

SECTION 10

ARUNDEL CASTLE CRICKET FOUNDATION



Twenty two years since its formation, it's as well to consider both the purpose and progress of The Arundel Castle Cricket Foundation. Ten years before the England and Wales Cricket Board replaced the Test and County Cricket Board and National Cricket Association and, indeed, 17 years before The Chance to Shine initiative gave birth to greater cricketing activity in schools, a cricket project based at Arundel Castle was established in 1986.

In the first place this came as a response to a decline in cricketing activity in Primary and Secondary schools. There were several reasons for this: teachers' industrial action put paid to after-school activities; playing fields throughout the country were progressively being sold off for development, a trend which hasn't diminished; Government paid lip-service to sport and its important impact upon social and physical health; competition within some local authorities was frowned upon; and health and safety issues were already being exploited and deprived the young of the opportunities they needed for their development.

The Foundation at Arundel was formed as a response to this depressing state of affairs. We have concentrated our energy upon the many young people whose opportunities are scarce – the inner cities and areas of social deprivation being an example. We have tried to use cricket and its diverse skills to improve their lives and enhance their education. More than 250,000 children have now benefited from the Arundel experience which has included trips to the Castle and seaside by way of an alternative to the cricket. London youngsters have been at the forefront of our plans since the outset. More recently we have immersed ourselves in the challenge of helping and encouraging children and teenagers with disabilities, both physical and mental. Schools for those in need of special care have visited us regularly since 2000. From their trips to Arundel, they have become more confident and been given the chance to improve their social skills and co-ordination as well. The blind and partially-sighted and the deaf visit us often and are highly motivated by the combination of cricketing and coaching skills. Indeed, sometimes the cricket takes a backseat and it is simply the day out at Arundel in a new environment that moves to the centre of the stage.

So the work of the Foundation is something which I believe complements Cricket Board activities throughout the country and the important work of Chance to Shine. Ours is a unique initiative that transcends county borders and political boundaries. It is entirely self-funding. That gives us the essential independence we require. With an outstanding cricket ground and indoor school tucked away behind the pavilion, we have the resources to make an important impact upon young people whose cards are not always stacked in their favour.

JOHN BARCLAY

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