



FIGHTING CONTAINER LOSSES

Press Release
14th February 2009

KEG WATCH Scrap dealer jailed for role in keg thefts

FORMER scrap merchant Christopher Armstrong has been jailed for eight months for handling tens of thousands of pounds worth of stolen goods.

The 30-year-old, of Hope Street, Bignall End, worked at Sandbach Car and Commercial when in May last year, an Italian truck driver arrived with £23,000 worth of fence panels.

The goods were not intended for that business, but an unnamed man arranged for them to be taken to scrap yard Armstrong owned in Talke.

The panels were unloaded there, but when the driver asked for paperwork to be signed, he was told to follow a vehicle which then lost him.

The driver contacted the police, who attended Armstrong's yard.

Panels worth £17,000 were missing and police noticed a large number of beer kegs.

The 308 kegs were valued at £29,855. Some had been damaged or smelted.

Armstrong pleaded guilty to two charges of handling stolen goods, and admitted dealing in scrap metal when the appropriate details were not registered at the borough council, and breaching environmental regulations.

Trevor Meegan, defending, said the fence panels offence was not premeditated or planned.

He said: "The defendant was recruited on the day. He knew the panels were stolen. He has not received any financial benefit.

"He was storing the panels as a favour for a man called Pat.

"With regard to the beer kegs, he was under substantial pressure from two gipsies to store them and cut them up and smelt them down as a way of paying off his late father's debt."

Judge Robert Trevor-Jones told Armstrong: "In the scrap metal business, you are prone to be offered tempting materials which can be disposed of quickly.

"You knew the beer kegs were stolen. They had a value of nearly £30,000.

"This was largely pressed on you by members of the travelling community.

"I might have been able to suspend the sentence but not in view of you handling stolen fence panels at the same time. It was opportunistic. You took a willing part.

"There has to be an immediate custodial sentence."

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Editor's Note

Further information can be found by contacting Keg Watch Limited either by telephoning **0808 100 1945** or by visiting the web site **www.kegwatch.co.uk**.

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