

The End of the Golden Weather

New Zealand : 1991 : dir. Ian Mune : : 99 min
 prod: : scr: Bruce Mason & Ian Mune : dir.ph.:
Stephen Fulford; David Taylor

Stephen Papps; Paul Gittins; Gabrielle Hammond; Alexandra Marshall; Ray Henwood; Steve McDowell; Alice Fraser; Bill Johnson; Christian Teutenberg; Alistair Douglas; Greg Johnson; Alison Bruce; Francie Gray; Andrea Kelland; Andrew Binns; Ross McKellar; Lucy Lawless; Kate Miles; Francis Bell; Tricia Phillips; Alistair Browning; David Telford; Shirley Duke; Robert Horwood; Georgina Monro; Timothy Raby; Leila Ford; Melissa Copp; Henry Dewey; David Fitchew; Christine McLay; Nicholas Pegg; Blessing Ross; Dorothy Tomlinson; Lucy White; Peter Stevens; Angus Cooper; Geoff Ross; Bob Harvey; Robert Hammond; Steve Westlake; Paul Thompson; Fraser Harvey; Rupert Harvey

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Dad tries to warn Geoff against encouraging a fool in his foolishness.

Source: Radio Times

CVMC video retail/rental website review:

"A twelve year old boy (Stephen Fulford) who finds it easy to get lost in fantasy befriends a young man who is referred to as a "loon" and believes he is bound to become an Olympic athlete, despite a physique which suggests otherwise. When the locals decide to stage a race to belittle the fellow, our young hero attempts to assist his pal..., but quickly finds himself up against many obstacles, dad and little brother (David Taylor) included. A good, solid family film; part of the *WonderWorks* series.

Rated NR: adult themes [sic]; violence; brief/mild profanity

Categories: Boy Films, Little to Preteen, Coming-of-Age, Drama."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

“ It was a time when anything seemed possible – even miracles ”



A well-chosen face for a 1930s setting, but the film's sensibilities are all too plainly those of the decade in which it was made.

Source: Boy Actors of the World website

Radio Times reviews:

“A first chance to see this oddity from New Zealand, which has achieved cult status for some, but is too eccentric for others. Director Ian Mune and playwright Bruce Mason adapted Mason's one-man show set in the 1930s about the imaginary world of a 12-year-old boy (Stephen Fulford), who takes up with a gawky stranger (played by the angular Stephen Papps) and encourages him in his aim to become an Olympic athlete. The gaggle of grotesques on parade lacks a single redeeming feature; meanwhile, the age gap between the adolescent boy and his father (Paul Gittins) widens to a predictable chasm as the adult world impinges on the youngster's fantasies. But, unlike the proverbial curate's egg, this family drama really is good in parts, and, in its unusual perspectives on childhood, could be compared with fellow New Zealander Vincent Ward's curious **“THE NAVIGATOR: A MEDIEVAL ODYSSEY”**, shown on BBC1 last year. *** ”

“Family drama about a boy growing up in thirties New Zealand, starring Stephen Fulford. Geoff Crome is a lonely 12-year old boy with his own imaginary world and a burning ambition to become a writer. One summer he meets Firpo, a strange, skinny, magical character who dreams of winning an Olympic race and, despite warnings from Geoff's father, the two become friends. Wanting so much to believe in Firpo's impossible dream, Geoff sets himself against his family and friends. *** ”

“A boy's friendship with a man with learning difficulties [sic].”

“Story of an unlikely friendship.” [how so, “unlikely”?]

“Drama from New Zealand about the forbidden friendship between a 12-year old boy and a mentally-retarded man named Firpo. Firpo's boasts about his sporting prowess lead the locals to challenge him to a race on the beach, with tragic consequences.”

The Sunday Times notes:

“A boy strikes up a friendship with a mentally handicapped man.”

“A 12-year old boy makes friends with a handicapped man who dreams of Olympic glory.”

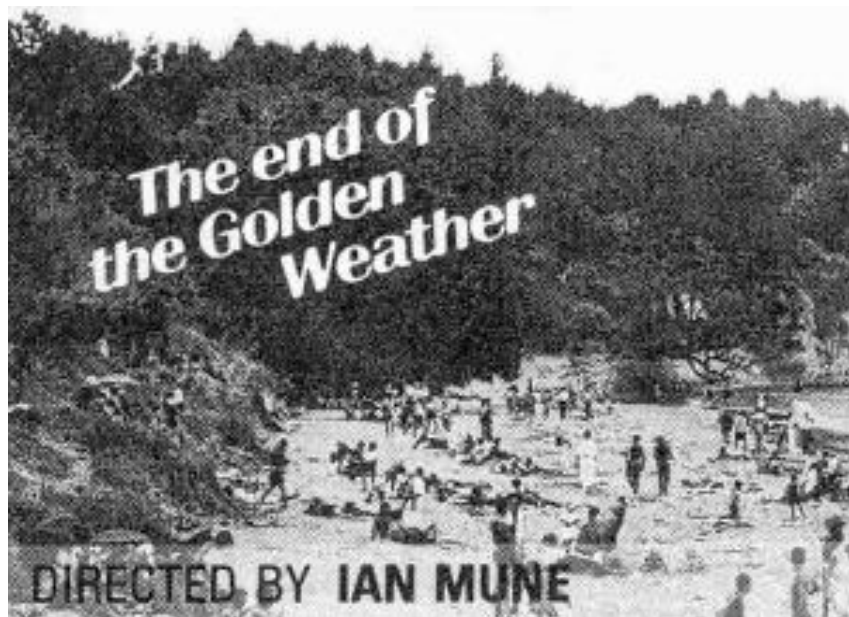
“A 12-year old boy forges an unlikely friendship with a mentally handicapped man.”

The Guardian note:

“New Zealand-set saga of the evolving relationship between a bored, lonely schoolboy and a retarded youth.”

The Daily Mirror note:

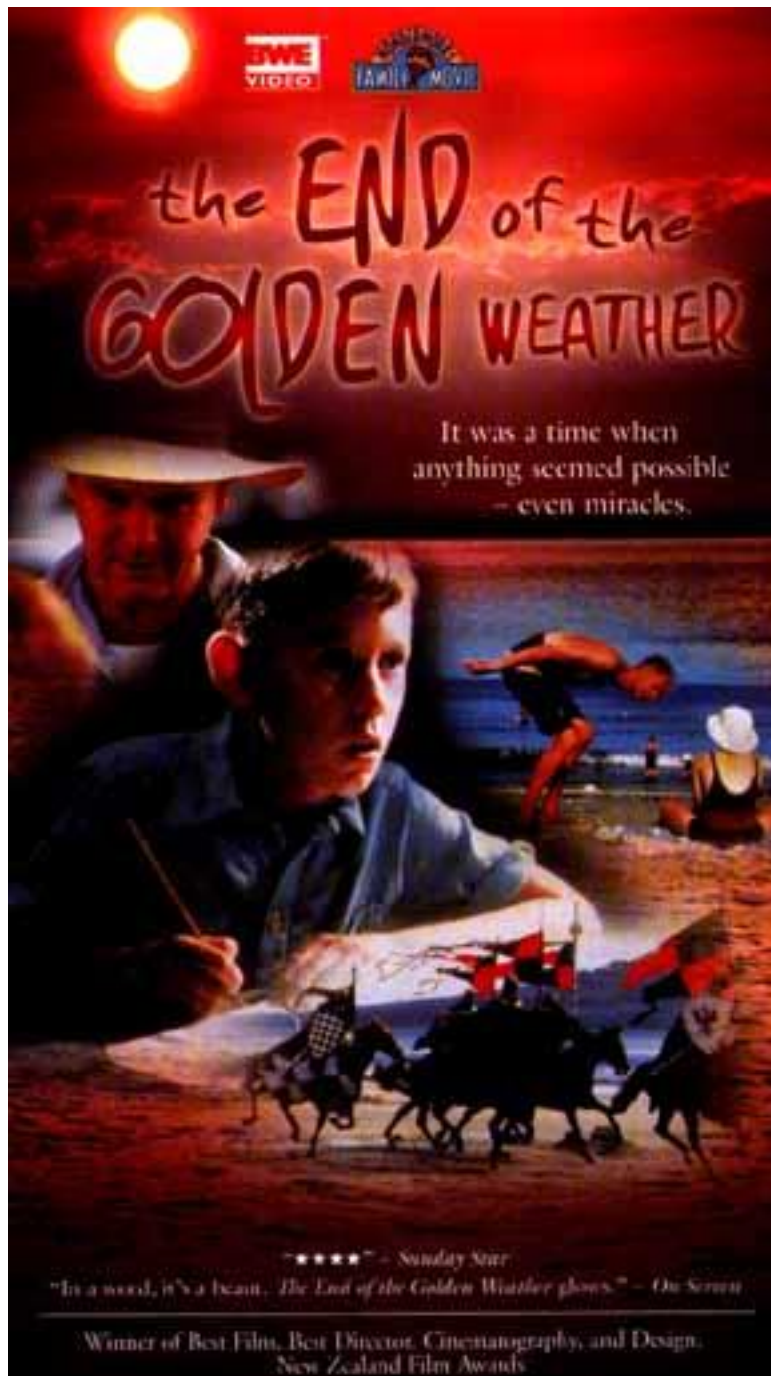
“A boy befriends a retarded man. Doleful little drama from New Zealand. ** ”



Source: *International Film Guide*

The plotline seemed promising, but the result is a mess, the central figure a mute observation post and the character of Firpo simply annoying. Whether he's mentally retarded is not altogether clear, as I recall, but he's certainly an unworldly braggart, mocked and derided by the community. In the 1930s people "*with learning difficulties*" could still find themselves in the status of village idiot, as much pilloried as sympathised with. Essentially this is a bullying story, but it's an adult who's being bullied, and the boy merely a hapless onlooker who, by gently encouraging the man, inadvertently goads the community into taking him down a peg. Nothing else is known of Stephen Fulford or David Taylor.

See subject index under [AUSTRALASIA](#), THE CHILD AS PASSIVE SPECTATOR, DEPRESSION ERA (1930s settings), DISABLED / HANDICAPPED, [SPECIAL FRIENDSHIPS](#) and SPORT.



Source: CVMC website