

BHSP-9-1982

**THE ELOPEMENT OF ANNA LUDOVINA TEIXEIRA
DE AGUILAR WITH LIEUTENANT WILLIAM
WALDRON KELLY**

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The history of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance embraces numerous treaties signed over the centuries, but the two outstanding events which further united the two nations were the Royal marriages of 1387 and 1662. Not all marriages improved relations between the two countries and, in this particular case, if the bride's mother had had her way, the Alliance would never have survived 610 years.

Following the victorious battle of Salamanca on 22 July 1812 and the subsequent triumphant entry into Madrid, the presence in Spain of a superior French army induced Lord Wellington to order the Allied army back into Portugal.

Severe weather, an overabundance of newly fermented wine, and lack of discipline, transformed what should have been an orderly retreat into an orgy of drunkenness and plunder; a period best forgotten in the history of the regiments present.

The entire army was in a deplorable state, and the 4th Division that Lt. General Sir Lowry Galbraith Cole led back into Portugal was no exception; in fact it could best be described as a long trail of human misery and suffering.

Sir Lowry established his headquarters in Casa do Cabo at S. João da Pesqueira in the district of Alto Douro, and his three brigades were quartered in neighbouring villages.

The quartermaster and his staff allocated the best quarters to the most senior officer, and in this respect they did Sir William Anson proud when, on 2 December, he led the 27th and 40th regiments into

Cedovim and himself took up residence in Casa de Nossa Senhora da Conceição. The mansion was, and still is, the centrepiece of this small and isolated hamlet in the Alto Douro; in it lived the lord of the manor Dom Francisco Teixeira de Aguilár, Fidalgo e Cavaleiro da Casa Real, who, with his wife Dona Maria Ludovina, ruled over their vast estates, feudal tenants and three eligible daughters.

Early in the 18th century on this site stood the modest home of Dom Francisco Xavier Teixeira Rebelo, kinsman of Anson's hostess. As a young man Dom Francisco had paid amorous attention to the daughter of a fellow nobleman, Pais de Sande, owner of the stately Casa do Cabo and whose forefather, the Marquês de Sande, had been deeply involved in the delicate negotiations that preceded the marriage of Catherine of Bragança to Charles II.

Pais de Sande did not have a British monarch in mind for his daughter, but he did object to his young neighbour who made a habit of displaying his equestrian skill under his daughter's window. In due course he sent him a curt note stating that the modest house in Cedovim was not a fit home for the heiress of Casa do Cabo.

The offended pretender swore to teach his conceited and arrogant neighbour a lesson and, to prove his worth, engaged an army of masons and proceeded to enlarge his house into the mansion it is today. To stress his equally noble ancestry, on the façade he prominently displayed his coat-of-arms featuring the crosses of Teixeira and the eagles of Aguilár. As the house grew so did his amorous desires wane and, when it was completed, he let his neighbour know that the young lady was not fit to adorn his mansion.

Returning to that severe winter of 1812, Anson's hostess, Dona Maria Ludovina, ruled supreme over the Aguilár establishment; very conscious of her blue-blooded ancestry, her one concern was to find titled suitors for her three daughters, Maria do Carmo, Maria Josefa and Anna Ludovina. While waiting to be allocated suitable husbands, the three sisters led the monastic existence accepted by unmarried ladies of their social rank and, under the close supervision of their mother, they were totally isolated from the outside world.

When Anson's brigade marched into Cedovim, Dona Maria had probably already chosen the titled families into which her daughters were to marry. In fact Maria do Carmo was to become Condessa de

Samodães and Maria Josefa, Baronesa de Fornos. But whatever title she had earmarked for her youngest daughter, Anna Ludovina had other plans in mind and would never be a party in a marriage of convenience.

The arrival of Anson's thirteen hundred men must have roused the three sisters into an exalted state of excitement, but their domineering mother made sure that all they saw of the manly foreign soldiers was from a distance and through drawn curtains.

While the army was being dispersed in the north of Portugal and bedding down for the winter, Wellington was setting up his Headquarters in the same small flea-ridden village of Freneda where he had spent the previous winter. Geographically he found it ideally situated; it was within easy reach of his divisional commanders but far removed from Lisbon which made communications conveniently difficult with the meddling and corrupt members of the Regency. Last but not least it offered excellent hunting country.

The return of "O Grande Lorde" delighted the inhabitants, in particular the children of the village who well remembered the sweetmeats he gave them when strolling in the square.

Freneda has not changed since then and, visiting it now, one wonders where and how the staff of 150 — the roll reads like a page from Burke's Peerage — was accommodated. In the private chapel adjoining Wellington's house, his ADC, Lt. Col. The Hon. Alexander Gordon, set up his quarters which by local standards were luxurious. Having patched the leaking roof and decorated the wall with red baize, he installed an iron stove and fitted up the altar as a dressing table. (Three years later Gordon was to die of wounds in his master's camp-bed while in the adjoining room Wellington wrote the Waterloo dispatch).

Very much to the horror of the clergy and all God-fearing Portuguese, during the war churches were put to every imaginable use; in the gilded church at Freneda hundreds of mules were stabled and the area near the altar was used by the muleteers as sleeping quarters.

There were exceptions: at Cedovim the small chapel in the village square was used exclusively as a place of worship to which, daily and religiously, D. Maria Ludovina, in her curtained sedan chair, led the family procession to attend morning mass. These daily excursions

offered the three sisters their only opportunity to observe the dashing foreign men that swarmed the square at close quarters.

The conduct of the army during the retreat from Madrid had led Wellington to write a very strongly worded memorandum to commanders of divisions and brigades and, as a result, all officers were now under great pressure restoring order and discipline in the ranks.

Still recovering from injuries suffered at Badajoz, Lieutenant Kelly was no exception, and during this period he was kept fully occupied drilling and shaping the 9th Company of the 40th into a disciplined fighting unit.

Wellington did not meddle with the spiritual side of his soldiers' lives, but he did resent the interfering priests of the country who persistently tried to induce soldiers to attend Mass. In this respect his views were very clear:

The consequence is that nobody goes to Mass, and although we have whole regiments of Irishmen and of course Roman Catholics, I have not seen one soldier perform any act of religious worship in these Catholic countries excepting making the sign of the cross to induce the people of the country to give them wine.

Whether Lieutenant Kelly was a devout and practising Catholic or whether there were other motives, such as the three virgins from across the square, the fact is that he found the time and made a habit of attending Mass; as dapper as his faded and tattered uniform would permit, and shako tucked under his arm, he took a place across the aisle from where he could view D. Maria and her brood.

While from the altar the priest delivered long-winded sermons on the evils that lurked in the village, in the form of lustful hard-drinking atheists, Anna's gaze was attracted to the officer who came daily to the chapel. If D. Maria did oblige her daughters to take communion, it is doubtful that Anna told her confessor what was foremost on her mind, as the parish priest was her uncle, D. Francisco's brother.

The attraction between the two church-goers was mutual and in due course secret messages were being exchanged, clandestine meetings taking place, and soon the attachment blossomed into deep love.

The lovers were conscious of the fact that her parents, who had titles and wealth in mind for their daughters, would most certainly take drastic steps to put an end to the association; they knew, too, that the regiment would soon receive the marching orders that would end their newly found bliss.

This happiness was indeed short-lived and the end came much sooner than expected; for having received intelligence from Salamanca of suspicious enemy moves, Wellington made the necessary dispositions and ordered the 4th Division to move to the right bank of the river Coa. The actual destination was not known and this sudden order to move came as a heavy blow to the lovers. Before leaving on 28 February Kelly consoled Anna and assured her that, wherever he went, he would return for her.

The regiment's destination was in fact Mata de Lobos and not very distant from Cedovim. As the name implies there was an abundance of wild game in the region and General Cole immediately organised a hunt for Sunday, 7 March, to which all well mounted officers were invited. If Kelly was in that category, he no doubt declined the invitation and made better use of his saddle to visit Anna and discuss their future.

From Mata de Lobos Kelly made his last but one journey to see Anna and, having found the separation unbearable, decided that the only solution was for her to elope. In detail and with military precision they made the necessary plans.

On Saturday, 13 March, Wellington gave a ball at Ciudad Rodrigo in honour of Cole and to invest him with the insignia of the Order of the Bath. With Cedovim depleted of officers attending the ball, what better opportunity would the lovers come by? The stage was set, including the bribing by Kelly of two servants from the Aguilar establishment who, in exchange for a few Reis, undertook to provide a horse and a ladder and to meet him at a pre-arranged time under Anna's window.

On the night of the Rodrigo feast, or the next, Sunday 14, Kelly with two fellow officers rode into Cedovim and met their accomplices who, true to their word, were waiting with the implements for the escapade. Under cover of darkness and when the signal was given that all was clear, Anna scrambled out of her window onto the sloping roof

and from there, down the ladder, into the eager and waiting arms of her lover.

Part of the agreement with the two servants was that they were to keep a look-out until the elopers were clear of the scene. Satisfied with the smoothness of the operation, the three officers and their prize rode away from Cedovim. They little suspected that at that very moment the two servants were relating the whole story to D. Maria. At first she was incredulous; then, having recovered from the immediate shock and more concerned with the family image than with the loss of her daughter, D. Maria ordered a party of six servants, including the two traitors, in pursuit, with specific instructions that at whatever cost they were to bring back her daughter and not to spare the soldiers.

The lovers and their escort were hampered by the slow-moving horse laden with Anna's baggage, and were soon overtaken by the rabble of men wielding sticks and knives. But the officers were alert and ready to defend their prize at all costs and, while the frightened Anna looked on from the road-side, Kelly and his comrades drew their swords and tore into their shouting and stick-waving opponents.

During the course of this hard contested yet brief affray, and before the soldiers had the six men on the run, Kelly, with one clean swipe of his sword, severed two fingers of one of the men who had betrayed him. But in the confusion the horse laden with Anna's possessions was captured and led back to Cedovim.

Having disposed of their assailants, the party continued their journey towards Mata de Lobos and, unlike Lot's wife, Anna never looked back.

Anna and her lover can hardly have realised that they had triggered off a chain of events in which even the Commander-in-Chief was to become closely involved. Some of these must be left to the imagination, but the brunt of D. Maria's wrath must have been directed at Sir William Anson, her recently departed lodger, and any remnants of his staff still in the house must have left in great haste as several swords were left behind and never claimed.

To Sergeant Lawrence of Kelly's company we owe this very lively account of events at Cedovim. According to him, on the following day the commanding officer of the 40th received a letter from D.

Francisco in which he demanded the return of his daughter and punishment of the culprits. Kelly was summoned, reprimanded and told that "he was to consider himself under arrest and that at such times he should be thinking of more serious matters than marriage."

On the following day (wrote Lawrence) he led the lady to a near-by chapel and married her, and later in camp he treated his company to pints of wine with which to toast the bride and groom.

A week later the girl's father forgave his daughter, returned the horse and accepted the officer as a son-in-law.

Records prove the Sergeant's narrative to be reasonable accurate. However, after the fingerless servant had brought in the news, it was in fact D. Maria who wrote the letter and had it delivered to Wellington at Freneda. In it, and in no uncertain terms, she demanded the immediate return of her daughter and severe punishment for the officer concerned. Simultaneously, and as a precaution, through her numerous and influential connections in the corridors of power, orders were given forbidding the clergy in the neighbourhood to perform the marriage ceremony.

On 19 March Wellington wrote a letter to D. Maria in which he gave his assent to her demand provided that she in turn gave a written assurance that she would not punish her daughter or confine her to a convent, the usual fate of erring ladies of good family.

The same day Wellington also wrote to Cole at Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, who was already acquainted with the scandal, giving him detailed and precise instructions:

Freneda, 19th March 1813.

Sir

The mother of the Lady carried off by Lt. Kelly of the 40th regiment, having complained to me of his conduct and having desired my assistance to remove her daughter from the disgraceful situation in which she is now placed, I have consented to grant it, on the condition of a promise on her part, that the daughter should not be confined to a convent.

I enclose the letter of the Lady, in which she makes the engagement as above pointed out, and I beg that you call upon Lt. Kelly to restore the young Lady to her family. If

he should decline to do so upon your order, I beg you to put him in close arrest and then to take measures to remove the young Lady from his power into that of her family's at Cedovim; as I cannot allow any officer of this army to be guilty of such a breach of the laws of Portugal as to carry away a young Lady, and retain her in the cantonments of the army, contrary to the wishes of her parents and relations.

I beg you to return the enclosed letter.

If you should find it necessary to place Lt. Kelly in close arrest, you will release him as soon as the young Lady shall be with her relations at Cedovim, but you will inform Lt. Kelly that he has my positive orders not to cross the Coa.

Wellington.

Lt. General the Hon. Sir G. L. Cole, K.B.

Very correctly he adds the newly acquired K.B. to Cole's title.

In accordance with His Lordship's orders and as Kelly refused to hand over the girl who was dearest in life to him, Cole had no option but to place him in close arrest. However, on being told by Kelly that his intentions towards the Lady were honourable, and that if they were not yet married it was only because they had not found a priest who would perform the ceremony, the General asked his prisoner to confirm this in writing. After receiving Kelly's very convincing letter, Cole decided to interview the Lady and to hear her side of the story before reporting to Wellington.

On the morning of Monday, 22 March, Cole was disturbed by the noisy arrival at his Headquarters of D. Maria who, having given the assurances required by Wellington, had come to collect her daughter and no doubt to see the culprit behind bars.

Reluctantly Cole received her, and the very agitated confrontation that followed convinced him that the woman before him was a liar and impostor. All she wanted was to get the girl into her power and she had no intention of complying with her written undertaking not to ill-treat her daughter. After she had stormed from his presence to return to Cedovim empty-handed and plan her next move, Cole wrote to Wellington, enclosing Kelly's letter and telling him of D. Maria's visit. Referring to Anna, Cole wrote: "She appears to me fully deter-

mined to go to any extremity rather than return to Cedovim." He concluded: "I have been induced to delay the execution of Your Lordship's orders until I hear further from Your Lordship."

Meanwhile Sir John Scott Lillie, attached to the Portuguese Army and acquainted with all the facts, came to the rescue and saved the lovers from their very embarrassing dilemma — it may well have been with the connivance of Cole.

Sir John called on Padre João Gomes of Caçadores 7 who, as army chaplain, could turn a blind eye to the ban forbidding the marriage, and on that very same day, in the presence of several officers of the regiment, Anna was given away by Sir John and the marriage duly solemnized in the church at Figueira.

Lieutenant and Mrs. Kelly returned to Mata de Lobos and it must have been there that the bridegroom bought wine for his friends.

Unknown to the participants in these events, but confirming Cole's assessment of her character, D. Maria returned home and made the necessary preparations to incarcerate her daughter by ordering her bedroom windows to be bricked-up.

Sometime before Wellington's marriage to Kitty Pakenham, Cole had been a pretender to her hand — a fact of which he was forever conscious; and he must have found painful and embarrassing all this correspondence about an *affaire de coeur*. Wellington also gives the impression that he found the correspondence irritating and distasteful: whereas he habitually addressed his Division Commander as "My dear Cole" or "My dear General", on this particular subject he used just "Sir".

Still ignorant of the fact that the couple had been married on 22 March, Wellington replied to Cole's letter of the same date:

Freneda 25 March 1813.

Sir:

I have received your letter of 22nd instant and being satisfied myself of the promise made by the mother of the young Lady who has been carried off by Lt. Kelly of the 40th regiment, I do not conceive that doubts entertained by any other person on that subject ought to prevent or delay the execution of the directions I gave on the subject.

In regard to Lt. Kelly's inclination to marry the young Lady, I cannot but observe that he has it in his power, whenever he pleases, to compensate in that manner the injury he has done to the family, and it is no excuse that the influence of the family has prevented the Clergy in the neighbourhood from performing the ceremony. That influence could not extend to the Clergy of Spain, from which Castelo Rodrigo is distant but a few miles.

Lt. Kelly has been guilty of a gross breach, not only of the laws of Portugal, but of the laws of his own and of all civilised countries, and if I should be called upon by the Government, as I most probably shall, to deliver over Lt. Kelly to the Portuguese tribunals to be dealt with according to Portuguese law, I shall most undoubtedly comply with their desire.

I cannot but observe upon the mother's complaint, "that he is to be placed at the disposal of a foreign tribunal", that the notion is too common among the officers and soldiers of the army that they are not obliged to obey the laws of the country in which they are acting; in other words, that they may act as they please and may commit outrages as they think proper, provided they do not offend against the Mutiny Act and Articles of War.

I cannot however admit of such doctrine, and Lt. Kelly will be an instance that the laws of the country must be obeyed, if the Portuguese Government shall desire that they may be delivered over to the tribunals of that country.

I beg that the directions contained in my letter of 19th instant may be carried into execution.

Wellington.

Lt. General the Hon Sir G.L. Cole, K.B.

In this dispatch Wellington fully lays down the law and articles of war yet, with tongue in cheek, he does imply that there is nothing to prevent Kelly from taking his lady-love into Spain where the ban on the clergy was not in force.

Events moved quickly and it is difficult to keep pace with D. Maria, but it appears that she returned to Figueira on 25 March to challenge Cole, and whatever did take place, it is unfortunate that he did not

commit it to paper in his dispatch of 26, but by word of mouth through his ADC.

Figueira, 26 March 1813. 2 pm.

My Lord,

I have had the honour to receive your Lordship's letter of yesterday in reply to mine of 22nd.

Lt. Kelly having been actually married to the Lady in question by the Chaplain of the Caçadores, I beg to know whether it is still Your Lordship's desire under those circumstances that he should be found to give up the Lady to her friends. For her mother who knows of the marriage will not hear of it and still persists in having her daughter.

I can with truth assure your Lordship that it is at all times my anxious wish to comply with your orders and after the letter I had the honour to receive this day I should certainly not hesitate to force Lt. Kelly to give up the Lady, but from part of your letter it appears doubtful to me whether under the above circumstances it is still your Lordship's wish that the Lady should be given up to her mother.

I send this by my ADC that there may be no delay in forwarding your wishes and he can inform you of certain circumstances which took place yesterday, which fully confirm me in the opinion I have before stated of the motives of her mother in asking to have her back.

Lt. General Cole.

His Excellency Marquis Wellington.

Cole was so very anxious to comply with His Excellency's wishes that, having sealed the dispatch, he instructed his ADC that under no circumstances was he to come back without specific instructions as to what he should do with the Lady.

Whoever thought that the matter was now closed must have underestimated the spiteful D. Maria who refused to admit defeat. In a last and desperate gesture of defiance, she ordered her carriage and headed for Freneda and during the long journey must have rehearsed the ultimatum she planned to deliver to the then most powerful man in the Kingdom.

The Judge Advocate General noted that, "At Freneda there are no women, but only ladies of a certain description"; so the appearance of D. Maria on Monday 29 March must have caused a stir at headquarters.

On this occasion Wellington, who had a reasonable command of Portuguese, did not have to use it, as it was the raving D. Maria who did all the talking at the interview. Her behaviour confirmed all that Cole had written, and finally when he managed to get a word in, it was to say a curt "No"; the girl was married and that was final.

This retort further inflamed the woman, and the Judge Advocate, who was present at the meeting, recorded that "Before leaving Freneda she swore that she would get Kelly and the priest transported for life and would kill her daughter should she ever see her again."

Ignorant of the fact that she had been sentenced to death and unaware of her mother's infamous behaviour at headquarters, on 1 April Anna celebrated her nineteenth birthday at Mata de Lobos. Her choice of life was totally different from the cloistered existence she had led at home: from that day she became a member of that huge army of amazons that trailed behind the Allied forces; it was made up of every imaginable sort but, regardless of background or upbringing, its members had one thing in common, they were tough and knew no fear!

Epilogue

On 19 May 1813, Anna, now with child, packed her belongings and set off on the long trek that was to finish twelve months later in Bordeaux.

On the very day the Kellys arrived at Miranda do Douro the following decree was signed in Lisbon, thus fulfilling one of the three threats made by D. Maria at Wellington's headquarters:

By decree dated 25th May, 1813 and in accordance with the wishes of His Excellency Marshal Beresford, Marquis of Campo Maior, Padre João José Gomes is dismissed from the Royal Service, owing to his misconduct.

After the battle of Vitoria on 21 June, Anna followed her husband into the Pyrenees and there she nursed him after he was seriously

wounded during the bloody engagement of 28 July, above the hamlet of Zabaldica.

During October the regiment enjoyed a period of rest at Echalar and there the Kellys enjoyed a second honeymoon. Late in December the regiment went into cantonments in the village of Arrauntz, and here during the first days of January Anna presented her husband with a baby girl. Ironically, the child was named Maria Ludovina, after her grandmother.

The battle of Toulouse, fought on Easter Sunday 1814, brought the Peninsular War to an end, and on 14 June the Kelly family sailed from Bordeaux in HMS *Sultan*, destination Cork. However, as Britain and America were then at war, veteran Peninsular regiments were given no respite, and in due course the 40th was ordered to reinforce the expedition being assembled, under the command of Sir Edward Pakenham, to sail on board the *Lord Wellington*, *Ajax* and *Baring*, under convoy of HMS *Sultan*. On 8 October, Lt. and Mrs. Kelly with their daughter, and a second child on the way, embarked on the *Baring*.

After sailing the next day a storm blew up and the ship was soon in serious trouble. After losing her rudder, she was holed and subsequently beached; five lives were lost and all baggage and accountments went to the bottom.

The convoy eventually sailed on 2 November and on 13, in sight of the island of Madeira, the sealed orders were opened and the destination made known.

The ill-fated expedition to New Orleans belongs to military history. In fact when the hard fought battle took place on 8 January, news had not yet arrived that the armistice had been signed on 24 December. After a long and relaxing period in Dauphine Isle, the regiment sailed for home early in April and, on the high seas and from a passing vessel, they learned that Napoleon had escaped from Elba.

The transport anchored off Spithead and was immediately ordered to Ostend, and the regiment proceeded to Ghent where, for a period, it did guard duties at the court of Louis XVIII.

Lt. Kelly was by then senior Lieutenant of the regiment, and on 8 June the long awaited promotion came through and he was gazetted

Captain. Holding this rank, he was present on the battlefield of Waterloo on 18 June, while, somewhere in the rear, Anna and the children listened to the thunderous gunfire.

After ten years of soldiering, seeing no prospect of further promotion and with a family to provide for, Kelly sold his commission and quit the army. Now in the money, and with the proceeds of the sale of his share of a house in Dublin, plus the £97: 7s: 3d of the Waterloo prize money, he leased farmland and settled down in Maudlin Cottage in County Kildare.

The farming venture was a disaster; whereas the land was unproductive, Anna proved to be the opposite, and Maria Ludovina was followed by Jane Ellenore, William Waldron, Anna Emilia and three other children.

On receiving news of her father's death, Anna travelled to Portugal to claim her share of the estate but, as she had been disinherited, she returned to Ireland empty-handed.

Kelly, having lost all his money in the farming venture, left his wife and family and sailed for Jamaica to take up the post of Barrack Master in Kingston. Here he died in 1836. Incredibly, Anna only learned of his death eleven years later and, when the Horse Guards eventually confirmed it, she applied for a widow's pension only to be told that she did not qualify as her husband had quit the army.

By now Anna was destitute, sick and going blind; but Sir John Scott Lillie, who had given her away in marriage, remained a good friend. He wrote to the Duke of Wellington and enclosed a memorial from Anna, addressed to Queen Victoria and in which she laid before Her Majesty all her problems. The response was prompt and, no doubt by command of the Duke of Wellington, from Lord Fitzroy Somerset she received a warrant for 50 pounds sterling.

In 1858, on the death of her mother, Anna returned to Portugal where her mother had made it clear in her will that Anna was to get nothing. Living almost on charity, and disgusted with her family in Portugal, Anna died two years later.

The bricked-up windows in the family manor at Cedovim remain as a monument to that brave young girl who turned her back on her family to follow the soldier she loved.

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