

# Legend of the Crystal Skulls

The truth behind Indiana Jones's latest quest

It looks as if Harrison Ford should have employed Sherlock Holmes when they started filming for the latest Indiana Jones movie, "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull"

**The skull is real, but is it Kosher?**  
A mysterious package, containing a hollow



**The Original Crystal Skull**

rock-crystal skull weighing about 12 kilos and standing thirty centimetres, was sent anonymously to the Smithsonian Institute in the USA, in 1992.

It was accompanied by a letter addressed to "Smithsonian Inst. Curator, Mezo-American Museum, Washington, D.C."

There is no such place or person, so the mystery package was actually delivered to the National Museum of American History.

The unsigned letter accompanying the skull said, "This Aztec crystal skull, purported to be part of the Porfirio Diaz collection, was purchased in Mexico in 1960. I am offering it to the Smithsonian



**Macabre Obsession**

During the reign of Louis Napoleon, 1852-1870, French artists created stereoscopic photographs, called Diableries, miniature scenes of skeletons and the devil in different situations including sexy ones. These coincided with the discovery of the original crystal skulls.

without consideration."

The curator of Hispanic-American collections contacted Jane MacLaren Walsh, an anthropologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, to ask if she could identify the object.

Ms Walsh knew of a larger than life-sized, milky white crystal skull on display at the British Museum, and another example, had once been exhibited at the Smithsonian as a fake.

If the skull was a genuine pre-Columbian Mesoamerican artefact, it was rare and would be accepted.

Jane instigated research into the history of both these early Columbian skulls both in the USA and in museums around the world.

Theories of their origin which began to emerge, ranged from being the handiwork of the early Mayan or Aztec civilisations, to originating on a sunken continent, and even having arrived from other galaxies with "special powers".

The first problem with these skulls is that there is not one example, in any museum or collection, which comes from a documented excavation.

They have just "appeared", from where, no one knows!

The skulls also have nothing in common by way of style, design or even workmanship, to anything pre-Columbian which has been excavated.

Try telling that to the hippies, relics themselves, and New Age devotees who wax lyrical over the so-called "messages" of the skulls.

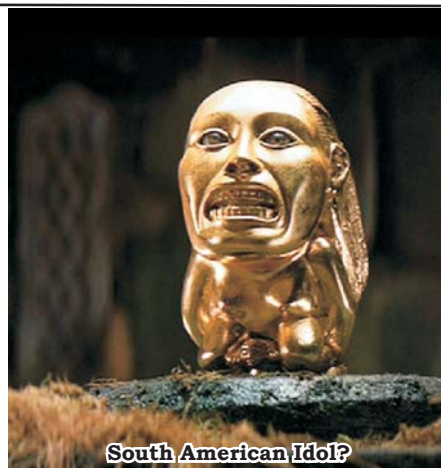
Crystal Skulls, which first came to light in the late 1800's, appeared at a time when nobody was actually excavating Aztec or Mayan areas.

Smithsonian archaeologist W. H. Holmes actually wrote about Mexico City in 1884, when he found shops selling fake relics, had opened all over the city.

### The Skull in the British Museum

The skull is a life-size carving of a human skull made from a single block of rock crystal, a clear, colourless variety of quartz.

Acquired by the Museum in 1897, as an ancient Mexican artwork, from Tiffany and Co, New York. Research since conducted by the



**South American Idol?**

Raiders of the Lost Ark in 1981, opened with Indiana Jones on the trail of a priceless golden idol created by a mysterious ancient South American culture. The idol is the image of a goddess in the process of giving birth.

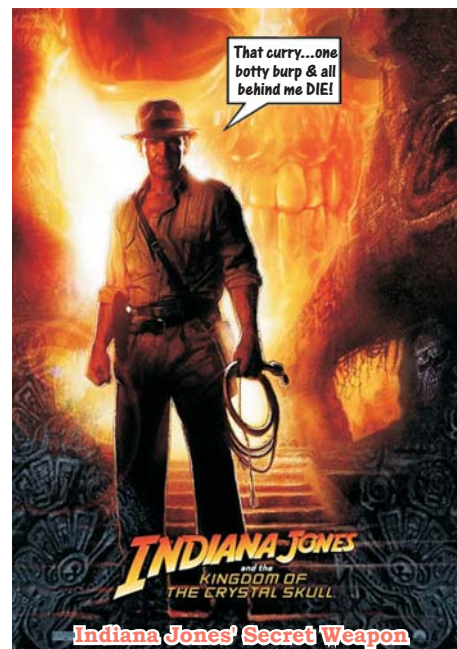
Our hero snatches it from an altar, which sets off a series of booby traps that end with an enormous boulder nearly crushing Indiana.

The golden figure was modelled on an actual Aztec stone carving called Tlazolteotl, displayed as an artistic masterpiece by the Dumbarton Oaks Museum in Washington, D.C.

In reality, a Chinese dealer in Paris sold the figure in 1883 to French mineralogist, Augustin Damour.

His friend, Eugene Boban, who was involved in the Crystal skull possible forgery, advised Damour on the purchase.

Yet again, analysis shows the use of modern rotary cutting tools on the object's surface.



**Indiana Jones' Secret Weapon**

Museum has established that the skull was most likely produced in the nineteenth century in Europe.

The skull was said to have been brought from Mexico by a Spanish officer before the French occupation in 1863.

It was then sold to an English collector and acquired at his death by Eugene Boban, you'll hear more of this man, a French antiquities dealer, later becoming the property of Tiffany and Co.

The skull was exhibited for many years at the Museum of Mankind in London and it is currently on permanent display at the British Museum in the Wellcome Trust Gallery.

But there are no scientific techniques which can be used to accurately establish how or when a stone or mineral object was produced. So research has focused on how the skulls were carved, where the quartz originated from and what is known about the early history of the skulls.

Under magnification, it is apparent that the tool marks on the skulls do not match those on other Aztec period rock-crystal objects, which were invariably carved by hand.

It is most likely that the British Museum skull was carved using a device similar to a jeweller's wheel, which was unknown in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans.

Analysis suggests that the rock crystal may have come from Brazil, outside of the ancient trade routes from Mexico.

The skull in the Smithsonian Institute, in Washington DC is larger, and there are also smaller rock crystal skulls known to exist. None appear to be genuine Aztec objects.

It looks as though they were produced to satisfy demand in the US and Europe in the nineteenth century when interest in collecting Mexican material was at its height.

Similar, maybe, to the genuine tourist souvenirs found around the historical hotspots of the world, all manufactured in China.

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, will have to take 200 million quid at the box office before the film-makers get paid.

### Quotes from Steven Spielberg

- You have many years ahead of you to create the dreams that we can't even imagine dreaming. You have done more for the collective unconscious of this planet than you will ever know.
- The public has an appetite for anything about imagination - anything that is as far away from reality as is creatively possible.
- People have forgotten how to tell a story. Stories don't have a middle or an end any more. They usually have a beginning that never stops beginning.
- Naturally, it is a terrible, despicable crime when, as in Munich, people are taken hostage, people are killed. But probing the motives of those responsible and showing that they are also individuals with families and have their own story does not excuse what they did.
- All of us every single year, we're a different person. I don't think we're the same person all our lives.
- Why pay a dollar for a bookmark? Why not use the dollar for a bookmark?
- I've discovered I've got this preoccupation with ordinary people pursued by large forces.
- I dream for a living.
- When I grow up, I still want to be a director.