

Mountain man Tom Weir's statue site targeted by thieves

Monday 2 December, 2019

In the run up to the 5th anniversary of the unveiling a statue in honour of Scotland's most loved mountain man, Tom Weir, the site, where it is located at Balmaha on Loch Lomondside, was targeted by thieves at the weekend.

They broke into donations posts and stole funds earmarked for maintaining the popular statue and associated picnic area.

The theft of money from the donation posts was discovered by visitors to the site yesterday (Sunday) who immediately reported it to the proprietor of the adjacent Oak Tree Inn, Sandy Fraser who looks after the popular site on behalf of conservation and heritage charity, the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and the Tom Weir Memorial Group.

Sandy Fraser of the Oak Tree Inn said:" This is very sad news and a setback for the efforts to raise funds to maintain this hugely popular site. It follows on from two other break ins this year at our St Mocha Coffee Shop and one of our nearby cottages.

Hopefully the police will be able to track down the thieves who are undermining the great work of voluntary groups in honouring the memory of Tom Weir who did so much to popularise the great outdoors."

James Fraser, Chairman of the Friends added: " We are very disappointed that the Tom Weir site has been targeted by thieves who used bolt cutters to remove padlocks from three donation posts.

Fortunately, we regularly empty the donation posts so the amount stolen will not have been substantial but, nonetheless, this thoughtless act serves as reminder that we need to remain vigilant and increase our efforts to protect this very special heritage site which has been enjoyed by almost a million visitors over the past 5 years."

The Tom Weir site, which incorporates a very lifelike statue of Tom, a mountain garden and a picnic area beside Balmaha Bay on the lochside is visited by around 200,000 visitors a year. Organisers are busy preparing to mark the millionth visitor in the run up to the 5th anniversary of the statue unveiling on the 29th December which is also the 105th anniversary of Tom's birthday.

It costs around £5,000 a year to maintain the statue and the site in good condition for visitors to enjoy and the funds raised from visitors via the on-site donation posts make an important contribution to raising this sum.

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