

A portrait of Queen Charlotte, the third wife of King George III of Great Britain. She is depicted from the waist up, seated, wearing an elaborate green and white gown with a large white ermine-trimmed cape. Her hair is styled in an 18th-century fashion, and she wears a pearl necklace and earrings. The background shows a classical architectural setting with columns and a landscape with a church spire in the distance.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE

Queen Charlotte was born Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz on 19 May 1744 in Germany.

She was the youngest daughter of Duke Charles Louis Frederick of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Princess Elizabeth Albertina of Saxe-Hildburghausen.

When she was 17, she married King George III on 8th September 1761. She became Queen of Great Britain and Ireland (until the union of the two kingdoms on 1 January 1801, after which she was Queen of the United Kingdom) and Hanover.

Being German, when she became Queen she couldn't speak a word of English.

Their marriage lasted 57 years. Charlotte became pregnant with their first child a year after marriage. And they had 15 children in total. 13 of whom survived until adulthood. Included in their offspring were: George IV, William IV, Charlotte Princess Royal, Prince Edward (the father of Queen Victoria), Prince Adolphus, and Prince Ernest Augustus.

Although their main residence was St James Palace they moved to Buckingham House which became Buckingham Palace.

Despite Helen Mirren playing this character in the film "The Madness of King George" it is believed that Charlotte had a Black heritage. This is supported in the Netflix show Bridgerton. Mario de Valdes y Cocom argues that her features as depicted in a number of royal portraits, were typically from African ancestry.

He claims that the queen, though German, was directly descended from a Black branch of the Portuguese royal family, related to Margarita de Castro e Souza, a 15th-century Portuguese noblewoman nine generations removed, whose ancestry she traces from the 13th-century ruler Alfonso III and his lover Madragana, whom Valdes takes to have been a Moor and thus a Black African.

Charlotte was a patron of the arts and could play the flute. She was also an amateur botanist who helped expand Kew Gardens. She introduced the Christmas tree to Britain, after decorating one for a Christmas party for children from Windsor in 1800. The practice of decorating a tree became popular among the British nobility and gentry, and later spread to the colonies.

The queen founded orphanages and, in 1809, she became the patron of the General Lying-in Hospital, a hospital for expectant mothers. Today, it's known as the Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital. She also held the education of women at a high importance, and ensured that her daughters were educated far better than was usual for young women of that day.

From 1804, the King began to show signs of a declining mental health state. Queen Charlotte eventually became estranged from her husband. She had her meals separate from him, and avoided visiting him alone.

On 17th November 1818, the Queen died in an armchair at the family's country retreat, Dutch House in Surrey (now known as Kew Palace). Her eldest son, the Prince Regent, held her hand. She was buried at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. She is the longest-serving female consort and second-longest-serving consort in British history, having served from her marriage to her death. This was a total of 57 years and 70 days.