



A Ride to Remember

30.10.09

This weekend a group of police officers from West Yorkshire are taking a matter of pride and principal into their own hands as they cycle the length of the country in an attempt to highlight the pitiful neglect of the Police Memorial site in London.

The officers, from West Yorkshire Police, are cycling to London to raise awareness and support for the national police memorial in Pall Mall which has fallen into disrepair due to a lack of maintenance funding. The Memorial established by Michael Winner in 2004 was set up to honour the thousands of police officers who have given their lives in the line of duty.

The cycle organiser, Michael Downes, Chairman, West Yorkshire Police Federation hopes that his ride will encourage forces and local police authorities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to take ownership of the memorial to help pay for its upkeep and cleaning. Mr Downes has written to each of the 52 forces asking for a 25p donation per officer. Mr Downes says;

“It must not be the sole responsibility of one organisation but the responsibility of all policing bodies in the UK to pay tribute to fallen colleagues and recognise and appreciate the ultimate sacrifice made by police officers, murdered or killed whilst protecting the public.”

“A small donation from each of the forces will ensure the memorial gets the attention and care it deserves. It must not be overlooked how important this is or what incredible comfort when they visit the capital this provides to the friends and relatives of fallen police officers - to know that their loved ones sacrifice will never be forgotten.”

Mr Downes will be accompanied on the ride by five colleagues, representing all ranks of the police service. The team of six will cycle from the memorial for Sharon Beshenivsky in Bradford, to the memorial for Ian Broadhurst in Leeds and on their final Yorkshire leg will lay a wreath at the memorial for John Speed, in Leeds City Centre. John was murdered 25 years to the day.

A similar wreath laying ceremony will take place at the national police memorial in London. Friends, relatives and colleagues are being encouraged to come together, either on cycles or on foot, to meet at a muster point a short distance from the memorial in Waterloo Place (off Pall Mall) at around 11 to 11.30am Tuesday 3rd November.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

- The wreath laying ceremony will occur outside Leeds Parish Church, Kirkgate, Leeds, at 11am on Saturday 31 October and it will be accompanied by a minute's silence.
- Thereafter the 6 cyclists, namely Sergeant Michael Downes, Constable Ned Liddemore, Inspector Andrew Tempest Mitchell, Chief Inspector Rod Wark, Superintendent David Oldroyd and Assistant Chief Constable John Parkinson, will leave for London and plan to arrive in the Mall, central London on the morning of Tuesday 3 November.
- At 12pm the last post will be played, followed by a minutes silence and a wreath laying ceremony.
- The National Police Memorial charity run by Michael Winner paid for the erection of the memorial and secured a site for it on Crown property.
- Since the memorial was established the Police Federation of England and Wales, the staff association for police officers, has paid solely for annual and ongoing maintenance.

For further information, please contact the Police Federation Press Office on 01372 352071 or visit www.polfed.org.