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Developed & Produced with the assistance of





BEYOND THE BACKYARD

**In 2004 an unknown cricket team went to India in search of
one last glorious innings.
They made history in the Kingdom of Bhutan.**

A film by Josh Moore & Duncan Imberger.

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

In 2004 an unknown cricket team went to India in search of one last glorious innings. They made history in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Like so many kids, they once dreamt they'd be famous cricketers, representing their country. But funnily enough, things haven't turned out that way.

So 20 years later, on the cusp of sporting oblivion, they return to the game they loved as boys and form The Guild Cricket Club – former backyard heroes assembled on the strength of their collective imagination.

Building to an historic showdown in the Kingdom of Bhutan, Beyond the Backyard is the story of a bold quest for a little sporting glory.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Beyond the Backyard follows a group of grown men who create a cricket team in order to revisit some childhood dreams.

Like so many kids, they once dreamt they'd be famous cricketers, representing their country. But funnily enough, things haven't turned out that way.

So 20 years later, on the cusp of sporting oblivion, they return to the game they loved as boys and form The Guild Cricket Club - 18 former backyard heroes assembled on the strength of their imagination more than natural ability.

Their quest is One Last Glorious Innings. All they need to do is play with the same fearless instinct they possessed as kids.

The team sets its sights on India, where cricket's an unparalleled national obsession, and where they're convinced anything's possible.

They have 3 weeks to realise their dreams, and a lot of ground to cover. First stop: the southern city of Mysore.

Lloyd Elliott epitomises the character of the team. He hasn't played cricket since the Templestowe u/14s. Likewise, Cameron Paterson hasn't played since "tonking" 30 not out in his last game for the year 10 Cs.

As the team travels across the country, entangled in the brilliant rhythm of India, there *are* moments when anything seems possible. But a run of injuries, dietary problems and failing imaginations results in some heavy losses, leaving the players to confront the fact they may be kidding themselves.

However, an unexpected invitation to venture beyond India, to Bhutan, a mysterious Himalayan kingdom, revives their quest and restores their gallant sense of destiny.

Archery, not cricket, is the national obsession in Bhutan. But following the introduction of television – and cricket telecasts – in 1999, the popularity of cricket has grown rapidly.

Bhutan throws down a challenge: inviting The Guild to the Kingdom to take on their emerging national side, for what will be the first-ever "international" match on Bhutanese soil.

With school children, passing monks and local sorcerers all swept up in the cricket fever, the scene is set for an historic showdown.

The players' dreams and aspirations suddenly hang in the balance.

It doesn't get any better than this!

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Letters were sent to a list of long-retired backyard cricketers, notifying them they were under consideration for one last crack at sporting glory. To confirm their interest, they had to respond in writing describing their finest hour in the whites, in no more than 1100 words. Those that responded formed The Guild Cricket Club.

The following are excerpts from some of the written submissions.

I scored 37 not out against Mitcham back in the under 14s for Templestowe Cricket Club. The standard number of runs for retirement in under 14 cricket was 35, so off I went back to the pavilion. Retired, Not Out. The tail collapsed and I went back out to bat at last drop. "Look out" the fielders said "here comes the Big Guy" ... it was my proudest moment.

Lloyd Elliott

During that summer I'd spend every spare moment playing cricket. I'd ride the mile long dirt road on my BMX to get to school early to play and we'd continue the match through recess, lunch and little play. In those days I thought Greg Matthews was pretty flash. He was making runs, taking wickets and having a great time on the field. So was I.

Adam Howard

A stinking hot day at the North Castlemaine Cricket Ground in 1987: Brownie Snr tosses one up, trying to draw a false lofted shot. But the batsman takes a step to leg, trying to late cut. Perhaps he is conscious that the only fielder in that zone is a skinny little 11 year old in a hat two sizes too large and with white zinc from ear to ear. The catch: "like Bobby Bloody Simpson".

Luke Brown

As a young fella I thought there were better things to be doing on a Saturday than standing around half asleep in the field all day. Sure it was fun tonking my way to 30 each week (forced retirement at 30) but it did take a big slice out of the best day of the week, otherwise reserved for sports such as throwing plums at cars and pinching porn mags etc.

Cameron Paterson

For the year preceding the tour, the team trained and trained, and - by necessity - trained some more.

The touring party consisted of 15 players, 1 photographer/player (seanizzard.com) and 2 filmmakers (Josh Moore and Sunny Wilding).

There was one token Pom (Spike Marchant), one Sydneysider (Sean Izzard) and one bloke who'd been living large in Los Angeles for 3 years. The rest came from Melbourne.

The Guild Cricket Club's tour of India and Bhutan took place in October and November 2004.

The team visited Mysore (where they faced-up to off former Indian Fast Bowler Javagal Srinath), Delhi, Agra, Varanasi, Calcutta, Mumbai & Bhutan.

Tucked between India and China at the eastern end of the Himalayan chain, Bhutan is the sole surviving Buddhist state in the region. An absolute monarchy since 1907, it is governed by a very popular King, married to four beautiful sisters.

Archery is the national sporting obsession in Bhutan. Contests usually occur between villages and the rivalry is fierce. But following the introduction of television, and international cricket telecasts, in 1999, the popularity of cricket has grown rapidly. A developing infrastructure (the BCCB) now boasts young development squads.

The Bhutanese cricket team is drawn from its senior development squad. Their most talked about player is the charismatic wicket-keeper/batsman Thinlay Wangchuk, a member of the Royal Family. The gangly fast bowler is known as The Bhutan Bullet.

The historic game was played on Monday 1 November 2004. The trophy was named in honour of the King (The Chhoetse Penlop Trophy) and the match was played at Changlimithang Stadium, once the scene of a famous and bloody battle.

There's a prevailing holistic philosophy in Bhutan, encapsulated in the concept of Gross National Happiness. This life-affirming approach places its people's spiritual needs at the centre of all development, and was manifestly evident in the way the country's first-generation cricketers played the game.

In February 2005, three months after The Guild's visit, Bhutan travelled to Thailand to compete in the Emerging Nations Cup, where they finished in third place.

The absence of a turf pitch in Bhutan remains the biggest obstacle to the further development of cricket there. Boasting the most mountainous terrain in the world, less than 4% of the country is flat.

Following their history-making tour, the members of The Guild Cricket Club returned home to their former lives as ordinary blokes. One scored a speaking role in a smash-hit Bollywood feature film, produced in Melbourne.

THE MAKING OF BEYOND THE BACKYARD

As first time filmmakers, India presented a wonderfully tricky training ground. Getting straight answers was almost impossible, and days refused to go to plan. The relentless touring schedule also meant we were rarely able to return to anything for a second take. Everything was done on the run.

India being such a visual assault on the senses, we suffered a permanent nagging anxiety that we really needed 10 cameras to truly capture everything we were seeing and experiencing.

Getting on and off packed trains with all the camera equipment, and 16 cricket kits, was one of many experience-defining challenges.

One particularly memorable sequence not included in the final cut was the mad search for a soothsayer in the holy city of Varanasi. Being a low point in the journey we set out to seek some spiritual guidance for the team. Seriously fatigued, stinking hot and pressed for time, we raced through laneways, lugging a tonne of gear, looking for the wisest man we could find.

Having passed on one who offered Goldie Hawn as a reference, we settled for another who couldn't comprehend that we were NOT the Australian cricket team. He offered us the following insight: "You see, about destiny I could say that all the planets move in your favour, you are playing very good, you need good confidence, you need hope and good playing also. Everything in your hand, but you need better feeling, better confidence, better will-power. Time is coming, I can say this".

When the Pakistani prime minister and his entourage suddenly commandeered some of our seats on the way out of Bhutan, the film crew became expendable, and were left behind to fend for themselves.

FILMMAKERS' PERSONAL STATEMENTS

I became obsessed with the idea of forming a cricket team to go to India. Although I hadn't played the game for many years, I still loved cricket, and always thought I'd return to it someday. A one-off journey to India seemed like the perfect solution. However, it was only after the concept received such a positive response (from those who became The Guild Cricket Club) and tour preparations were underway that the idea of documenting the journey arose, and Josh became involved. Thereafter our wonderful characters led the way and made the story what it is. Each of them had slightly different motivations for being involved, but all of them bought into the possibility of one last glorious innings. Further, they helped us to tell a story that went beyond just the journey and the cricket, and into the universal territory of childhood dreams and memories.

As a first time filmmaker, *Beyond the Backyard* has been an incredibly rewarding learning curve. I loved pulling it all together before the tour, nearly expired during the 3 and a half weeks we were away in India and Bhutan, and then enjoyed the process of finding and refining the story most of all.

Duncan Imberger
Writer & Producer

When Duncan first told me of his plan to take a group of former backyard heroes on a cricketing mission to India, I was intrigued. As many have done, I once dreamt I'd play cricket for Australia, and had a long history of backyard imaginings. I remembered hot evenings of bashing a ball around in one of mum's old stockings, dreaming of playing match-winning innings in far off lands.

The more I learned about the tour, and of the spirit in which it had evolved, the more I realised what a unique story I had stumbled upon. I knew I had no choice but to follow The Guild Cricket Club on its journey. Had I known what lay ahead, however, I may have reconsidered. Travel in India is a challenge at the best of times, filming in India is that challenge magnified tenfold. Thankfully the journey, the characters - and they are all characters - Sunny Wilding (Cinematographer), and everyone else who helped us on our return, made *Beyond the Backyard* everything I had hoped it would be.

Josh Moore
Director & Producer

CAST & CREATIVE PERSONNEL

Starring

Luke Brown
Lloyd Elliott
Ravi Henderson
Adam Howard
Duncan Imberger
Sean Izzard
Andrew Kokinos
Spike Marchant
Dan May
Antony Morell
Peter McDonald
Peter Paltoglou
Cameron Paterson
Damien Power
Ross Wildes
Dale Wood

Writer/Producer: Duncan Imberger

Duncan has a background in both the law and arts management/marketing, having been Media Relations Manager at The Australian Ballet for four years. More recently he was commissioning editor for Aurora magazine in Sydney. He currently works as a writer and producer.

Director/Producer: Josh Moore

Josh got his break in the film industry in 1995, working on the Oscar winning feature film Shine. For the next 7 years he spent most of his time on the sets of films, TV series and commercials all around Australia. In 2002 began a three-year spell at Great Southern Films, where he worked as a director's assistant and editor. Since 2004 he's been balancing an emerging directing career with other on set & production work.

Cinematographer: Sunny Wilding

Sunny has been working in the camera department in the film industry for over 10 years. He has extensive experience in all kinds of production, from documentary to music video, drama and commercials. Cinematography and working creatively as part of a team are his passion and dedication. He has worked in Australia and internationally.

Editor:	Steve Robinson (ABC TV)
Executive Producer:	Jason Byrne (Wasabi Pictures)
Photographer:	Sean Izzard (seanizzard.com)
Composer:	Tamil Rogeon
Audio Post Production:	Mark Street (ABC TV)