A gang of Lithuanian men who stole lead from over 20 churches across three counties have been jailed for a combined 20 years, representing the most severe sentencing ever handed out for this type of crime.

The gang caused an estimated £1 million worth of damage during a nine month crime spree across Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. They are believed to have stolen approximately 70 tonnes of lead, which they sold on to scrap metal dealers for an estimated £70,000.

The group were snared when Lincolnshire Police officers stopped two suspicious vehicles during a Day of Action targeting metal theft. Five of the six defendants were found in the vehicles, along with a quantity of lead. The lead was marked with SmartWater, which was subsequently analysed and positively identified as coming from a church in Lincolnshire. This contributed vital evidence that aided their conviction.

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**FLORIDA NEIGHBOURHOOD REPORTS 60% BURGLARY REDUCTION**

One of the first neighbourhoods in Fort Lauderdale, Florida to deploy SmartWater has reported a huge reduction in domestic burglaries.

Using the proven model that has successfully reduced crime in residential areas across the UK, South Middle River introduced The SmartWater Strategy™ to protect homes and target both thieves and receivers of stolen goods. A total of 500 SmartWater home security packs were handed out to South Middle River residents and during the three months that followed, burglaries plummeted.

The SmartWater was paid for using money that the police had confiscated from criminals.

Street signs generating awareness of the project have been placed around the area; whilst Fort Lauderdale Police Department have installed UV lighting and signage within police station custody areas to let thieves know that they routinely scan for the presence of SmartWater.

Community association president Sal Gatanio said, “We’ve had a 60 per cent drop in home break-ins. The police are going into pawn shops now with special flashlights and recovering stolen property.”

They’re stopping cars and hitting the contents with the light. Five hundred people are using it in their homes and only one of these homes has since been broken into.”

**CONVICTION AIDS BRENT POLICE SUCCESS**

A SmartWater initiative conducted in an area of Brent as part of a wider MET Police burglary reduction project has produced impressive crime reduction statistics as well as arrests and prosecutions.

SmartWater home security packs were issued to 1,000 households in an area of Harlesden, resulting in an 80 per cent drop in burglary over the course of the six month trial.

A car thief from Tottenham has also become the first person in Brent to be snared by a SmartWater trap car. Haifa Mokuba (29) was caught red-handed with a laptop marked with the crime fighting liquid after he stole it from a trap car parked in Willesden. He was caught on CCTV eyeing up the laptop in the car before stealing it, unaware it had been marked and was under surveillance. He has since been jailed for six weeks.

Detective Sergeant Madeline Ryder from Brent Priority Crime Unit said: “This is another excellent example of the thorough work completed by Brent Officers. Using the SmartWater trap car technology, we were able to charge Mokuba and put him before the courts within 24 hours of his arrest.”

**GANG THAT PLUNDERED CHURCHES JAILED FOR 20 YEARS**

An alleged car thief has become the first person to be arrested as a result of SmartWater in the USA. 21 year old Michael Jackson was arrested after activating a trap car fitted with a SmartWater spray system in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
SOUTHERN WATER MAKES A SPLASH WITH SMARTWATER

Security has been stepped up at hundreds of Southern Water sites following the introduction of SmartWater to protect generators, cables and other equipment from the threat of theft.

The forensic technology has been introduced at Southern Water sites across Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight as a deterrent to thieves intent on stealing metal. Signage has been placed at every site to warn off would-be thieves, whilst regular searches for SmartWater at scrap yards across the area are also being carried out in partnership with the police.

Phil Jackson, Southern Water’s Resilience and Security Manager, said: “This comprehensive tagging of Southern Water equipment with SmartWater will help deter thieves from targeting our sites. Our message is simple. Steal from us and you will get caught – so don’t even try.”

GANG JAILED FOR 19 YEARS FOLLOWING CASH ROBBERY

The identification of SmartWater marked clothing has aided the prosecution of three men who have been jailed for a total of 19 years, after a G4S courier was held up outside a Blockbuster Video store in Surrey.

Nicholas Leacock (35) and Marvin Samuels (28) stole a cashbox before driving to an address in Croydon where they paid accomplice Paul Tucker (36), £100 to open the stolen box with an angle grinder. A tracking device in the cashbox led police straight to the gang, where they found £370 in cash, industrial cutting equipment and clothing all marked with SmartWater. Suspecting the thief would return, copper piping. Suspecting the thief would return, when the gang forced open the box. Under police interview Leacock and Samuels made no comment, but their clothing was seized and sent to SmartWater’s forensic laboratories where scientists positively identified traces of purple dye laced with SmartWater and linked it with the stolen cashbox. This evidence was upheld in court and used to help link the pair with the robbery. Leacock and Samuels were jailed for nine years each after pleading guilty to a charge of conspiracy to commit robbery. Tucker, who had entered a not guilty plea, was found guilty by a jury and sentenced to one year in prison.

‘TRAP HOUSE’ BURGLAR JAILED

A covert trap set up by Gwent Police in partnership with Caerphilly Borough Council and SmartWater has secured its latest conviction.

The trap was installed in a vacant house that had previously been targeted by burglars who stole copper piping. Suspecting the thief would return, covert CCTV and a SmartWater forensic spray system were both installed at the address.

Andrew Bullock (38) activated the capture house and was arrested at the scene after response officers found him hiding inside the house dripping with SmartWater. He had removed a quantity of copper piping which was also covered in SmartWater forensic solution. He was charged with burglary and sentenced to two years and four months in prison and ordered to pay £120 costs.

DC Wayne Alexander said “Gwent Police are regularly scanning persons in custody units for the presence of SmartWater and are confident that more offenders will be arrested by using capture house technology. The use of capture houses is expanding through the Gwent Police area.”

GANG THAT PLUNDERED CHURCHES JAILED FOR 20 YEARS

Continued from Page 1

Six members of a gang dubbed ‘Britain’s most prolific church lead thieves’ have been jailed for 20 years after being caught in possession of SmartWater marked lead. SmartWater evidence together with mobile phone records and DNA from a cigarette butt found on a church roof, were all used to help convict the gang and ensure lengthy sentences. Since their arrest Lincolnshire Police has reported that church lead thefts in the county have fallen by 90%.

Vidas Andruska (34) was found guilty by a jury of conspiracy to steal and sentenced to 7 years in prison, as were accomplices Andrius Cereska (30), Tadas Andruska (36) and Audrius Kvedaras (30) who were all jailed for four years. Nerijus Razma (23) was found not guilty of conspiracy to steal but was jailed for 22 months after pleading guilty to theft. Vitalijus Viliks (27) pleaded guilty to a charge of handling stolen goods and was jailed for six months, suspended for two years.

DI Keith Blakey from Lincolnshire Police said: “These thieves targeted some of the most important heritage sites in the heart of our rural communities, causing huge amounts of damage to religious buildings and leading to a great deal of upset among congregations. We hope today’s outcome sends a clear message to criminals across the East Midlands and the rest of the country.”

GOTHENBURG RAIL ROLLOUT

The Swedish Transport Administration, which has responsibility for the maintenance of the railway infrastructure in Sweden, has reacted to an increase in cable theft by instigating the first use of SmartWater to protect the Swedish rail network.

SmartWater’s Swedish agent, Eurosafe Security Solutions Ltd, rolled out the technology at Olskroken railway yard in Gothenburg in order to protect cable and other metals. Olskroken was identified as a major crime hotspot having suffered the most thefts of any yard across the Western Maintenance Area of the network. Results have been extremely positive, with no thefts reported in the four months since the introduction of SmartWater.
Duchess reaffirms support for In Memoriam 2014

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall has demonstrated her continued support of the In Memoriam 2014 campaign. Her Royal Highness, whose Scottish title is The Duchess of Rothesay, marked the Black Watch memorial in Powrie Brae, Dundee with SmartWater as part of the nationwide campaign to protect war memorials from the threat of theft.

In Memoriam 2014 is a partnership between War Memorials Trust and The SmartWater Foundation, which is seeking to provide greater protection to war memorials across the UK. The project was launched in November 2011 to coincide with the forthcoming centenary of the First World War. During 2012 reported thefts of war memorials fell by 60 per cent.

War Memorials Trust’s Director, Frances Moreton, said: “War Memorials Trust greatly appreciates the support of our patron 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.”

Sir Keith Povey OQPM, 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.”

SmartWater awarded top durability classification

Following rigorous testing, the forensic codes used within SmartWater’s uniquely-coded marking solutions have become the first to be awarded “Grade A External” classification under the British Standards Institution’s specification PAS 820:2012. This means they have been tested to have the equivalent operational lifespan of at least five years, even when used outdoors in potentially harsh conditions.

PAS 820:2012 was developed as a collaboration between the Home Office, police, the security industry and the British Standards Institution as a means of testing the durability of forensic codes. SmartWater Technology Limited has supported the creation of the specification as a way for buyers to independently assess the suitability and robustness of products based on their requirements.

Chief Executive of SmartWater, Phil Cleary, said: “The choice of a security marking product is a critical decision for buyers in many sectors. Until recently however, they only had the assurances of the product manufacturers to go on, particularly with regards to durability. Now, for the first time, they will be able to look for an independent benchmark against which forensic codes have been tested and I’m pleased that they will find SmartWater meeting the highest testable standards.”

Covert operation snares court thief

A covert operation planned and executed by Nottinghamshire Police and SmartWater Investigators has resulted in the conviction of a court usher.

Karen Webb, from Retford, Nottinghamshire pleaded guilty to 18 counts of theft from purses and bags belonging to staff at Worksop Magistrates’ Court.

Webb was jailed for four months, suspended for one year, after admitting thefts amounting to £430. Police suspected the thefts to be the work of an insider, but legal privilege put constraints on using traditional surveillance techniques. A covert ‘capture-bag’ was developed by SmartWater covert managers and Worksop Town Centre beat officer, PC Dan Cooper, specifically in response to the thefts. The bag was activated within hours of being set and its inbuilt alarm sent an immediate message to police officers. Bank notes inside the bag were also smeared in a transferrable form of SmartWater, meaning that the thief would be covered in forensically traceable solution.

PC Cooper said: “We were racking our brains as to how to detect this crime. We had to be relatively covert due to the sensitive nature of the crimes and there were legal constraints because it was in a court. We approached the investigators and scientists at SmartWater about some sort of ‘capture’ tactic. The capture bag was what we came up with.”

Rollout continues in Holland

A further 2,500 households in the North Schiebroek district of Rotterdam have been issued with SmartWater home security packs to deter incidents of domestic burglary. Police officers distributed the packs as part of a larger, city-wide project that will ultimately see SmartWater issued to 10,000 Rotterdam homes.
COVERT STING CATCHES CASH STEALING CARER

A carer who stole £18,000 from the elderly disabled couple he was supposed to be looking after, has been jailed for 14 months after pleading guilty to a series of cash thefts. The couple, who kept large quantities of cash in their Lancashire home, grew suspicious that money was disappearing from their safe and contacted the police.

To catch the thief in the act, the police set up a covert operation in partnership with SmartWater, installing a SmartWater forensic spray system in the couple’s home. When carer Michael Harris (29) tried to open the safe without permission, the device activated and sprayed him with SmartWater solution, tying him to the crime scene. He was arrested after traces of the solution were found on his clothes. An inspection of Harris’ home revealed that he was living well beyond his means.

Detective Constable Ian Hassall said: “These were absolutely despicable crimes taking money from two vulnerable people whom he was supposed to be caring for. His position of responsibility was grossly abused for which he is now paying the price in jail.”

CONTACT

The crime fighters at SmartWater Technology Limited offer a range of support services to 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

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HARBOUR PROTECTS 4,000 BOAT OWNERS

The Hamble River Authority has launched an innovative scheme to combat the theft of boating equipment by issuing all boat owners, who pay harbour dues on the River Hamble, with a SmartWater security pack.

The project marks the first time an entire harbour has embarked on a crime prevention scheme such as this. A total of 4,000 boat owners will be issued with a SmartWater security pack to protect equipment including outboard motors, navigation systems, chart plotters and radios.

Cllr Keith Evans, Chairman of Hampshire County Council’s River Hamble Harbour Board, said: “We have been working closely with the police, including their marine unit, and of course with SmartWater. The River Hamble is not a crime hotspot; nothing could be further from the truth. This is purely a deterrent to ensure the River Hamble stays crime free. This tool is a way to ensure property is protected.”

David Evans, Harbour Master for the River Hamble, said: “The forensic marking scheme project is designed to make it clear to potential thieves that the River Hamble is not a place they will want to target. We already work very closely with the police and this is an extra step to help prevent crime and act as a deterrent to thieves. It is also a scheme that is of benefit to everyone who uses the river.”

PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT RARE BIRDS OF PREY

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Staffordshire Police and SmartWater are partnering on an innovative crime prevention project to tackle gangs that target rare birds in the Midlands.

Thieves are targeting a quarry in South Staffordshire where beautiful, and protected, Peregrine Falcons return to nest, lay eggs and raise their young chicks every year.

Police have evidence that eggs are being stolen and nests deliberately destroyed at the site near Wolverhampton. Officers are now issuing a stark warning to thieves following the installation of CCTV and motion sensors in the quarry, along with SmartWater trap devices.

Although the reason for the thefts and damage is not clear, Inspector Donna Gibbs, South Staffordshire Police Commander, is working on two possible theories: “We suspect that it is either someone involved in pigeon racing as the Falcons feed on birds locally, and there are often pigeons in the area, or someone who is specifically after the eggs to sell them illegally.”

“Whatsoever the case, we are determined to catch those responsible and will continue to do everything within our power to do so. We are working very closely with quarry staff, colleagues from the RSPB and SmartWater. Not only does anyone entering the site risk being caught on CCTV, they will trigger SmartWater spray devices showering them in forensic marking fluid which will link them directly to the crime scene.”

STOP PRESS

Three men who robbed a Bradford jewellers became trapped in the store and were sprayed with SmartWater as they attempted to smash their way out using a sledgehammer. One man has been jailed for eight years, three others remain on police bail.