

— Second Speaker —

Crowns, Regalia and Royal Jewellery

A Talk by Nicholas Humphrey-Smith

Reported by Alan Lee

Nicholas is the head of 'Ancestors of Dover' who successfully manufacture, market and supply historic merchandise.

They currently supply approximately 95% of the castles, museums and zoos in the UK. Over recent years they have increased sales in Europe, America and even to the State Museum in Moscow. A large number of films have made use of their full size replica crowns and regalia including *The Madness of King George*, *The Hustle*, *Johnny English* – with Rowan Atkinson and Young Victoria starring Emily Brunt. In the theatre world one of the most notable productions was Shakespeare's *Henry V* by the National Theatre Company.

On 9th September 2015 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will become our longest serving monarch. Eleven years ago, sitting for an official portrait she wore a replica crown which was a lot lighter than the real one.

Ancestors of Dover holds the only licence to reproduce full size copies of the crown jewels. Part of the agreement included a clause that no one was allowed to wear the exact replica of the Imperial State Crown or the Edward Crown.

During his talk Nicholas passed many replicas round the audience to let them touch and inspect them at close quarters. All are made to an exactingly high standard. The only difference is that the

replicas are plated and coloured crystals used - not solid precious metal and precious gems like diamonds.



Imperial State Crown

The Crown Jewels are owned by the state and not the monarch and for over 900 years have been housed in the Tower of London. The one exception was during WWII when they were removed to a secret location for safe keeping.

The regalia refers to objects that are used in a coronation ceremony. The use of regalia

can be traced back to Edward the Confessor who became king in 1042 and was crowned in 1043. His great seal shows him seated on a throne wearing a crown, in one hand holding a sceptre surmounted with a cross and in the other an orb. On the reverse in one hand he is holding a sceptre surmounted with a dove and in the other a sword. It is believed that he also wore a ring. With only slight alterations these are still used to this day. The spurs used in the ceremony are thought to have been introduced in the 12th century. From about 1250 there appears to have been two sets, St. Edward's regalia, only used at coronation ceremonies and the royal regalia, part used in coronations and also on other state occasions.

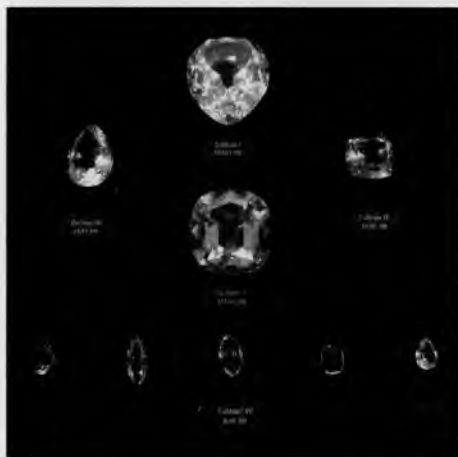
In 1216 King John is said to have lost the crown in quicksand and Edward III pawned the regalia to pay his troops the money he owed them. In 1649 after the end of the Civil War Oliver Cromwell

ordered the regalia to be "totally broken", the precious stones to be sold and the gold and silver sent to the "Mint" to be melted down and turned into coins. The clergy at Westminster managed to save the ampulla (a golden eagle some 8 inches high that holds the holy oil), the anointing spoon, the Elizabethan salt cellar and some of the historic gems from the crowns.

At the cost of £12,185 replacement regalia was made for the coronation of Charles II in 1661. Since then there have been numerous additions to it.

Up to the early part of the 20th century it was usual to set the regalia and crowns with gems that were hired for the occasion. After the ceremony the crowns were dismantled and the gems returned leaving just the frames.

Whilst seated in King Edward's chair, made in 1300, the sovereign receives the orb and sceptre then has the crown placed on his/her head by the Archbishop of Canterbury. After the ceremony the crowns are usually dismantled leaving just the frames.



Cullinan Diamonds I to IX

One of the most important items of the regalia is the magnificent jewelled Sword of State or Offering, made for the coronation of King George IV. The gold scabbard is covered in leather set with precious stones. These include 1,200 diamonds in the form of national plants from England, Ireland and Scotland. Wales is not represented as it is a principality and not a kingdom.

In 1910 the Sovereign's Sceptre was altered to allow the addition of the 530 carat Cullinan diamond – the largest top quality cut diamond in the world. Uncut it weighed about 1.5 pounds. It produced 9 major gems (Cullinan 1 to 9), 6 stones, 96 smaller brilliants and 10 carats of unpolished pieces.

The only time the Crown Jewels left the Tower of London was during the Second World War when they were moved to a secret location for safe keeping.

This well presented and interesting talk was enhanced by the large number of replicas that Nick passed round the audience. Many thanks to Nick and his company Ancestors of Dover for supplying these items.



Twelve Piece Coronation Crown Set