



## Small Man in a Book

*Rob Brydon*

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## **Small Man in a Book** Rob Brydon

Rob Brydon tells story of his slow ascent to fame and fortune in *Small Man in a Book*. A multi-award-winning actor, writer, comedian and presenter known for his warmth, humour and inspired impressions, Rob Brydon has quickly become one of our very favourite entertainers. But there was a time when it looked like all we'd hear of Rob was his gifted voice. Growing up in South Wales, Rob had a passion for radio and soon the Welsh airwaves resounded to his hearty burr. However, these were followed by years of misadventure and struggle, before, in the TV series *Marion and Geoff* and *Gavin and Stacey*, Rob at last tickled the nation's funny bone. The rest, as they say, is history. Or in his case autobiography. *Small Man in a Book* is Rob Brydon's funny, heartfelt, honest, sometimes sad, but mainly funny, memoir of how a young man from Wales very, very slowly became an overnight success. Rob Brydon was brought up in Wales, where his career began on radio and as a voiceover artist. After a brief stint working for the Home Shopping Network he co-wrote and performed in his breakthrough show, the darkly funny *Human Remains*. He has since starred in the immensely popular *Gavin and Stacey*, Steve Coogan's partner in *The Trip*, and was the host of *Would I Lie to You?* and *The Rob Brydon Show*. He now lives in London with his wife and five children.

## **Small Man in a Book Details**

Date : Published 2011 by Michael Joseph

ISBN : 9780718158095

Author : Rob Brydon

Format : Hardcover 334 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Biography, Autobiography, Humor, Comedy, Memoir, Audiobook

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# From Reader Review Small Man in a Book for online ebook

## Sophie Narey (Bookreview- ahoic) says

Published: 2011

Author: Rob Brydon

Recommended for: fan's of Biographies and Rob Brydon

Rob Brydon is one of my favourite comedians, this book shows us just what a 'normal' man he is. It gives an insight into his life and how he became to be a comedian, we follow him through his life and go on all of his journeys with him. Rob Brydon's humor style comes through in the book as you read it. It is an easy book to find yourself laughing out loud at. It isn't full of swear words or alcohol infuced conversations. It is a nice and easy book to read and is very enjoyable. The way the book is written means that you can hear his voice in your head while you are reading it, as if he was sat in the room telling you about his life. A really wonderful read.

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## Paul Tisserant says

A great read. He has a way with words that renders the mundane interesting. A light and easy read.

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## Sheli says

I had this autobiography as a Christmas present and got into it as soon as I picked it up to read from my "to read" pile. It was like reading something written by a friend as Rob has a brilliant narrative voice.

I really enjoyed reading about his youth and was suprised that he had a fairly privileged upbringing compared to the majority in South Wales. I think it made it better for me as I knew a lot of the places he talked about in the book so it made it more personal for me.

The book itself only tells Rob's life story up until 2000, so pre Gavin and Stacey and basically pre fame! Rob's struggle to make it was pretty interesting, but the last 80 or so pages runned my enjoyment to be honest as he went into too much detail about the writing and making of Human Remains and Marion and Geoff. I understand that these are the shows that made him, but it just wasn't for me.

All in all a good read with an easy going style and packed with humour.

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## Amanda says

Finally got to read Rob Brydon's memoir "Small Man in a Book" and loved it!!! :D I've been trying to read it since I saw "The Trip" movies last year and so glad I was able to. Made me love Rob even more after reading his story and how he stuck with being an actor even though the road to get to stardom took longer than he thought. It was great to read about his childhood, his love for his favorite actors & singers (especially

Bruce Springsteen), and his journey starting out as a radio voice over artist and working his way to a full time actor. Was sad to see the book ended right when his career finally took off with “Marion & Geoff”, “Human Remains”, and “Gavin & Stacy”. Hopefully means there’ll be a 2nd book which I would love to read behind the scenes stories of his later shows and “The Trip” films and all the other movies & shows he’s been in since.

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## **Suzie says**

Obviously a "part 1" as this covers Brydon's childhood and early start up to the year 2000. Interesting in parts with a few laughs, but I haven't seen much of his early work so the stories behind the tv shows and movies are lost on me

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## **Jo says**

I have a love/hate relationship with autobiographies of comedians that I like.

I loved Mr Norton's, I wasn't so fussed about Mr Brand's, I *hated* Ms Brand's and I find myself looking suspiciously at the adverts of Mr McIntyre's book that Goodreads keeps tempting me with.

But still I always pick them up and think "YAY I love this guy/gal, it's going to be sooooo interesting and hilarious to find out more about them".

And it is... in a way.

I do find it interesting how they got to where they are but I want to know what they're like *now*.

Maybe I'm just nosey.

However this autobiography stops at 2000 which is pre-Gavin and Stacey and pre-Every-quiz-show-on-British-television and... well.... *eh*.

So I'm putting this book on hold.

If I pick up this book again (and I hope I do because his childhood and experiences in drama school are fascinating. I especially loved his story about how Ms Zeta Jones watched him in a production of Star Wars) I will definitely be listening to the audiobook because I imagine his delivery would have me in stitches.

I won't lie to you... the main reason why I'm giving up on this is because when I flicked through to look at the pictures of him (A particularly hilarious one of him channelling his inner Rambo, by the way!) I discovered that there was *not* a chapter called "The Truth: What *Really* Happened On That Fishing Trip with Bryn and Jason".

\*Sigh\*

One day we'll know what gravity-defying shenanigans they got up to on that fateful weekend...

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## **Mira says**

This is an enjoyable read, but as somebody else noted, it tends meander in parts so I found myself picking up other books when my interest dipped. I did find a couple of chuckles and enjoyed the Bruce Springsteen mentions.

One of the passages I really enjoyed was surprisingly insightful and I made a note of it, so I thought I'd quote it here for you too!

*"..Hugh Laurie once described how he eventually came to realise that there is not a finite amount of success in the world, and that someone else gaining great success did not necessarily mean that there was now less to go around for everyone else. It's a good thing to remember."*

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## **David Highton says**

a funny and self-deprecating autobiography covering his childhood up to the age of 35, his breakthrough year

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## **Julia Doherty says**

I will be honest with you, I only knew Rob from Gavin & Stacey and I was intrigued to read his autobiography. I had not realised how much he had achieved in his life. The audio version was brilliant as he read it himself and introduced so many voices that I found myself laughing out loud in the car!

I always learn something when I read an autobiography, and this book was no different. Rob could have easily given up and just provided voice-overs for the rest of his career, but his determination and vision kept him going through until success. He also proved that the law of attraction works wonders!

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## **James says**

This book was entertaining, and I enjoyed reading the stories of Rob's life, but it seemed to meander at times and spent a little longer than necessary in his childhood on things that didn't necessarily have much impact on his later life, other than giving him an anecdote to share. I also would have liked something on the past five years, particularly his Gavin & Stacey experiences, and there was nothing there. I guess that will come out in the next volume. Not sure why he'd release a book in 2011 that only ran through the early part of the decade, but that's Rob's call, I suppose. It really hit home reading this (as well as in James Corden's memoir) how difficult it is to break into show business. He certainly overcame some long odds, though it was a long road.

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## **Nick Lawrence says**

My memory tells me that I first saw Rob Brydon on QI (however, this is not the case apparently as I shall explain below). I thought he was funny, and latterly enjoyed his show 'The Trip' with Steve Coogan. His autobiography focuses on his pre-fame days. He recalls growing up in Baglan, Wales, and his early attempts at performing, along with his accident prone mishaps. His childhood memories include his father's temperamental speed boat, summers at Lawrenny and unrequited teenage loves , something we can all relate I'm sure (the unrequited loves, not our father's speedboat or summers at Lawrenny). He also describes the hard work and disappointments of his early professional life including trying to be taken seriously as an actor (apprently he was in First Knight starring Sean Connery and Richard Gere, which I have seen but don't remember seeing him in it), and his early attempts at writing and stand-up routines. Although confident in his abilities, he is self-deprecating, as only the British can be. In my head whilst reading, I could hear his soft Welsh accent reading the words aloud to me which made reading about his life all the more interesting and enjoyable.

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## **Christine Blachford says**

Rob Brydon's autobiography is deliberately set in the period from birth to just as he broke through and become a household name. I admire that, considering the world of autobiographies can be about just spilling the beans on your rich and famous friends.

However, it does linger a little too long on childhood, for my tastes, particularly as Brydon himself admits he's remembering them through rose-tinted spectacles. Thankfully it's all done with humour, but I found the middle section about trying to break through into acting far more interesting.

It was also interesting to see how the same people come dipping in and out of his life - Ruth Jones, Julia Davis and James Corden, helping each other and working together to make comedy a better place! I found it interesting to read about the voiceover process, and how hard it was to find an agent to get out of that world into acting instead, although I must admit it was disappointing when the story ends on a tantalising glimpse of Gavin and Stacey.

I don't want gory details, but love reading how things are made, what efforts go into creating the wonderful things we, as fans, get to consume. Thankfully the latter portion of the book has that in spades, making up for the slightly slow start to proceedings.

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## **Orinoco Womble (tidy bag and all) says**

My only awareness of Rob Brydon until I saw this book was as a guest presenter on "Have I Got News For You". Indeed there was something vaguely familiar...but more about that later, as Brydon is so fond of remarking in his book.

I enjoyed the first part where he relates his childhood/schooldays. The text doesn't seem ghostwritten, as so many UK Celeb Bios are--all of which share a particular writing style, not evident in this book. However, the writing is much more engaging in the first half of the book; when he begins to relate his professional adventures, the narration somehow begins to drag. Perhaps this is in part because of his self-confessed ineptitude in pursuing his dream, and then in selling himself. After pages of expatiation on his dream to act,

to do standup, to be in front of an audience, he tells of jettisoning his drama-school training halfway through his course...for a career in BBC Radio. After seven years or so of this, he decides to try the club circuit and work as a "warmup artiste" for other comedy shows, but admits that he really didn't bother to come up with any material of his own. There was evidently no real drive to create a persona or work out "an act"--he just seemed to be waiting around for the world to discover how wonderful and funny he was in himself. Well, apparently that's where it stayed--in himself. He can't imagine why the bit parts he was offered in movies were, by his own admission, so badly done. Could it have helped if he'd actually learned to act in the school he so merrily left all those years before?

Bored with his inability to get "discovered" (for doing what, exactly?), Brydon then plumps for the steady work and money of voiceovers. That's where he was vaguely (so vaguely) familiar from--I do tend to recognise people by their voices, having synesthesia and very little visual memory. (I actually had a portrait photo taken of my husband, as I realise that if he passes on before I do, within a month I will be totally unable to recall his features, and we've been married over 30 years. But I digress, as I am wont to do). Brydon repeatedly states in the book that while he "desperately" wanted to cross over into acting on films or TV, he was "somehow" unable to put together the all-important video demos, attend more than a few auditions, or put himself round those who might offer him work--a far cry from the go-getting story of many successful comics. The further I read, the more frustrated I became; Rob Brydon gives the impression that he simply sat round waiting for someone to hand him a big juicy career on a platter.

Strangely, when that "big" break finally came (10 *ten-minute long* "bits" slotted in to round out an hour of BBC programming is apparently success--to him), Brydon seems to lose interest in his own story, and the style shows it. (I'm not surprised; either the three series he did land were funnier on film than in the telling, or they were as they seemed to me in the reading--not funny at all.) The successful years from 2001 to the present are glossed over at lightening speed in less than ten pages, leaving me grinding my teeth in frustration. Not only do we get precious little insight into his work and technique (does he have any?), but Brydon chooses to end with the old gimmick, "Fast forward from 2001 to the present" or words to that effect. It was almost as if someone else had written the final third of the book. Perhaps someone else wrote the engaging section, leaving Brydon to fill in the end. In any case, the story just sort of peters out, leaving him eating fish and chips poolside in Australia while working on a project mentioned only in passing.

Two stars for a frustrating read.

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## **Ken says**

A highly enjoyable look at the Welsh comedians childhood and early attempts to break into show business. The book mainly covers he's early career as a voice actor before he's big break with Marion and Geoff.

It's just a fun light read, I would definitely buy a follow up covering the rest of he's career.

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## **Jim says**

Phew, at last an autobiography that paints a picture of what seems to be a fairly normal bloke. No tearful, alcohol-fuelled impeachments of a depersonalised God (Frank Skinner), no family child molestations (Billy Connolly), no scuzzy deflowerings by prostitutes (Frank Skinner again). You'd think it would be boring, but surprisingly it's not. Another surprising thing is that I picked this up with hardly a knowledge or

preconception about Brydon. I've rarely watched or seen any of his stuff on telly and what I have seen was far from laugh out loud funny. Wry, observational humour, more like, which is fine by me if I was to find such repeated in the book. Well, it was and it wasn't. It must be difficult to write something like this - you try sitting down to write a tasteful reprise of how (and to whom) you lost your virginity, knowing that the chances are the other half in the liaison will read it too. Providing they can read of course. Or you're Frank Skinner, who seemingly could write a book about it. As Brydon sometimes points out though, attention and fame were for him a calling that he couldn't not follow. People are pulled along in the slipstream when the autobiography gets written, and I had the feeling that Brydon was often cognisant of the fact that they'd probably rather not be.

For me, it's the pre-fame and fortune years that are the interesting ones before celebrity hits, whether that applies to a comedian, actor, politician, footballer, whatever. The hungry years, which Neil Sedaka wrote he missed, when their view of the world wasn't warped by who they have to be when in public persona. Brydon stops writing in this book when fame begins to loom large in his life and I wondered if he's still trying to come to terms with it? Maybe it's easier to write about when you could still pretend you led a normal life and that chatting to, say, Bruce Springsteen, didn't leave you with the feeling you have more talent in your little finger. Brydon seems to be at pains to show just how normal a guy he was, and hopefully still is, while the rest of us wonder how the hell Jimmy Carr was able to avoid paying tax on an income of over £8m. If Carr's worth that, what's Brydon worth, given the former is, at best, mildly entertaining and/or famous? So, good try at convincing us you're normal, Rob. But you're not.

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