

*Independent Diplomat*  
*Despatches from an Unaccountable Elite*

Carne Ross

London: C. Hurst and Co., 2009, £15.00, h/b

**Robin Ramsay**

**T**his has been out a while (first edition was in 2006) but it is worth a look. Ross was the indentikit young British diplomat who began to acquire that most dreadful of professional handicaps, politics. His memoir illustrates the bizarre amateurism (the 'effortless excellence' which is so highly prized) of the British civil service compared with their well trained European counterparts, the stultifying nature of the British diplomatic culture, as well as providing many telling and occasionally comic examples of its sheer uselessness.