is the fourth person to be sentenced after being caught in the act burgling the sting houses. I hope this reassures people that Northumbria Police will use every tactic and tool at its disposal to continue to protect and detect burglaries.”

WAR MEMORIAL THEFTS Plummet

Figures compiled by War Memorials Trust show that war memorial thefts have fallen by around two thirds since the launch of In Memoriam 2014, a project set up to protect war memorials from the threat of metal theft.

The last 12 months have seen an unprecedented amount of media coverage about war memorial-related metal theft, which has resulted in heightened awareness amongst the general public. Both War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation hope that as knowledge of In Memoriam 2014 continues to grow it will reinforce the message that war memorial theft is totally unacceptable, and that war memorials are no longer a soft target for thieves.

War Memorials Trust’s Director, Frances Moreton, said: “It has been encouraging to see increased public awareness of war memorials over the last 12 months. More and more people are realising that war memorials are not just relevant on 11th November but all year round.”

Phil Cleary, Director of the SmartWater Foundation, said: “We are hugely proud to be involved in the In Memoriam 2014 project and very pleased with these latest figures. War memorials are focal points for commemoration and we will continue to do all we can to protect these important symbols of our heritage.”
BOILER THEFTS CUT FROM VOID PROPERTIES

A partnership between Wakefield and District Housing (WDH), West Yorkshire Police and SmartWater has produced impressive reductions in boiler thefts. The partnership was established after West Yorkshire Police recorded significant increases in thefts across Pontefract, Knottingley and the Warwick Estate. The increase coincided with a Housing Association project to upgrade heating systems, during which time tenants were being temporarily re-housed. Whilst properties were left vacant the brand new boilers and heating systems were being stolen.

The Warwick Estate was identified as a particular hotspot and 750 SmartWater forensic coding systems were deployed to mark boilers as well as tenants’ valuables.

In support of this, regular visits to scrap metal yards were carried out by West Yorkshire Police officers and SmartWater Investigators. This heightened awareness of the project amongst potential handlers and receivers of stolen goods and reduced the means for thieves to sell on stolen metal.

Within three months of the launch the Warwick Estate saw a 52 per cent decrease in all types of burglary offences and a 20 per cent reduction in dwelling burglaries. Similarly, Knottingley saw a 38 per cent decrease in all types of burglary and a 60 per cent decrease in dwelling burglaries, whilst Pontefract recorded a 41 per cent drop in all types of burglary and a 62 per cent decrease in dwelling burglaries.

The project review noted that the rollout of SmartWater forensic systems to void properties had been delayed and during this period boilers continued to be stolen. Debriefs conducted with offenders revealed that it was common knowledge amongst thieves that the targeted void properties had not yet been marked with SmartWater as they were not displaying SmartWater window stickers. Properties that were displaying stickers were considered to represent an increased risk of conviction and were left alone.

Professor Jane Mortimore, Chief Executive of WDH, said:

“The project review noted that the rollout of SmartWater forensic systems to void properties had been delayed and during this period boilers continued to be stolen. SmartWater is being rolled out to 10,000 Rotterdam homes

The visit coincided with the launch of a major SmartWater initiative in Rotterdam which will see the distribution of 10,000 SmartWater forensic coding systems to residents of Schiebroek and Bloemhof.

The project is a joint partnership between the City of Rotterdam, Rotterdam Police and SmartWater as part of a wider initiative to reduce crime in the city.

The Hague-based crime prevention officers visited SmartWater’s International Control Centre in London to learn more about how SmartWater’s crime prevention strategies have helped to successfully reduce burglary across the UK and USA.

Crime reduction officer for Kirkkees, Mark Wall, said: “When we started this project with the Huddersfield Crime Prevention Panel and SmartWater, we were confident that it would lead to a reduction in the number of thefts of stone. A 43 per cent reduction in thefts is, however, a great result.”

GANG JAILED FOR ROBBERY AND ATTEMPTED MURDER

A gang of violent cash-in-transit robbers, who were caught in possession of SmartWater marked banknotes shortly after their fifth and final robbery, have been jailed following a trial at Kingston Crown Court. Andre Abrahams (25) and Gladstone Allen (24) were convicted of robbery alongside Ishmael Baptiste (21) and Romaine Gayle (18), after they were arrested by detectives from the Metropolitan Police’s Flying Squad.

Baptiste and Gayle were jailed for seven-and-a-half years and six years respectively, whilst Abrahams and Allen were given indeterminate sentences after also being found guilty of two counts of attempted murder and possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life. This related to a separate investigation led by Operation Trident, following the shooting of two men at a hostel in Tooting. Neither will be considered for parole until they have served at least 10 years.

The gang’s first of five robberies against cash-in-transit couriers took place in Clapham High Street when a G4S employee was assaulted and a cashbox was stolen. The offenders left the scene in a silver Volkswagen Golf, which was later found to have been registered to Abrahams. Four similar robberies were committed over the next three months in Battersea, Clapham, Wandsworth and Richmond convinced detectives that they were carried out by the same gang.

The men were arrested swiftly after the final robbery by officers from the Flying Squad. They were found in a nearby flat still in possession of dye-stained cash and clothing. The marked items were seized and sent to SmartWater’s forensic laboratories which confirmed the dye-staining had come from the same cashbox stolen in Richmond.

STONE THIEVES OUT-SMARTED

Theft of stone from Yorkshire’s historic dry stone walls has been slashed thanks to an innovative project using SmartWater. The disappearance of Yorkshire stone from walls, some of which are centuries old, had been rising at an unacceptable rate, but thefts have plummeted since the start of the project.

The Huddersfield Crime Prevention Panel launched a 12 month initiative with SmartWater and recorded a reduction in stone thefts from 121 incidents to 70 during the course of the year. Officers from the local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) and SmartWater Investigators also monitored stone merchants and worked to educate them about the risks of buying stone that may be stolen.

When we started this project with the Huddersfield Crime Prevention Panel and SmartWater, we were confident that it would lead to a reduction in the number of thefts of stone. A 43 per cent reduction in thefts is, however, a great result.”

DUTCH POLICE EAGER TO REPEAT SUCCESS

Senior officers from the Royal Dutch Police have visited SmartWater’s International Control Centre in London to learn more about how SmartWater’s crime prevention strategies have helped to successfully reduce burglary across the UK and USA.

The Hague-based crime prevention officers visited SmartWater’s International Control Centre in London to learn more about how SmartWater’s crime prevention strategies have helped to successfully reduce burglary across the UK and USA.
SPECIFICATION FOR FORENSIC CODING PUBLISHED

The first ever specification providing a method of assessing the performance of forensic security marking products has been published, providing a trusted benchmark for both manufacturers and their customers.

This new Publicly Available Specification (PAS 820:2012) is the result of collaborations between the Home Office, police, trade associations, the security industry and British Standards Institution (BSI).

PAS 820:2012 will assist customers with identifying the suitability of forensic coding products, which are used within a wide range of environments, both internal and external. They can be used to protect anything from domestic items and business assets to infrastructure, such as cabling.

It is therefore imperative that the forensic code used to mark an item is suitable robust and able to withstand the environmental conditions in which it is to be used. This is particularly essential for items of property that are left outdoors - such as railway cable or lead flashing – where the forensic code must be durable enough to withstand multiple weather conditions.

MITIE IS FIRST TO TRAIN SMARTWATER ‘FORENSIC TECHNICIANS’

Strategic outsourcing and energy services company, MITIE, is the first in the UK to have staff formally trained as ‘Forensic Technicians’, which enables them to operate SmartWater systems on client premises to enhance the protection of assets.

The new partnership will give MITIE’s client base of major companies and government organisations straightforward access to SmartWater protection, in the knowledge that it is being operated by SmartWater accredited professional security staff. Rolls Royce is the first MITIE client to take up this opportunity.

Training on the application and deployment of SmartWater’s crime reduction products and tactics has already been provided to MITIE’s management team and officers. Every MITIE staff member attending the training must pass an exam at the end of the course to demonstrate competence.

Two security operations managers have also undertaken the SmartWater ‘Train the Trainer’ course, which is delivered at either SmartWater’s London Training Centre or Telford Laboratories. This course covers topics including the deployment of covert forensic trap devices, the maintenance of clients’ asset registers, the recovery and submission of forensic evidence and the use of psychological warfare to deter theft. This allows subsequent training of officers to be conducted in-house, thereby reducing impact on site resources.

Ian Rigby MBE, Account Operations Manager - Security and Emergency Services for MITIE Facilities Management, said: “We are delighted to be working with SmartWater Technology Ltd on this partnership, which we believe will improve our offer and be of significant benefit to our clients. Upskilling our security staff to use and actively search for traces of SmartWater forensic solution adds real value to our service and keeps us at the cutting edge of security and manned guarding.”

Chief Executive of SmartWater Technology Ltd, Phil Cleary, said: “We believe that we can assist professional manned guarding companies like MITIE to achieve a key differentiator by ‘upskilling’ and accrediting their staff to use the SmartWater deterrence for the benefit of their clients.”

CAT CONVERTER PRODUCT UNVEILED

SmartWater has unveiled a new high temperature marking product to provide long term traceability to catalytic converters and other vehicle exhaust components.

This follows an alarming rise in the number of catalytic converter thefts which are being stolen for their inherent scrap value. Organised thieves can steal a catalytic converter in a matter of seconds, and despite only being worth £100-200 in scrap value the cost of repair could be over £1,000, not to mention the cost of disruption whilst vehicles are off the road.

SmartWater’s High Temperature Marker acts as a proven and longstanding deterrent to thieves by providing irretrievable traceability to vehicle exhaust components making them more difficult to sell on. Unlike DNA-based markers and other identification systems, SmartWater does not require regular reaplication and is capable of withstanding the intense heat that exhaust systems reach when a vehicle’s engine is switched on.

For more information please contact SmartWater’s Customer Services Department on 0800 521 669 or email enquiry@smartwater.com

STOP PRESS

Having undergone rigorous testing, SmartWater’s forensic marking product has been confirmed as conforming to PAS 820:2012 5 year external (GRADE A) specification - the highest functional test life.

GANG RECEIVES COMBINED 46 YEARS IN JAIL

Continued from Page 1

A gang of six men and a woman have all been convicted following two cash-in-transit robberies during which they stole £70,000. On both occasions, police said the couriers were left badly shaken.

When the thieves tampered with the stolen cashboxes they activated the built-in SmartWater system, which stained the notes in a purple dye containing a forensic signature.

Ashley Charles (24), Anton Sylvester (25), Daniel Monaghan (25), Kyle Morgan (25), Issac McNual (24) and Farren Melluish (28) were jailed for a combined 46 years. Accomplice Roxanne Wilson (25) received a nine-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, and 150 hours of community service after she admitted handling criminal property.

Senior investigating officer Detective Chief Inspector Lecrew said: “This was an organised criminal outfit, who executed their plans with an alarming level of violence which left their victims shaken. They showed little or no regard for anything other than getting hold of the money.”
SMARTWATER ASSISTS STOLEN METAL RECOVERY

A large quantity of stolen metal items have been seized during a Police-led day of action at a South London scrap yard. The raid in Croydon, which was attended by the Metropolitan Police, SmartWater Investigators and other partners, uncovered dozens of SmartWater marked graveyard memorial plaques as well as an ornamental dragon and a statue of Christ.

Officers believe many of the plaques were taken from graveyards and crematoria in and around Croydon. Some were intact, though many had been cut into pieces to try and mask identifying marks before being melted down. Investigators discovered traces of SmartWater forensic marking solution on the plaques as well as on cutting equipment at the site. As a result of the recovery the owner of the scrap yard, along with an employee, were arrested on suspicion of possessing unlawfully gained metal.

They have since been charged with receiving and converting stolen goods and remanded in custody. Chief Executive of SmartWater Technology Ltd, Phil Cleary, said: “This was a huge find, with evidence pointing to the systematic theft of memorial plaques from graveyards and crematoria in the Croydon area. SmartWater Investigators regularly attend Police-led days of action and we will continue to work with our partners to target handlers and receivers of stolen metals and provide supporting forensic evidence to the Police to assist with criminal convictions.”

CASCASINO CHAIN BACKS SMARTWATER

A casino chain that operates across France is installing SmartWater’s forensic spray system to deter armed robberies and out-of-hours burglaries. La Pasino is the first casino chain to install SmartWater, which will be rolled out at an initial seven sites which have been identified as the most ‘at-risk’. All seven sites have been repeatedly targeted by armed robbers in the past, collectively escaping with millions of Euros in cash and leaving staff members traumatised. The installation of SmartWater is part of a large-scale security upgrade by La Pasino to protect both staff members and customers.

Commissaire for the Police in Lille, Guy Sapata, said: “For the first time ever we have a tool which links the criminal with the scene of a specific crime. SmartWater is a very powerful evidential tool and will give investigating officers the ability to easily identify the criminal. SmartWater works as an effective deterrent because it represents an increased risk to criminals.”

Other businesses currently using SmartWater in France include the Rosny 2 Shopping Centre in Rosny-sous bois and Altadis Distribution, both of which have suffered no further attacks since installation.

CHURCH LEAD THIEF JAILED FOR THREE YEARS

A member of a gang which plundered lead and copper from churches and houses across Birmingham has been jailed for three years. Robert Kivej (30) was arrested after one of his accomplices fell through a church roof and fractured his skull, as reported in the last issue of SmartWater Searchlight.

Fire crews and West Midlands Ambulance Service were called to St George’s Church in Newtown, Birmingham in the middle of the night and discovered the man lying in a pool of his own blood. Kivej fled the scene but was picked up soon afterwards by West Midlands Police.

Despite denying any involvement in the theft his clothes were seized and sent to SmartWater’s forensic laboratories for analysis. This proved to be decisive, as SmartWater scientists found two small flecks of SmartWater on two separate items of clothing. Both were positively identified as having come from St George’s Church. It is believed that the flecks of SmartWater had transferred onto the offender’s clothes whilst cutting and removing copper from the roof.

Kivej admitted to six charges of burglary, three of theft and good equipped and asked for another 11 similar offences to be taken into consideration. At the time of his arrest Kivej was on bail after being caught stripping lead from a church in Edgbaston.

STOP PRESS

Western Power Distribution has announced that thefts from electricity substations have fallen by 62.5 per cent in Gloucestershire, an area previously identified as a theft hotspot. The use of SmartWater has been praised for helping to deter thieves.

COUNCIL PROJECT SLASHES TIPTON METAL THEFTS

A council-funded project supported by local Police and scrap metal dealers, which made SmartWater available to residents across a West Midlands town, has slashed metal thefts by 60 per cent.

Sandwell Council provided its local police with funding to invest in SmartWater systems for residents of Tipton. This was used to deter criminals who had been helping themselves to metal from across the neighbourhood, including copper piping and garden gates. Officers also liaised with the area’s scrap metal merchants, to shut down the criminals’ opportunities to sell on stolen metal.

Sergeant Dave Rogers, of Tipton Police, said: “Scrap metal dealers have signed up to the SmartWater scheme and they can tell any scrap metal has come from. More importantly, they will have details of the person that has tried to sell the scrap metal. It is a great scheme and we are pleased to have teamed up with Sandwell Council to cut down on these sorts of thefts that blight people’s lives.”

Lead member of Sandwell Council for Tipton, Councillor Joanne Hadley said the dramatic drop in metal thefts occurred because the word had spread about the wide use of SmartWater.

CONTACT US

SmartWater Technology Ltd offers a range of support services to help ensure the SmartWater deterrent works for you. Our dedicated staff members are on hand to assist domestic users, businesses, commercial clients, Police, Local Authorities and more with their crime prevention and risk management requirements.

If you require any assistance, please contact SmartWater on 0800 521 669 or email enquiry@smartwater.com