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Diamonds arrive from space

A team of researchers from Florida International University claims that carbonado diamonds originated from an asteroid billions of years ago.

The charcoal-coloured, froth-filled stones — obtained from Brazil and the Central African Republic — can weigh more than 3,600 carats but, because of their odd appearance, are unsuitable as gemstones. Consequently, they are used in industrial applications and make up the drill bits that helped dig the Panama Canal.

The team, led by Stephen Haggerty, reveals that these diamonds may have been formed in an environment rich in hydrogen — such as that found in space — as evident from the hydrogen-carbon bond present within the stones. The bubbles are theorized to be caused by fizzing gases during the formation of the diamonds.

Haggerty suggests that the deposits probably came from the impact of a diamond-rich asteroid at a time when Africa and South America were joined.

The study was published online in last December's *Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

Turkana Boy unveiled

The most complete skeleton of a prehistoric human ever found, Turkana Boy, is to emerge from his confinement in a cabinet in Kenya's national museum and be displayed publicly.

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