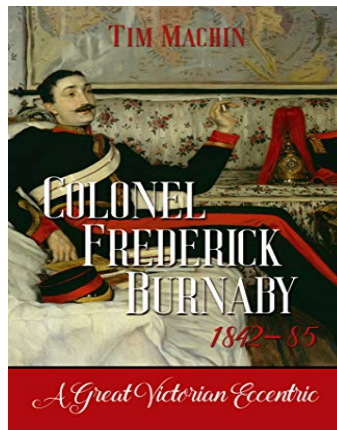


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Burnaby was one of the most charismatic Englishmen of the second half of the 19th century. Even at an early age he was described by the house servant as having a “contradictious spirit”, something he himself recognised later – to be ready to contradict or deny- and that this did not sometimes concur with his best interests.

A Harrow friend, H Finch, said “Burnaby was the only man I have ever met who was totally devoid of fear”, a quality that perhaps partially led to his death at Abou Klea.

For years he was one of the most popular men in England, though not always with those who were his intimates.

Stagnation was insufferable to him, and he managed to cram into his short life adventures whilst at school and home life, whilst in the Army, on incredible journeys into highly dangerous places, with his obsession with ballooning, in his political activity, to his mastery of seven languages, in his prolific writing of which the “Ride to Khiva” and “On Horse Back through Asia Minor” are still in print, a novel, “Our Radicals”, published after his death, and several military books about training and tactics for infantry and cavalry alike.

He was reputed to be “the strongest man in the Army”. He

was 11lb at birth and grew to 6ft 4"ins, with a 47"chest, 17/18 stone and a 34" waist He was loved by the rank and file of his Regiment and then increasingly with officers who served with him. His death caused a shock wave in England

He could not resist a challenge and could not resist taking the initiative, he was rash but in deadly earnest. For the most part he was cheery, bright and humorous but he saw through "cant" and was not slow to say why.

Perhaps the best modern description of him was that of John Brindle saying "He was the sort of chap you would want at your shoulder in a fight".

Perhaps some idea of his popularity can be seen in the memorials about him.

In the grounds of St Philips Cathedral in Birmingham is a very large obelisk to commemorate him, on the one side his face complete with facial growth, on another the plain word "Khiva" and on the third the words "Abou Klea". This obelisk was paid for by public subscription within months of his death; it is now a listed monument.

In Holy Trinity Church in Windsor a monument was erected in his honour by the Prince of Wales and other officers.

There is a memorial window in St Peters Church Bedford, as well as a pub named after him!

There is a boarding house named after him at Bedford School and at Oswestry there is an organ in the Chapel which was given in his honour.

But, he received no honour during his life, except from Egypt, something that gives an indication of the different views of him that some held.