

The Crown

JEWELS



The Crown Jewels include crowns, sceptres, orbs, rings, swords, spurs, bracelets and robes. They are mostly used in the Coronation of a Monarch, which is when a King or a Queen is officially crowned at Westminster Abbey. These objects are often referred to as the 'Regalia', and are kept in the Tower of London.

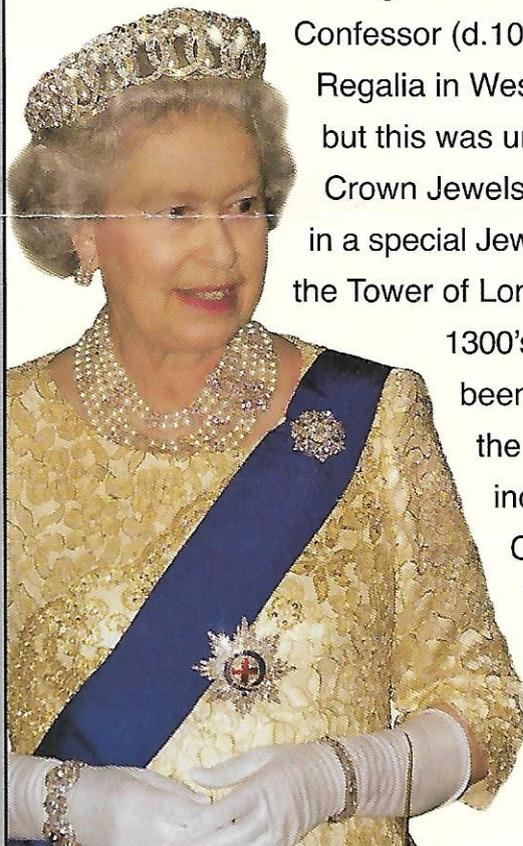


A Home for the Jewels

Most of the Crown Jewels are made of precious metals (gold, silver or platinum) and many are set with

famous gemstones. Edward the Confessor (d.1066) kept his Regalia in Westminster Abbey, but this was unsafe so the Crown Jewels have been kept in a special Jewels House at the Tower of London since the

1300's. Attempts have been made to steal the Jewels, including one by Colonel Blood in 1671, but nobody has succeeded.



Disaster and Destruction

Much has happened to the Crown Jewels over the centuries. After the civil war of the seventeenth century, when King Charles I was beheaded and a Republic was declared, Oliver Cromwell ordered that the Regalia be totally destroyed as he felt it represented the rule of Kings and Queens which he hated. Many of the gold pieces (some were nearly 600 years old) were melted down and the gemstones removed from their settings and sold. Only a golden spoon and three steel Coronation swords survived.

A New Regalia

After Cromwell's death, The Monarchy was restored. The new King was Charles II. For his Coronation in 1661, The King ordered new Regalia at the enormous cost of £12,050 3s 5d. In addition, The King ordered new gold altar and banqueting plate, costing a further £18,000. Much of this Regalia is in use to this day, for example St Edward's Crown.

