



Clough The Autobiography

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For the last three decades Brian Clough has been the most charismatic manager in football. Funny, outrageous, sentimental, he stands out sharply from the bland men in suits. Though his talent has earned him a fortune, he remains a working-class hero. As a player he was one of the most gifted forwards of his day. He scored 251 goals in 274 League appearances - and would have scored more had a cruel injury not forced him to retire.

As a manager his record was full of superlatives. He took both Derby County and then Nottingham Forest out of the doldrums of the Second Division and made them world-beaters. Tactically brilliant, Clough had an unmatched ability to motivate players. He is the best manager England never had. Behind his back, they call him Old Big 'Ead. He has never been far from controversy, and some of his rows, particularly with his long-standing managerial partner Peter Taylor, are the stuff of tabloid legend. Not so long ago he was televised running onto the pitch to wallop some unruly supporters. More recently he has taken legal advice to counter rumours about illegal ticket deals. Dull he isn't. Despite his outgoing nature, Clough has always guarded his privacy. At last he has decided to tell his full story: from terraced council house in Middlesbrough, to luxurious mansion in an exclusive suburb of Derby; from fitter to socialist millionaire. He speaks of the influence of his strong, proud mother, his courtship and marriage to his glamorous wife Barbara, his children, particularly his goal-scoring son Nigel, and his health, which has been the subject of press speculation and concern. This is an extraordinary life, told by an extraordinary man.

Clough The Autobiography Details

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From Reader Review Clough The Autobiography for online ebook

Garry T. says

The legend himself. I'm not one for autobios, but I'm a footballer and a football fan, and I loved Cloughie's perspective of the game from then and the (almost) present. His story provides a bit more clarity to 'The Damned United.' Seriously give this a read if you're ever interested football behind the scenes, management, stories of success and failure -- on and off the pitch.

Paul says

One of the better sporting autobiographies, young man. Not necessarily a classic but well worth the read for any football fan.

Jono says

Good stuff and well written but I don't think it goes into enough detail about his time with Taylor and the trouble at Derby, Leeds and Notts Forest. He never really seems able to let his guard down and admit some of his greatest mistakes. Also has dated a bit, especially his claim that no team would match his 42 game unbeaten run...

Jem Wilton says

It's a god review of a good manager

Mark Ayre says

I wasn't sure, and still am not sure, how I was going to review a non-fiction book.

I'm used to talking about plot and character, but that won't work here. I can hardly blame Clough for weak characters and crappy plotting. He is, after all, restricted, seeing as his life is his life. It's not his fault he didn't have a final showdown with big bad Don Revie before he retired. Although, that would have been good.

But I suppose I can talk about general enjoyment and writing style. So that's what I'm going to do. As usual, making most of it up as I go along.

So prepare for that.

Enjoyment

I enjoyed this book. In a ten point scale, it would have been a seven.

It took me longer than expected - seven days - to finish. But that's, I think, because it's non-fiction

What I mean by this is it is not plotted to be a page-turner. At least, not in the same way. There are no cliffhangers at the end of chapters to drag you along. The story is the story, and so there is not that same tug as with a fiction book to page turn.

Brian's life was his life, and while it was interesting, he will never be able to compete with the lives of Batman and co. Because of his unfortunate drawback of not being fictional.

This, though, I don't think we can hold against him.

Writing Style

Writing style is as important in an autobiography, as it is in fiction. More so, even, on account of it not having cliffhangers etc. to keep you going.

Anyone can ruin an interesting life by writing about it dully.

Brian Clough avoids this.

Part of this may be down to the fact he had John Sadler writing either with him or, more likely, for him.

Although, the choice of Sadler - who worked for the Sun - as writer does make you question the validity of the book. After all, the News is supposed to be factual, and the Sun has never worried about that.

Regardless of who wrote it, the writing style is very Clough. Plain speaking, accented, friendly and littered with exclamation marks. The latter of which being a horrible writing device, but anyway.

The writing works. It improves the flow and gives the book a Clough personality. Even if there are a lot of digressions as he tells his stories.

This, plus an interesting life, makes for an enjoyable read. But it was never going to be as good as the best fiction.

A 3/5 was always the highest it was ever going to go.

Predictions

There are a couple more things I could write about, outside of general enjoyment. One of them, which I won't go into in too much detail, is honesty.

I could talk about how Clough claims never to take a bung, despite many official sorts being sure he did. He could be lying, he could be telling the truth, I don't know, and speculation won't get us anywhere, so let's leave it.

One thing I will discuss is his predictions. Written in 1994, and read 20 plus years later, it is clear Clough would never have made a good precog. Fortune telling, then, would never have been for him.

Though I suspect most fortune tellers know what they are saying is nonsense. However they portray it.

Much like writers of the Sun.

Back to Clough.

There are three bold predictions Clough makes in this book that I knew right away were not right.

First - and he mentions this twice - Clough claims he does not believe any side will beat his Forest team's record of going 42 games unbeaten.

In fact, Arsenal smashed this record in the 03-04 seasons, right before Wenger forgot how to put successful teams together. Or, at the very least, before everyone else learned how to do it better.

Second, he claims of his son, Nigel Clough, that "I don't think he will choose football management, though. I'm certain he won't." Stating the reason ex-footballers become managers is because they are not equipped for other work.

Well, if that's the case, Bri, your son was less equipped for the outside world than you thought. He went into management in 1998, only a few years after this book's publication. He has been doing it now, at the time of writing, for 19 years. Albeit, not as successfully as his father.

The final prediction made is a sad one, and does not fall into the same category as the first two. It involves addiction, something only he can overcome, rather than anyone else.

Being released in 1994, there were already rumours of Brian Clough and alcoholism, and he moves to address them in the epilogue.

He talks about how his family worries about his alcohol intake and admits it is something he will need to look at it. The penultimate paragraph reads:

"Whatever steps are necessary to set my family and friends at ease, I will take them. No-one is going to be able to brand Brian Clough as a drinker who lost control and could not conquer his habit. I will beat it..."

This is a prediction tinged with sadness. Here was one of the most successful football managers of all time. A man never afraid to step up to a challenge. A man who knocked down obstacles throughout his career and who was determined to do so again with alcoholism.

If anything shows the strength and resolve it must take to overcome addiction it is this. Clough would go on to battle addiction for almost a decade after the release of this book. A fight culminating with a liver transplant in January 2003 that saved his life.

What was written at the time as a message of strength to end the book, now adds a dimension of sadness, given the context.

But, whatever happened towards the end of Clough's life, he will always be remembered as one of the greatest football managers of all time.

Not to mention one of the greatest personalities.

Darren Hughes says

Loved it, straight talking, no nonsense.
Don't make them like him anymore.

Trevor Hall says

Excellent account by one of the finest coaches who ever lived. Be warned that this version does not cover the alcohol years and the demise, but is still worthy of a read. Only Clough can give the rationale and the techniques, his beliefs and values, that drove so many of his brilliant decisions.

Michael says

if you like football, you'll like this.

Damien Field says

Riddled with classic Clough stories from arguably the greatest managerial career of all time. A wonderfully stubborn man

Calum says

Written in a relatively colloquial style befitting the straight talking man, it really captured the essence of his career and life. The emphasis is placed where he clearly found the most importance, as it should be. While this left you wanting more information on certain aspects and incidents, it felt like his perspective, his story. There are no long descriptions of matches, even entire seasons pass without mention. It is more about the personal relationships with his family, the boardroom staff, and the players.
Even as a 27 year old, with no memory of him as a manager during my life, it is really a tremendous insight into a fascinating man, and the evolution of the English game.

Ben says

The way I had discovered Brian Clough was actually through pure coincidence; I'd been browsing a variety of YouTube videos of esteemed managers and interviews, when I found one with Clough - A Calendar Special, so it was called. I remember being struck, as soon as Clough opened his mouth, by the way he seemed to control the room with what he said. Once he began to talk, other people listened. The more videos I watched, the more I realised that perhaps the most fascinating aspect about him was his unpredictability;

you never knew what he was going to say next. And you could be sure that in most cases it was something controversial. He was indeed a inimitable character, one which will most likely never be seen in the footballing world again.

Although Clough was terribly brash and conceited, his career as a player, and a manager, stands to be seen. As Muhammed Ali once said, "It's not bragging if you can back it up", and Brian certainly could. He and Peter Taylor achieved unprecedeted success during their managerial partnership at Derby and Nottingham Forest, ensuring that they're both forever engraved in the annals of footballing history.

Clough's autobiography was as good as I'd expected it to be, let's leave it at that. It's difficult to review a non-fiction book, but for anybody who respects Brian Clough and appreciates all the work he put into his forty-year career in football, it's a purchase you won't regret.

Peter Wilson says

brian clough, the manager england never had, and he proved it time and again from derby threw forest via leeds, he entertained and will always been remembered.

Pinko Palest says

Always good for a reread, this is Cloughie at his most controversial. He is of course absolutely appalling about Hillsborough, but I can't bring myself to hold it against him, so wonderful is the rest of it. Clough was above all a great entertainer, and this book proves it
