

## ***Information cards for the enquiry on the arrival of Catherine of Braganza***

A1: The bride that Charles II chose to marry in 1662 was a Portuguese princess, the Infanta, Catherine of Braganza. She was the daughter of King John IV of Portugal and his wife Luisa de Gazman.

A2: Portugal had effectively gained its independence from Spain in 1640, but there was still fighting between the two countries as Spain was trying to re-assert power over Portugal. (Both Spain and Portugal were Catholic countries.)

A3: In 1656, when Charles was still in exile in France, he had signed a treaty with King Phillip IV Spain, promising military support to Spain to win back control of Portugal. In return the King of Spain promised to help Charles get his throne back in England. But Spain did not actually send any troops to help when Charles returned to England.

A4: When the marriage to Catherine of Braganza (a Portuguese princess) was suggested, the Spanish ambassador to England, Baron de Vatteville, warned Charles that if he married Catherine it would lead to immediate war with Spain.

B1 Catherine was a Catholic. She had spent a lot of her childhood in a convent close to the royal palace.

B2 Catherine and Charles had a Protestant wedding in Portsmouth a week after she arrived in England, but it is thought that they also had a secret Catholic wedding service first.

C1 Charles had debts of over £50,000 following his years in exile and his very expensive coronation.

C2 Catherine's dowry was worth £300,000. Some of it was paid in goods like sugar. Charles began spending the money that Catherine was due to bring before she even arrived in England. He used it to pay for the costumes worn at his coronation.

D2 Samuel Pepys diary records that in the week after Catherine arrived in England and before Charles went to Portsmouth to meet her, he spent every night at the home of his mistress Barbara, Countess of Castlemaine, who was pregnant with his child.

E1 Charles placed the name of his mistress – Barbara, Countess of Castlemaine – on the list of the ‘Ladies of the Queen’s Bedchamber’. This would have allowed her to follow the Queen at court, flaunting her position as the King’s lover. Catherine crossed out Barbara’s name. Charles was frustrated but at first he seemed to accept his wife’s decision.

E2 Later Charles tricked Catherine by presenting Barbara, Countess of Castlemaine, at court. When Catherine realised who Barbara was, she fainted and had to be helped away. Catherine threatened to return to Portugal if the King would not show her respect as his wife.

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F1 As part of Catherine’s dowry Portugal gave England trading rights in Tangiers (in North Africa) and in Bombay (in India). England was also given certain privileges in other Portuguese trade networks. (The East India Company already had some trading posts in India – at Surat from 1619 and at Madras from 1639).

F2 The Earl of Sandwich, a leading official in the Admiralty, claimed that through the trading rights that England gained, the marriage would ‘rob the Hollanders of a great fortune’. (The East India Company faced powerful rivalry at the time from the Dutch East India Company).

G1 Catherine was used to drinking tea in Portugal – a product of Portugal’s well established trade networks in the east. She continued to drink it when she arrived in England.

G2 The East India Company increased supplies of luxury goods like tea, coffee, drinking chocolate and sherbet during the course of the 1660s.

D1 The Infanta (Princess) Catherine of Braganza landed at Portsmouth on 14<sup>th</sup> May. This printed image shows her being welcomed ashore. King Charles II came to Portsmouth a week later.



The Manner of the Queen’s Landing at Portsmouth, Ashmolean Museum

H1 Charles did not meet Catherine before she arrived in England to marry him in May 1662. He had, however seen a painting of her.



The Infanta Catherine of Portugal, (after Dirk Stoop, 1660-61), *National Gallery*

H2 Charles' portrait of Catherine was copied and widely circulated in print.



*Ashmolean Museum*

C3 Among the goods that Catherine brought with her as part of her dowry was this chair, with a beautiful carved back.



*Ashmolean Museum*

E3 The poet Edmund Waller wrote a poem for Catherine's birthday. It combines praise for Catherine with praise for tea, which she did much to promote by drinking it at court.

### ***Of Tea***

Venus her myrtle, Phoebus has her bays;  
Tea both excels, which she vouchsafes to praise.  
The best of Queens, and best of herbs, we owe  
To that bold nation, which the way did show  
To the fair region where the sun doth rise,  
Whose rich productions we so justly prize.  
The Muse's friend, tea does our fancy aid,  
Repress those vapours which the head invade,  
And keep the palace of the soul serene,  
Fit on her birthday to salute the Queen.

H3 Many portraits were painted of Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine, who had five children with King Charles II. All of them were acknowledged as his children (but could not be his official heirs).



Barbara Palmer, (Countess of Castlemaine) By John Michael Wright, *National Portrait Gallery*