

# Factsheet

## The Crown Jewels and other Regalia

The Crown Jewels have been on display to the public at the Tower of London since at least 1661. Having been kept in various locations in the Tower over the centuries, they have been housed in the Waterloo Block (a former barracks) since 1994. Representing far more than precious stones and gold, the Crown Jewels symbolise hundreds of years of British history and are still a working collection used today at many State occasions.

- The English coronation ceremony dates back to the 8th century and for the last 900 years has taken place at Westminster Abbey.
- The current regalia, on show in the Jewel House, mostly dates from 1660 when Charles II ascended the throne.
- The old regalia, used until the Coronation of Charles I, was either destroyed or disposed of by Cromwell's Parliamentary Commissioners who regarded it as symbolic of the 'detestable rule of Kings'. However, some pieces have survived...
- The oldest piece in the collection is the silver gilt spoon, displayed alongside the ampulla, it was probably made for Henry II or Richard I. The spoon was sold during the Commonwealth but returned to Charles II on the restoration. It is the only piece of royal goldsmith's work to survive from the 12th century.
- When Queen Anne was crowned in 1702 she was suffering from a severe attack of gout and, weighed down by the regalia, gained the dubious distinction of being the only English Monarch to be carried to her coronation.
- William IV's coronation crown is said to have been so heavy (it weighed 3kgs (7lbs) when set with stones) that it gave the new king violent tooth ache and he rushed back to Buckingham Palace after the ceremony to have the offending tooth removed.
- More recently, Queen Elizabeth II's coronation on 2 June

1953 was televised live at her personal request; newly restored footage of the event is shown in the introductory exhibition in the Jewel House.

- The only crown allowed to leave the country is the Imperial Crown of India. Set with more than 6000 diamonds, it was made especially for the Delhi Durbar in 1911 when George V was crowned Emperor of India.
- The largest top quality cut diamond in the world is the First Star of Africa, or Cullinan I. Sitting in the top of the Sceptre, it weighs just over 530 carats.
- The Cullinan diamond was found in the Premier Mine in South Africa in 1905. Uncut, it weighed 3,106 carats.
- Cutting the Cullinan diamond took more than eight months, the result was nine major stones and 96 small brilliants.
- The Koh-i-Nûr (Mountain of Light) is probably the most famous diamond in the world. It weighs 105.6 carats and currently sits in the Queen Mother's Crown. Legend has it that it will only bring luck to women and it was said that whoever owned it would rule the world.
- Possibly the most famous crown in the collection is the Imperial State Crown worn by the Queen each year at the State Opening of Parliament.
- The sapphire set in the Maltese cross on the top of the Imperial State Crown is allegedly taken from a ring found on the finger of Edward the Confessor when he was re-interred at Westminster Abbey in 1163.
- The smallest crown in the collection is Queen Victoria's Small Diamond Crown. Standing only 9.4cm (3.7in) in height, it weighs 145g (5.11oz) and was worn on top of the Queen's widow's cap.
- The most sumptuous crown ever created was the Coronation Crown of George IV which was made in 1821 and can now be seen in the Martin Tower. It originally held more than 12,000 diamonds and was said to make the monarch look like 'some flamboyant bird of the east.' De Beers have lent the Tower diamonds valued at more than £2 million to represent those that once adorned this frame.

- The Imperial State Crown of George I has returned to its original home, the Martin Tower, where in 1815, a woman reached through the grille and wrenched it out of shape.
- So far, there has only ever been one attempt to steal the Crown Jewels - by Colonel Blood in 1671. He failed.
- The Crown Jewels are priceless.