



Parting Shots

Matthew Parris, Andrew Bryson

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Matthew Parris's *Parting Shots* is a treasure trove of wit, venom and serious analysis. Up till 2006 a British Ambassador leaving his post was encouraged to write what was known as a valedictory despatch, to be circulated to a small number of influential people in government. This was the parting shot, an opportunity to offer a personal and frank view of the host country, the manners and morals of its people, their institutions, the state of their cooking and their drains. But it was also a chance to let rip at the Foreign Office itself and to look back on a career spent in the service of a sometimes ungrateful nation. Combining gems from the archives with more recent despatches obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, *Parting Shots* sheds light on Britain's place in the world, revealing the curious cocktail of privilege and privation that makes up the life of an ambassador. 'Wonderful ... a glimpse of that lost world of private eloquence and erudite candour' Matthew d'Ancona, *Evening Standard* 'Unbuttoned, indiscreet and very funny' *Yorkshire Post*

Matthew Parris had a short career in the Foreign Office where one of his tasks was to distribute incoming valedictory despatches. He was a Conservative MP from 1979 to 1986, since when he has worked as a journalist. He is the author of *A Castle in Spain*, *Parting Shots*, and *A Spanish Ambassador's Suitcase*. He divides his time between Derbyshire (where his old constituency was situated) and east London.

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