

Charles and Camilla – Portrait of a Love Affair by Gyles Brandreth.
Century 2005.

Gyles Brandreth has close contacts with members of the royal family, as well as what is usually described as 'royal circles'; he is thus exceptionally well-informed about his subjects and further writes with an objectivity tinged with affection and respect that makes the finished product credible and engaging.

Brandreth is also a fine writer, engaging the reader instantly and holding the attention fast. Charles and Camilla parallels his excellent biography of the Queen and Prince Philip, and while some of the information is repeated, there is much that is fresh because the principle characters are different.

Whether one is a supporter of Prince Charles or a mourner for the late Diana, Princess of Wales, Brandreth presents a Camilla Shand/Parker Bowles whom only the most close-minded or ill-informed could fail to warm to: he skirts no awkward areas, and undoubtedly has caused some cringes at Clarence House as a result, but there is nothing in this portrait that damages or hurts either Charles or Camilla.

There can be little doubt that Charles and Diana were hopelessly mismatched, and the marriage between them could not have survived for that reason alone, never mind all the other issues which contributed to the couples' agony and the marriage's demise; but having read Charles and Camilla there can be even less doubt not only of their eminent suitability for each other but of the way they complement each other too.

Together with the author, all readers of this excellent biography must wish the Prince and his Duchess a very happy future together.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh