

The Coronation Chair

So I have here in front of me the 700 year old coronation chair. It dates back to 1296, but it was first used in the coronation in 1308 for Edward II. It was his father, Edward I, that commissioned the chair and the reason was that the English King Edward had captured the Scottish symbol of monarchy, the famous Stone of Destiny, and he commissioned a chair to be built to house the Stone of Destiny, or the Stone of Scone, as it's also called here in the bottom. When it was originally made back in 1300, it was decorated in a layer of gilded gold.

That's a thin layer of gold over the top, so it would have absolutely sparkled. It is the oldest piece of furniture here in the UK that's still used for the purpose that it was made for. The chair has been used or featured in every coronation since 1308. And I say that, but it hasn't necessarily always been sat on. And there was one occasion in 1553 for the coronation of Queen Mary the first, the Catholic Queen, and the reason why she refused to sit on the chair was because that her Protestant brother, Edward VI, had used it previously in his coronation.

So, as we look at the 700 year old history of the chair, it was last used in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, when it was located up by the high altar on the Cosmati pavement for the coronation ceremony on that day.