

## **Tomb Raider III Questions**

### **The Past**

- Was it just lucky you chose a woman? How much marketing thinking was involved?

**Lara was created because a lot of the moves in the TR games require a very agile figure! With a male, moves would look clumsy - a lot less pleasing on the eye than a graceful female character. When we first explored the possibilities of using a female, there was some doubt as to whether she'd be a strong enough character to take the lead. However, once Lara was created and animated, there was no doubt that she could do the job far better than a man. We soon came to realise that it would also be a lot easier to sympathise with a female character than a male - it's a bit hard to feel sorry for the stereotypical macho males that feature in a lot of the other games.**

**It wasn't a conscious marketing decision to create a female - we just wanted the best character for the job. Lara's personality wasn't actually created until after the game was released. We certainly didn't expect her to become such an icon, but people became genuinely interested in her as a person! Obviously her assets speak for themselves, but there's a lot more to her than that - she's actually quite a complex character: people can't quite work her out and I think that's part of the attraction. She's a bit of a dark horse!**

Susie Hamilton

- Do you believe the games would have been just as successful with, say, an old man as the star?

**We had no doubt that we had a good game with Tomb Raider - the initial reaction from the press was great! Technically it was far more advanced than anything else at the time so I think that yes, it would have been a hit, perhaps not with an old man, but definitely with a Indiana jones-type male character.**

**Before the game was launched, there was little interest in Lara herself, but once we produced rendered images for front covers people soon wanted to know more about her, plus review scores were excellent. The real turning point, however, was the front cover and feature in 'The Face' in June 1996. This really took Lara and Tomb Raider to a mainstream audience. The national press soon picked up on her and the whole thing snowballed - to the point where Paramount are now making a TR movie!**

**So I guess it's a 50-50 thing: if the game had been sub-standard then Lara would not have got the initial exposure... but once she was out on front covers there was no stopping her. A lot of people now know who Lara is, but don't really know much about the game, so in a way, Lara's become a 'hook' to get people interested in Tomb Raider.**

Susie Hamilton

- Was she based on anyone in particular?

**Not that we're aware of!**

Susie Hamilton

- Did you have any idea how big the whole Lara phenomenon might become?

**No, as I said, we were totally surprised in the levels of interest in her. There have been literally hundreds of National press features, front covers and articles in mainstream magazines etc. and we're surprised that people are still interested! We never imagined in our wildest dreams that we'd end up with such a hit character, let alone have a movie made about her! Once the movie is released, there's no doubt that Lara will become even more of a 'household name'. Who knows what will happen next...!!!**

**We're actually planning to release a completely new range of Lara merchandise, designed and made by 'Animal'. It's looking pretty cool and will be available in November so look out for that!**

Susie Hamilton

- Was it exciting when the mainstream/style/national press started getting a hold of Lara, and pushing her as a genuine star in her own right? Did you ever feel you were losing control of the whole thing?

**Yes - very exciting to think we'd created a character capable of generating so much interest! The main problem is controlling all the coverage and promotions. We want to make sure that Lara's character isn't cheapened or ripped-off by people who might want to use her to endorse product that she wouldn't normally be associated with etc. It's very hard to keep an eye on things worldwide, and we've really had to be quite tough with those companies that use her image without our permission.**

**We now have a licensing committee who decide where, when and how she can be used. We get so many offers from people who want to use Lara that it's becoming increasingly hard to stay on top of it all, but we're doing our best to protect her and allow her to keep an almost 'cult' status. Too much mass exposure would inevitably tire her out!**

Susie Hamilton

- What's been the strangest publicity/reaction/fan mail you've seen? Does she have any stalkers?

**Well, Lara gets a tremendous amount of Fan mail. The strangest? Well, we've had one guy who wanted our permission to get a huge tattoo of her on his back - now that's dedication!**

**As for stalkers - everyone who's played the game has to admit to this one! Particularly those males who just can't resist backing her into a corner to get a better look at.... you know what!**

Susie Hamilton

### **Present (Tomb Raider 3)**

- How much, technically, is TR3 an advance over TR2?

**The new multi-coloured lighting has made a vast difference to the overall atmosphere of the game. The environments, baddies and Lara herself all look far more realistic with the different coloured light-sources. An improved texture palette has also allowed us to generate more detailed surroundings.**

**The new landscape system has allowed us to create far more organic maps than were possible in the previous games. We are also able to construct more complex architectural structures such as arches and domes - St Paul's Cathedral for example!**

**The AI has had a complete overhaul so all enemies will behave in a much more life-like manner, rather than just running at Lara and attacking immediately.**

**Lara's new moves such as the crawl, dash and the monkey swing have opened up new possibilities for puzzles and exploration.**

**The game engine is also faster than before due to a complete overhaul. For the PlayStation, we have hi-res and dual-shock analogue support.**

**New water reflection effects and surfaces also add to the realism, as do semi-transparencies such as light beams and mist. We've also got weather effects such as snow and rain and a host of other effects such as the following:**

**Leaves blowing in the wind**

**Footsteps in snow/sand etc.**

**Different sound effects for Lara's footsteps (depending on the surface).**

**New particle effect for flames and explosions**

**Lara's guns will smoke when she fires and you'll even see the shells fall out of weapons such as the shotgun and uzis.**

**And a few more things that we're keeping to ourselves!**

Richard Morten – level designer

- What improvements are you most proud of?

**All of them!**

Richard Morten

- What about the actual structure of the game, and the game play itself? What changes have you made to, say, the aiming system or savepoints, etc...?

**We had quite a lot of comments from people saying that Tomb raider II was too action orientated and there wasn't enough exploration. The save-game system was also criticised - a lot of people felt that the 'save anywhere' option reduced the suspense.**

**We spent a lot of time looking at all the TR websites and getting feedback. The result:**

**Tomb Raider III combines the best elements of its two predecessors:**

- **Tomb Raider's atmosphere, vast locations, puzzle-solving and exploration elements.**
- **Tomb Raider II's action and use of vehicles.**

**The combination of these elements offers the player an environment that features a 50-50 balance between exploration and action elements.**

**Tomb Raider III's levels are non-linear, presenting the player with more than one route to complete each level. So, it will be possible to complete a level without having explored the whole map.**

**There is also a new structure for the order of game-play: Tomb Raider III contains 5 separate 'adventures' which link together. After completing the first adventure, the following three may be played in any order, before the fifth level brings the game to its conclusion.**

**The new save-game system has also been implemented, offering 'easy' and 'difficult' options. For the easy option, you'll be able to save anywhere, as in TR2. The difficult option will allow the player to store save game crystals in Lara's inventory. When you collect a crystal, you'll have the option to either save or store it. The player will have to explore every part of each level in order to find these crystals.**

**The improved artificial intelligence allows more sophisticated combat techniques since enemies react far more realistically - they may even run away when initially approached. It is now possible to sneak past some of the enemies and duck behind objects whilst shooting.**

Richard Morten

- Get all technical on us. Did you have an entirely new engine/level editor/whatever?

**No, it's not a new engine, but it's had an 80% overhaul which means that it's faster, smoother and capable of handling more detail this time. Level and character editors have also been overhauled.**

Richard Morten

- How did you go about designing the levels? What have you learnt in this field, and just how important is it?

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**The improved artificial intelligence allows more sophisticated combat techniques since enemies react far more realistically - they may even run away when initially approached. It is now possible to sneak past some of the enemies and duck behind objects whilst shooting.**

4. One of the strongest parts of the previous two Tomb Raiders has been the level design. How do you go about constructing them and how does TRIII compare to the other games?

**We've developed our own level-editing system - it's unique to the TR games. The maps comprise a series of rooms, stacked side-by side and on top of one another. The editor allows us to place all objects, effects such as water, light etc, triggers, enemies and Lara into the maps and then immediately play them to check that everything works. This system allows to to immediately correct any mistakes - so if there's anything we've overlooked it becomes obvious as soon as we play.**

**The level editor has been improved for TRIII - instead of using squares to generate height and surfaces, we can now use triangles. This means that the maps themselves can be more complex and organic - less 'blocky' than the previous 2 games. Also, the textures that we apply to the maps are more detailed in the previous games. Incorporation of multi-coloured lighting and improved dynamic lighting gives the levels a lot more atmosphere.**

Richard Morten

- What about the movie? Have you had any input, heard anything etc...?

**We have approval over the script but there's not a great deal to tell you just yet. Paramount are saying it'll be out towards the end of next year, but we're not sure who's starring in it yet - I'm sure they'll make an announcement soon!**

Susie Hamilton

### **The Future**

- Is there any chance of game spin-offs featuring the character of Lara Croft, or will the series concentrate on the 3D adventure format?

### **It's possible...**

- We have to ask ? Tomb Raider 4? Will it be on PlayStation? Have you started planning or coding it? Can you, in fact, confirm or deny that it will appear?

### **Maybe...!**

1. Who's on the TRIII team?

<b>Richard Morton</b>	<b>Level designer</b>
<b>Peter Duncan</b>	<b>Level Designer</b>
<b>Jamie Morton</b>	<b>Level Designer</b>
<b>Martin Gibbins</b>	<b>PSX Programmer</b>
<b>Chris Coupe</b>	<b>PSX programmer</b>
<b>Richard Flowers</b>	<b>PC programmer</b>
<b>Andy Sandham</b>	<b>Level Designer</b>
<b>Phil Chapman</b>	<b>Animations - baddies</b>
<b>Darren Wakeman</b>	<b>Animations - Lara</b>
<b>Peter Barnard</b>	<b>FMV</b>
<b>Dave Reading</b>	<b>FMV</b>
<b>Tom Scutt</b>	<b>AI programmer</b>
<b>Nathan McCree</b>	<b>Musician</b>
<b>Troy Horton</b>	<b>Producer</b>

2. What are the most impressive differences between TRIII and TRII?

**Where to start...?**

**Of course there are the obligatory new outfits, vehicles and moves... but a whole lot more too:**

**Multi-coloured lighting has made a vast difference to the overall atmosphere of the game. The environments, baddies and Lara herself all look far more realistic with the different coloured light-sources. An improved texture palette has also allowed us to generate more detailed surroundings.**

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**And a few more things that we're keeping to ourselves!**

3. What sort of feedback have you had back about Lara's last outing and how is it going to be incorporated in to the new game?

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6. So what's your favourite puzzle in the TRIII? Take us through it (without giving away the solution!).

**In Area 51 there's one bit where you have to escape from a prison - you can't shoot the guards (your guns have been confiscated) and the level is full of laser defence systems. Your only hope is to find another prisoner who can lead you through the laser traps, then it's up to you to sneak past the guards. The only snag is finding the prisoner...**

7. Is there anything you would have liked to put in TRIII but couldn't due to time or memory constraints. What got left on the drawing board?

**The Bowie knife: Lara was meant to use it not only as a weapon but also to cut through ropes, prise open grates in the floor and dislodge artefacts from tight rock faces. Unfortunately we didn't have the time or the memory to implement the knife with all the other new moves. Maybe in the next one...**

8. Do you ever get worried that people might get bored with Lara?

**The thought did cross our minds, but Lara is such a strong character - a cult icon not only for men but women also. She has more lasting appeal than Mario and Sonic put together.**

9. Which level do you think looks the most impressive? And which is the toughest?

**London is probably the most impressive level just because of the fact that it's so different from any past Tomb Raider location. The hardest has to be the last location Antarctica, but Area 51 is also very tough and very clever.**

10. What new enemies are we going to be drawing our Uzis on in TRIII? Are there any new monsters that are going to make us gasp?

**The human enemies in TR3 are very intelligent now, they can guard a certain Object, they have L.O.S. (line of sight) code allowing Lara to sneak past them if They can't see her or if they're looking the other way, some enemies even flee When shot and return later with swat team backup. As for monsters, we have Some very scary beasts within the dark tunnels of the game, but what and where Are they?**

11. Everybody loved the T-Rex from the last two games. Is he back and what other dinosaur mates has he brought with him?

**The Rex is back, re-modelled, re-textured and re-coded. T-Rex now works in a Much more realistic way, he behaves as a T-Rex should, his vision is based on movement, he loves to chase flares and he's rock hard to kill. Other Dino's include Compys, really small ones that hunt in packs.**

12. What was behind the decision to have five separate adventures in TRIII?

**Simply because we wanted to change the basic game structure for TR3.**

**India is the first location and the player can then choose any of the three mid-game areas either Area 51, South pacific or London and play them in any order, gaining certain Advantages / Disadvantages depending on the levels they chose to play first.**

13. Tell us a TRIII secret that nobody knows.

**I'll have to whisper this one so listen very carefully. Lara has a proper bum and Dynamic skin over the many joints of her body.**

14. Which games have impressed you recently? Have any influenced TRIII?

**Unreal was impressive looking but we had already done most of what we saw Within the game.**

15. What new weapons has Lara been given? Are they going to be auto-aiming? And what about this sniper rifle? Shades of GoldenEye?

**Lara now has a proper rocket launcher that isn't auto targeting but the explosion now has a blast radius, she also carries a grenade launcher similar to the one in quake, you can bounce the grenades around corners and fire them into water.**

16. How is Lara herself going to be different?

**See question 13... and she's got real ears!**

17. Which sections of the new game are going to excite people the most? Which bits have people at Core been the most enthusiastic about?

**There's a section of the South Pacific that involves a Rapid ride, Lara has to find a Kayak boat and brave the white water down a deep ravine.**

18. Is the Croft Mansion going to be in the game again? How are we going to learn Lara's new moves?

**The Croft Mansion will be in there, as before Lara will learn her new moves here. But her beloved home will look strikingly different...**

19. You probably don't want to think about it at the moment but give us rumours about TRIV?

**Hand to hand combat (Bowie knife), more character interaction, antique dealers to sell your unwanted artifacts and secret stores to buy new weapons from. But as with all rumours you just can't believe everything you read, can you?**