

Factsheet

A few things you might not know about the Crown Jewels...

- On the morning of William IV's coronation the King woke up with toothache which was only to be aggregated further by his coronation crown which weighed 3kg (7lbs) when set with stones.
- In 1845 at the State Opening of Parliament, the Duke of Argyll was carrying the Imperial State Crown before Queen Victoria when he let it fall from the cushion causing damage which cost £150 to repair. The Queen described it as 'all crushed, & squashed, looking like a pudding that had sat down'.
- When Queen Anne was crowned in 1702 she was suffering from a severe attack of gout and, weighed down by the regalia, probably gained the dubious distinction of being the only English monarch to be carried to her coronation.
- Security for the Crown Jewels wasn't always so tight; visitors used to be able to touch them after making a small donation to the Jewel House Keeper. Later they were kept in slightly more secure surroundings - behind bars - but this arrangement also changed after 1815 when a woman reached through the grille and seized the Imperial State Crown of George I, wrenching it out of shape.
- There has only been one attempt to steal the Crown Jewels - by Colonel Blood in 1671. He failed but remarkably received a full pardon by Charles II and even a grant of Irish lands worth £500 a year.
- During George III's coronation ceremony in 1761 a great diamond dropped out of the king's Imperial State Crown It 'was not found again without some trouble'.
- George VI was convinced that the Archbishop of Canterbury would not be able to distinguish between the front and the back of St Edward's Crown so he had a piece of red cotton tied to the front of it before his coronation ceremony in 1937. Unfortunately the cotton was removed before the event, so the King was indeed crowned back to front.
- A smaller version of the coronation ring was made especially for Queen Victoria's Investiture although it was accidentally made too small (for her little finger instead of the adjoining one) and had to be forced onto her finger by the Archbishop. The Queen noted in her diary 'I had the greatest difficulty to take it off again - which at last I did with great pain'.