

The Grand Tour Diary
of Frederica Murray,
1819-1820

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Edited with an introduction by

Mark Guscin

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter One.....	5
The Life of Lady Frederica Murray	
Chapter Two	63
The Grand Tour	
Chapter Three	95
Frederica's Diary	
Chapter Four	101
The Fair Copy of the Diary	
Chapter Five	229
The Original Diary	
Bibliography	275

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INTRODUCTION

The Grand Tour diary of Lady Frederica Murray (later Stanhope after her marriage to James Hamilton Stanhope) is a previously unpublished account of her journey with her family through Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy in 1819 and 1820, at the time when the Grand Tour was undergoing transformation into something much more like what we understand by the term tourism today. Not only is the diary unpublished, but it is previously unknown, as it is never once mentioned in any of the related literature. I came across the manuscript when I was writing a biography of Frederica's husband, James Hamilton Stanhope, as her papers are kept in the Stanhope collection at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone, England. The very fact that the diary was previously unknown in any of the literature makes it important to publish in its entirety. Excerpts from many of the women's travel accounts that have been published in recent anthologies fall under titles that while they may make for good marketing, trivialise women and their achievements, such as *Ladies on the Loose* and *Wayward Women*. Sara Mills argues that "The [travel accounts] which have been reprinted are those which are most stereotypically 'women travel writers': the indomitable eccentric spinsters; the many other texts which do not fall into that mould have by and large been ignored by present-day critics and publishers alike"¹; the publication of Frederica's account (she can hardly be described as wayward or eccentric) is a step towards putting this right.

As will be explained in greater detail in the chapter on the Grand Tour, the Murrays (or Mansfields, from the Earl's title) travelled at a time when the traditional male-oriented Grand Tour, whose original purpose was to prepare and train young men from noble families for their future lives as significant members in English society, was being transformed into journeys undertaken by whole families (as in this case) and solitary women travellers who visited the same places as men had previously done in search of nothing more than pleasure, very much like what is suggested by the word 'tourism' today. The Murrays completed their Tour just

¹ *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 27. This matter is further analysed in Chapter 3.

before steam boats and trains came into use, and just before the Thomas Cook travel agency opened up Europe to the middle class and brought the time required for the journey down from years to weeks or months. Frederica's account is therefore one of the very last of the old-school Grand Tour narratives, while at the same time it reflects some aspects of the new modes of travelling; women and families who simply enjoy their time abroad. Her journey was undertaken and her account written at a cross-over time in the history of tourism, and as such deserves our full attention.

The diary is a first-hand account of the new route which opened up after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, and which included the battlefield (as we shall see, this very soon became a well-organised tourist site with guides and souvenir stands, much to the annoyance of the Duke of Wellington²) and the subsequent route down to Italy through Germany and Switzerland instead of southwards through France. It contributes to our knowledge of how travelling changed from the traditional Grand Tour with its more or less established standard route, to the new idea of tourism for pleasure, and as a significant document from this important time in the history of travel is a worthy addition to texts of scholarly interest. The diary also shows us something of the process of rewriting diaries, using the original text written while actually travelling to produce a more polished edition, generally known as a "fair version" (even if in this case, a large part of the fair version was produced by Frederica's widower).

The diary is an accurate reflection of what a relatively independent and cultured young woman in the early nineteenth century thought and how she saw and what she felt about the places and works of art she came across. Frederica never once talks about women's position in society and never mentions women's rights or anything related thereto; she cared nothing for what people might think of her account, she just takes her position and relative freedom for granted. The fact that she openly fell in love with a man with few financial prospects at the time (even though he also came from a noble family) and her parents accepted the match equally openly (most probably on the condition that James Hamilton Stanhope could show some money to his name, which indeed happened before the Mansfields came back from their Grand Tour), and the whole family's attitude to social mores and different religions, all provides a fascinating picture of a liberal and tolerant family.

² Christopher Hibbert, *Wellington, A Personal History* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 208: "... the battlefield resembled a fair with tourists wandering about, searching like beachcombers for bullets and buttons, buying boots and badges and bits of uniform from the stall-holders at Hougoumont and La Belle Alliance".

I have also provided a life of Frederica, necessarily short as we know nothing about her early childhood, and she died shortly after giving birth to her second child at the age of twenty-three. Most of what we do know comes from her diary and her correspondence with her fiancé and then husband, James Hamilton Stanhope. This biographical sketch is followed by an analysis of the Grand Tour and how the Murrays' journey in 1819 and 1820 fits in with the changes that were taking place at the time in relation to transport, attitudes to Catholicism and more specifically, the growing number of women who were travelling.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE OF LADY FREDERICA MURRAY

Frederica Louisa Murray lived a short but intense life, although very little is known of her childhood. Her father, David William Murray (see Figure 1) was born in Paris in 1777 to David Murray and Louisa, daughter of Charles Cathcart, the ninth Lord Cathcart. In 1792 Frederica's grandfather (said David Murray) succeeded to his uncle William Murray's creation of the Mansfield earldom; her father succeeded in 1796, inheriting Kenwood House in Camden, London (see Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5). The family also had homes in Scotland and Ireland. On 16 September 1797 David William Murray married Frederica Markham (1774 – 24 November 1837). There is a portrait at Kenwood which is reputedly of his wife, the Countess (see Figure 6). Frederica Markham was one of the seven daughters of William Markham, Archbishop of York, and his wife, Sarah (née) Goddard.

David and Frederica had nine children, the eldest of whom was Lady Frederica Louisa Murray (1800–1823), who married James Hamilton Stanhope in 1820¹. James Hamilton Stanhope was the youngest child of Charles, the third Earl Stanhope, one of the best known figures in the Stanhope family history. The third Earl married William Pitt the Younger's sister, Hester, and had three daughters by her; Hester in 1776, Griselda in 1778 and Lucy in 1780. Lucy was born in February, but her mother never really recovered from the birth and after lingering in poor health for some months, died in July.

¹ The others were Lady Elizabeth Anne Murray (1803-1880), unmarried; Lady Caroline Murray (1805-1873), who became Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess Mary, Duchess of Gloucester and Edinburgh; William David (1806–1898), who succeeded as 4th Earl of Mansfield; Lady Georgina Catherine Murray (1807-1871); the Honourable Charles John Murray (1810-1851); the Honourable David Henry Murray (1811-1862), a captain in the Scots Fusilier Guards; Lady Cecilia Sarah Murray (1814–1830); and Lady Emily Murray (1816-1902), who married Francis Seymour, later 5th Marquis of Hertford.

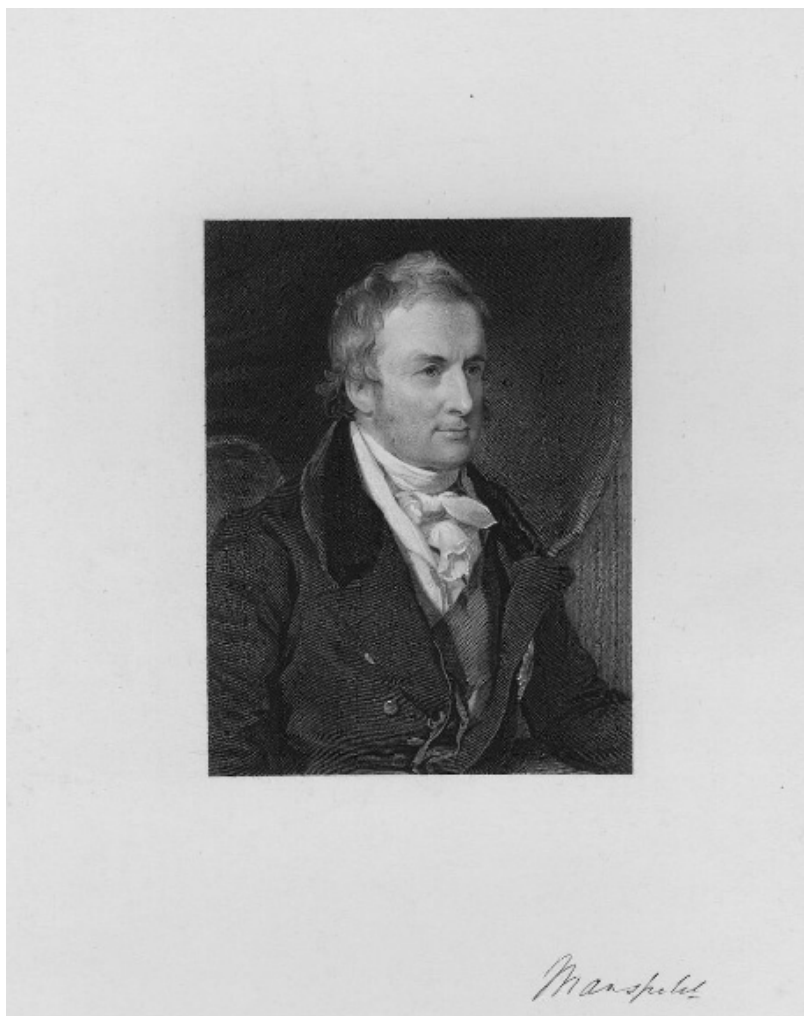


Figure 1 – David Murray, the third Earl Mansfield and Frederica's father



Figure 2 – Kenwood House, front view



Figure 3 – Kenwood House, back view



Figure 4 – Kenwood House, interior



Figure 5 – Kenwood House, interior



Figure 6 – Portrait at Kenwood House, reputedly of Frederica's mother

Lord Mahon, the future third Earl Stanhope, married again soon after being widowed, in the following March, just nine months after the death of his first wife. The bride this time was his first wife's cousin Louisa, the daughter of Lady Chatham's younger brother, James Grenville. Louisa bore Mahon four sons; Philip Henry in 1781 (who eventually became the fourth Earl), Banks (who was born and died in 1784), Charles Banks in

1785 and James Hamilton on 7 September 1788. James Hamilton Stanhope was thus the youngest child of the family, and had two full brothers and three half-sisters. James was with William Pitt when he died in 1806, and with Sir John Moore in Corunna on 16 January 1809 when he died and was buried in the city. James' brother Charles Banks was also killed in the Battle of Corunna on the same day.

James' friendship with the Mansfields (the family was generally known by the title rather than their natural surname) dates from at least 1814 (when his earliest surviving letters to them were written, but in order to write to them he must have known them beforehand); he wrote numerous letters to Lord and Lady Mansfield while in Portugal and Spain with the army, although in these early missives there is no mention of their daughter. In later correspondence James and Freddy claim to have met and if "fallen in love" is too ambitious an expression, to have "noticed each other" as early as 1815, when Frederica was just fifteen years old and James twenty-seven. Frederica had a remarkable memory for dates, and in a letter to James dated 22 March 1821 says "I want to speak to you today for it is the day on which I first spoke to you six years ago, and as such is a remarkable one in my mental almanach". We know next to nothing about Frederica before this time.

James was severely injured during the storming of San Sebastian in 1813; he was hit by a bullet in the shoulder blade while trying to call off the attack and no doctor was ever able to extract the ball. It gave him great trouble and pain for the rest of his life, although it did not stop him from returning first to the Peninsula and then joining the Waterloo campaign. He continued writing to the Mansfields; on 2 May 1815 he wrote to the Earl of Mansfield describing the preparations for the inevitable battle, and to Lady Mansfield three days later. She seems to have written to him too, as on 14 May he says "Your account of the wood is rather triste" (a reference to some clearing work in the woods around their house, Kenwood). Frederica is mentioned in just one of the letters, the one written to his future mother-in-law on 24 August 1814, in which James signs off "Affectionately remember me to Mansfield, F, and all".

Back in England after Waterloo and his time in France with the army of occupation, and now in the world of politics, we can only assume that James maintained his good relationship with the Mansfield family and with Frederica in particular, although as there was now no need for letters as they lived relatively close to each other, there is no surviving documentation. In 1819 the Mansfields set out on a Grand Tour of Europe, accompanied on some of the initial stages by James. Near Chamonix, in view of Mont Blanc, James asked Frederica to marry him and she

accepted. In addition to keeping her diary, Frederica wrote assiduously to James after they became engaged about what she had been seeing and doing.

James seems to have accompanied the Mansfields on the first stage of their journey, and then on and off on other stages; the clues in their correspondence² suggest this, but provide only a few dates and even fewer explanations³. He was definitely in Paris with them just before the journal starts on 15 June, as in a letter dated 20 January 1820 Frederica says “I remember you telling me at a ball in Paris that you often, when you went home, read the Collects”. There was no other occasion when they could have coincided in Paris.

Even though it has never been perfectly clear at what stages and for how long James accompanied the Mansfields and their daughter Frederica on their Grand Tour in 1819 (the Tour continued into 1820 but James was definitely back in England in November 1819), a collection of dated watercolours produced in 1819 do indeed show us exactly when James was with the Mansfield family in July and August 1819.

The first sketch is entitled “Street in Brussels” and is dated 4 July (1819). The Mansfields left Brussels on 5 July; Freddy’s diary entry for 22 June reads “From then till July 5th nothing to say, having been nowhere”⁴, while 5 July starts with the words “Left Brussels”. James had therefore rejoined the Mansfield family in Brussels and continued with them from there.

The next dated sketch is from 6 July, entitled *Meuse Marche les Dames*. Marche les Dames is very close to Namur, on the road to Liège,

² Frederica’s letters to James are filed at the Kent History and Library Centre under catalogue number U1590 C266/4-7, consisting of four little books. James copied the letters out just a month after her death, in February 1823, possibly an attempt at exorcism, a way of dedicating his time to her even though she was no longer physically with him. The first book is entitled *Lady Frederica Stanhope, Extracts from Freddy’s letters and journal, February 1823*.

³ Frederica’s diary starts on leaving Paris on 15 June 1819; Gareth Glover, *Eyewitness to the Peninsular War and the Battle of Waterloo: The Letters and Journals of Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable James Hamilton Stanhope, 1803 to 1825, recording his service with Sir John Moore, Sir Thomas Graham and the Duke of Wellington* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2010) p. 206, says that Frederica and her parents were “accompanied by James Stanhope”, although that when they visited the battlefield at Waterloo just three days later he was no longer with them. This is confirmed by a later letter, in which Frederica mentions that James left them in Paris.

⁴ The fair copy of the diary, produced later, adds that the reason why Frederica did nothing these days is that she was ill.

and which according to Frederica's diary is precisely the route they followed that day. Her diary entry reads "The road by the side of the Meuse under masses of high rock was beautiful". Two days later, James sketched the waterfall of Coö; Freddy makes no mention of this particular waterfall in her diary, although she does say that she was drawing all morning⁵, and even though she went out in the evening she came back very quickly because it got cold and so she spent the evening at Lady Bristol's. James is never mentioned by name in the first version of the diary, but the fact that Frederica says she spent all morning drawing and one of James' drawings dates from precisely this day seems to suggest they were together.

Frederica's diary entry for 16 July reads "...and below it the village of St. Goar. Opposite is the town of St. Goarshausen and above it on the rock the Castle of Katz". James drew Sankt Goar on 15 July, and the castle of Katz too, although this particular sketch is undated. On 22 July Frederica tells us that she "went to Castle Heidelberg, from whence I took a sketch of the newest part of the building". James too sketched the castle on the same day; no doubt they were drawing together.

The next and last dated watercolour in this collection is from the waterfalls of Giessbach in Switzerland (see Figure 7), although James' note on the back of the image is mistaken (it says Heidelberg, 22 July). The image is clearly of Giessbach, and must have been produced on 17 August 1819, when in her diary entry Frederica says "We stopped to see the magnificent falls of the Giesbach, of which there are seven", and from there they spent a few hours in a small cottage, where an old man and his four children entertained them with music. On this same date James made some changes to the original text of Frederica's diary, crossing out some words and adding others⁶.

⁵ Drawing was a common pastime for numerous Grand Tourists. Cf. the introductory essay by Cecilia Powell to Dora Wordsworth's diary, *Canals, Castles and Catholics: Dora Wordsworth's Continental Journey of 1828* (Grasmere: The Wordsworth Trust, 2021), p. 56: "Whilst her tour sketches are seemingly no longer extant, she refers to the activity of sketching intermittently throughout her journal and jokingly described their party as 'travellers in search of the picturesque'". None of Frederica's sketches are now extant either, although several of James Stanhope's are.

⁶ Frederica says "There was a simplicity and feeling in all these people which was quite affecting, and I shall ever regard the two hours we spent in this little cottage as some of the most [word crossed out by James, now illegible] happy I have ever spent". In addition to the word he crossed out, James also changes "we spent" to "we passed", and adds the following words at the end of the sentence; "their weeping at Scotch not Italian music". Frederica no doubt enjoyed the music and



Figure 7 – James' watercolour of Giessbach Falls

the setting, but the fact that they were among the happiest hours of her life strongly suggests that it was because James was there too, and they were in love with each other.

In the months of July and August James and Frederica fell in love with each other, as can be gathered from their later correspondence. In a letter sent to James from Rome on 26 March 1820, Frederica reminds James of what seems to be their declaration of love at Secheron⁷; according to her diary they spent a week at this town, from 21 to 28 August 1819. She says:

How little Mama knew me, dearest, or rather knew my attachment to you at Secheron. The day she was displeased with me for having given you my hair, she said “and if it suited and you could not marry him and that afterwards you were to marry another, for though I dare say you think it is impossible now, you would not find it so, should not you feel uncomfortable from the reflexion you had given your hair to another?” Do you think I would James? I did not and were it then as I feared I might have to do it afterwards, but no – if I never had seen you again after you left us at Paris, do not think I could have married another. I soon saw and I believe you did too that our parents were quite surprised at the degree of affection we had for each other – particularly with me, for how I could conceal it I do not myself understand.

Things came to a head on between 29 August, when they arrived in Chamonix, very close to Mont Blanc, and 22 September, when they set off for Italy. More precisely, it seems to have been on 10 September that James proposed to Frederica; in the same letter from Rome she says:

I am surprised how I authored⁸ the joy of the 10th. Good God, the expression of your face! And when you pressed my hand to your lips and said “Will you say yes, Fred? We shall be poor but happy”.

Even so, there seems to have been some doubt at first⁹, as Frederica goes on to say,

⁷ We are lucky to have so many of James’ and Frederica’s private letters, in which they open their hearts to each other, especially when this is not the norm; cf. Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 60: “One of the hardest areas for historians to explore is that of ordinary sexual and emotional relationships. Inevitably the most intimate thoughts and feelings go unrecorded”.

⁸ The word is unclear in the MS as the original reading was altered in darker ink. A dot was inserted above the fourth from last letter, but must surely be ignored as the only English word that ends in “thired” is “outhired”, which does not fit in at all.

I cannot yet bring myself to think with composure on the possibility of me having failed – the agony I felt those 5 days no-one is aware of, and I danced with what a heavy heart God knows! I can enter your feelings with respect to the library¹⁰ and shall feel the same whenever I go into it. To have met you and not to have been allowed to love you, to have felt that I debarred you of all happiness not only by my means but in the society of my parents, oh James, I should have sunk under it. Though I knew not the extent of my gratitude to Sir Joseph I feel as if I was not half grateful enough for the happiness I possess through his means. How shall I ever be able to express my gratitude – he must see it reflected in our happiness in each other.

When James was back in England, he corresponded regularly with Frederica. In a letter dated 21 November 1819, he sent her some verses he had written, which contain the following lines:

For mental anguish well I know
 Can blanch and furrow my cheek
 And Fred in vain mid age's snow
 The likeness of her love may seek;
 But were my head with age as hoar
 As that huge peak which saw our vow
 My heart would cherish her the more
 Not more!! As tenderly as now.

The line “As that huge peak which saw our vow” seems to mean that he proposed to her in view of Mont Blanc.

In November the diary entries become much shorter, sometimes no more than two or three lines per day. This is most probably because Frederica was now much more interested in James than in Italy and much too busy writing to him to write in her diary. One of the entries even reads “From Nov 18th to Dec 5th saw nothing new”. On 10 December they left

⁹ Possibly that Lord and Lady Mansfield did not at first approve of the union, until James had some money and property to look after their daughter; this would explain the importance of the inheritance from Joseph Banks and their gratitude to him.

¹⁰ Frederica refers to James' visit to Joseph Banks and the inheritance he received (see below), which meant they would not be poor at all. Of course, in September 1819 this had not yet taken place, but it had when Freddy wrote the letter in March 1820.

Florence for Rome, on 15 they visited St Peter's, and on Christmas Day they saw the Pope in his chapel¹¹.

James left the Mansfields to return to England in October 1819. Frederica wrote to him on 5 December (she was still in Florence), saying that it is eight weeks since they parted. As stated above, she had an excellent memory for dates and anniversaries, which would mean that James left on 10 October. This is confirmed by a later letter, written on 10th April 1820 (again in Florence, but this time on their way home), in which she says "It is now six months since I parted from the dearest, most angelic, the most beloved of human beings, from my own James". We can therefore state with confidence that James left the Mansfields on 10 October. On 10 October they were in Genoa, and Frederica's diary entry shows a very busy day taken up with several different visits. She makes no mention of James or of his departure.

Frederica's first letter to James (now back in England) from Italy is dated 27 November 1819, sent from Florence, although she says therein that she has already received two from him. James' first surviving letter to Frederica begins on Sunday 7 November, at 2 o'clock (unfortunately, one very important letter from before this date is lost, in which, from what we can gather from later letters, he must have expressed some kind of doubt or misgiving about their future, no doubt related to certain financial conditions imposed by Lord and Lady Mansfield, and possibly even suggested that he and Frederica should not be married). The letter dated 7 November opens "My best beloved, my dearest Fred" and continues:

Such sacred and homefelt delight, such certainty of waking bliss I never felt till now!!!! How little do we know who are our friends, when I expected least I have obtained all. The transition from agony to joy is so overpowering that I am crying like a child, but gratitude to Providence and to my dear benefactor, and the reflection of the pious joy and gratitude which will fill the warmest and most affectionate of breasts on reading this.

...

When I came into my room just now I fell upon my knees and humbly thanked God for these blessings unlooked for.

¹¹ In a letter to James Frederica describes the Pope as "very pale and much bent". The Pontiff at the time was Pius VII, who was seventy-seven years old, and had suffered and aged much under Napoleon and the humiliations the emperor subjected him to.

The first impression on reading these lines is that he is referring to his engagement to his “best beloved, dearest Fred”, and has overcome his doubts (whatever they were) expressed in the letter now lost, but he is actually talking about the sizeable inheritance from Sir Joseph Banks¹². Banks had left him his estate (when he and his wife died), which was worth £10,000 a year. This is why he fell on his knees and gave thanks to God¹³. As explained above, it is possible that Frederica’s parents had withheld their permission for the marriage until James had some income above that of half-pay from the army. He would now be able to care for Frederica as she deserved. He would even be able to take care of his sister Hester and her debts, and just as Frederica’s family was now his own too, so Hester is also Frederica’s sister too.

Luckily, Frederica received the above letter before the first one, as she says “I have this instant received your second letter, which is the first I have ever had from you”; although when she answered she had clearly read the first one too. Their correspondence continued for the rest of 1819 and 1820 until the Mansfields were on their way back home, although only part of one letter now survives from 1820, in which Frederica describes her ascent of Vesuvius (this is included in the fair copy of the diary).

Among the souvenirs that Frederica brought back from Italy with her were three miniature watercolours, two of which show the Strada di Santa Lucia in Naples (see Figures 8 and 9), while the third shows an eruption of Vesuvius dated 5 March 1820 (see Figure 10). There were major eruptions

¹² Sir Joseph Banks (1743 - 1820) was an English naturalist, botanist, and patron of the natural sciences. Banks made his name on the 1766 natural-history expedition to Newfoundland and Labrador. He took part in Captain James Cook’s first great voyage (1768–1771), visiting Brazil, Tahiti, and after 6 months in New Zealand and Australia, returning home to immediate fame. He held the position of president of the Royal Society for over forty-one years. He advised King George III on the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and by sending botanists around the world to collect plants, he made Kew the world’s leading botanical gardens.

¹³ Cf. Aubrey Newman, *The Stanhopes of Chevening* (London: St Martin’s Press, 1969) p. 200: “The estates of Revesby Abbey in Lincolnshire were the property of Sir Joseph Banks, the eminent botanist. Banks had no children and his nearest heirs were his first cousin, Louisa Stanhope, whose mother had been Joseph Banks’s aunt, and his wife’s family, the Knatchbull-Hugessens. It was for long understood that on his death his landed estates would pass to the Stanhopes, and it was in this expectation that Charles, Louisa’s second son, had been given the additional name of Banks. On his death James became the eventual heir, subject to the life interest of Lady Banks. Sir Joseph died in 1820, and Lady Banks in 1828”.

in December 1820 and again in 1822, but there can be no doubt that there was also a lesser volcanic action in March 1820¹⁴.



Figure 8 – Naples

¹⁴ Cf. http://www.geo.mtu.edu/volcanoes/boris/mirror/mirrored_html/VESUVIO_elenco.html (accessed on 1 September 2022): “February 1819: lava overflows onto the E flank. 1 December 1819 - 31 May 1820: lava from fractures on the upper NW and W flanks. 15 January - 28 February 1822: increased explosive activity with lava outflow. 21 October - 16 November 1822: final eruption; violent lava fountaining and small glowing avalanches, lava effusion from vents mainly on the E and SW flanks; explosive activity is strongest on 23-24 October”; J.R. Hale (ed.), *The Italian Journal of Samuel Rogers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 84: “After the eruption of 1794, which overwhelmed the village of Torre del Greco, the volcano for some years was thought to be exhausted. In 1814, however, it erupted again through a new crater, and until the next major eruption of 1822 was constantly in some sort of activity”.



Figure 9 – Naples



Figure 10 – The eruption of Vesuvius on 5 March 1820

It is not known exactly when the Murrays came back from their tour – Glover says it was early in 1820¹⁵, but in the fair copy of Frederica’s diary from her Grand Tour of 1819 and 1820, which James gave as a gift to Lady Mansfield, the long letter from Freddy to James telling him how they had visited Pompeii and Vesuvius and were currently based in Naples, dated 9 March, automatically precludes a return to England at the beginning of the year.

The Stanhope manuscript collection holds a power of attorney¹⁶ for the transfer of £8,690 from the “Trustees of the Hon. James Stanhope’s marriage to himself”. The power of attorney is dated 23 April 1820, which shows that the wedding was already decided upon (possibly the date too, although no mention is made of it). The same file also holds a document called “Epitome on the settlement of the marriage of the Honourable Colonel Stanhope and Lady Frederica Louisa Murray”, dated 6 and 7 July 1820. It is quite a long document and concerns mainly what will happen to the estates in Lincolnshire inherited from Sir Joseph Banks, depending on who dies first from among James, Frederica, any possible children they might have, Joseph Banks and his wife Dorothea.

Colonel the Honourable James Hamilton Stanhope and Lady Frederica Louisa Murray were married at the bride’s house, Kenwood, on 10 July 1820. The evidence for the date is contradictory. Many years after the event, Charles Lewis Meryon tells us it was on 9 July¹⁷, a Sunday (and is followed in this by the later books that give a date for the wedding¹⁸), while in a contemporary letter he actually says the wedding took place on 10 July. The letter in question was written to Lady Hester on 11 July; Meryon informs her that James had married Lord Mansfield’s daughter just the day before, and that (as he had been told) they had gone to spend their honeymoon at Chevening.

This is further backed up by a note from James to his mother, sent from Kenwood on Friday (no month or year given). He refers to a letter he has received from his mother and which he has shown to Frederica, i.e. the Mansfields were now back from their travels. He goes on to say that:

¹⁵ *Eyewitness*, p. 206.

¹⁶ U1590 C 262/2. The papers are held inside a folder sheet entitled “Papers relating to the marriage settlement of the Hon. J. H. Stanhope 1820”.

¹⁷ In a footnote of his own to his copy of the letter informing Hester that James had died, quoted in Mark Guscini, *A Very Good Sort of Man* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2017), p. 93.

¹⁸ E.g. Gareth Glover, *A Staff Officer in the Peninsula and at Waterloo: the Letters of the Honourable Lieutenant Colonel James H. Stanhope, 1st Foot Guards, 1809-15* (Godmanchester: Ken Trotman Publishing, 2007), p. 3.

The marriage takes place here at 1 o'clock on Monday, and we shall reach Chevening by dinner¹⁹. I hope on the Monday following we shall have the pleasure of receiving you or you will open your house to us, for Freddy is impatient to be acquainted with you. Lord and Lady Mansfield join in everything that can be said kind, and Freddy sends her love.

In July 1820 9 July was a Sunday and 10 July was of course a Monday. James writes as if the event is imminent, and even though his mother was apparently not going to the wedding, James would hardly have got the day wrong so soon before the marriage. On the weight of the evidence, given that James wrote three days before the wedding and Meryon the day after, it seems safe to state that James and Freddy were married on Monday 10 July 1820.

Frederica became pregnant almost immediately after her wedding. They seem to have lived a quiet domestic life for the rest of 1820 and most of 1821. Their son was born on 13 May 1821, and named James Banks (Banks was doubly in honour of James' brother Charles Banks, and his benefactor Sir Joseph Banks). The weeks before the birth show us a curious side to Frederica's personality; the following letter is kept in the Stanhope collection²⁰, with a title written by Lady Mansfield: "This note was written by my beloved child to her husband nearly seven weeks before the birth of her first child which took place 13 May 1821".

London, 26 March 1821

What is my spirit in writing this? To attempt to cheer the heart of one whose warmest affections will have received their death blow ere he can open this. Oh almighty and most merciful God, grant this last proof of my affection for him (who by thy grace made me enjoy a state of happiness no mortal had ever known) grant that this last proof of my affection may be pure from all the deceits and vanities of this world and which may be calculated to make him repeat being separated from me, what we never craved repeating while together, thy will be done O God!

Almighty, Merciful Father, grant the prayer thy unworthy servant pours up to Thee – support I pray Thee and comfort my afflicted James. Grant him I beseech thee patience in his sufferings,

¹⁹ Confirming what Meryon said about their spending their honeymoon at Chevening. The dowager Countess Stanhope seems to have been very much excluded from the ceremonies and festivities.

²⁰ U1590 C 269/1.

and humility of spirit to acknowledge thy chastening with gratitude. Grant that he may so spend his life on earth that he may be worthy of the joys of heaven, to which I (though in humbling) aspire.

My dearest, my own, my best beloved James! Father of my child! When I think that the hand that writes this will be cold and stiff and thou canst read it, that the eyes that now glisten with affection will be shut forever, that the lips that have so often assured thee of my affection will be cold and motionless I confess I should die.

My James, I wish to comfort you for my loss, first let me thank you for the perfect happiness I enjoyed with you and let me beg of you that as our souls are still in union although our bodies are separate, that you will with me thank our maker for all the blessings we have enjoyed. Remember, my dearest, our separation will be short, and we shall meet again, never, never to part – I trust I leave you a pledge of my love! Cherish me in it! Be not only a father to it, supply the place of a mother, for you alone can supply that greatest of losses.

Recollect, my James, that next to the loss of a wife, comes the loss of a child. Think of this not only as to our poor little babe, but as to our parents – go to them and comfort them, in trying to assuage their grief your own will become more regulated and composed. Take care of your health I conjure you, for my sake, yes, James, for do I not live still in our child?

As Frederica did not die during or immediately after the birth of James Banks, this letter can only have been written in preparation for what she thought might happen. Childbirth was certainly risky at the time and a lot of women did die²¹, although the maturity and faith of a twenty-one year old woman are profoundly evident in this letter. It would not be the last warning of her own death that she wrote. There is no sign that James read or even knew of the letter; it was clearly entrusted to Lady Mansfield, who would give it to James if anything happened to Frederica. She most probably gave the letter with the rest of her daughter's papers to the Stanhope family after both Frederica and James had left this world.

²¹ Cf. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/3511335/> (accessed on 24 September 2022): "The history of maternal deaths in England from the earliest records in the 1700s to 1935, concentrating on the influence of medical practice, is recounted. The rate lay between 4 and 5 per 1000 until 1935, with the advent of sulfa antibiotics to prevent puerperal infections. ... The current maternal death rate is about 0.1/1000".