

The hardest thing we have ever done!

It was the toughest thing they had ever done – but also the most rewarding.

Premiership footballers Linvoy Primus and Darren Moore joined Christians from around Portsmouth for a sponsored trek along the Great Wall of China with the charity Faith and Football.

Paul Hickman, a Reader from Rowlands Castle, and Graham Farr, from St Simon's, Southsea, were also among the team who raised more than £50,000 for vulnerable children.

It meant gruelling ascents to the wall itself on dangerous terrain, climbing up to 6,000ft on steep, crumbling sections of the 15th cen-

tury wall, and camping out each night.

"It really was very tough – one of the most gruelling things I've done in my life," said Paul. "The fact that I got blisters on my hands from climbing shows what it was like.

"There was one part called the Angel Tower where we had to edge along a 40cm-wide rock ledge with 3,000ft drops on each side. We also had to cross Indiana Jones-style rope bridges. Graham Farr suffers from vertigo, so he did amazingly well to do it.

"We also met an ex-patriot who is a West Brom fan. He couldn't believe he'd met Darren Moore on the wall."

The team took presents to give

to locals when they descended into the villages to sleep. They also played a surreal game of football on some scrubland – Linvoy Primus's 'Pompey' side and Darren Moore's 'West Brom' side drew 4-4.

Linvoy said: "It was much harder and more physically challenging than we could ever have imagined. Despite our previous gym work and long training walks, nothing

could have prepared us for walking on that dangerous and rugged terrain.

"But it was great to think that all those steps took us nearer to helping give some of the most desperate and vulnerable children in Africa and India a chance in life".

The two projects that will benefit from the cash are a school in Nigeria that works with children who were caught in child labour, prostitution or are disabled, and a

new medical centre, school and orphanage in India.

The projects are part of the Faith in Football vision. The charity was launched in 2002 by former Pompey player Mick Mellows.

Most of its work involves running six-a-side football leagues in inner-city Portsmouth, where children experience positive Christian role models. For more information or to contribute to the fund, see: www.chinachallenge.org




Paul Hickman (left) with Linvoy Primus on the Great Wall of China

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Life as a lollipop lady

KENNETH'S croziers are no longer the only sticks in the house - there is a new kid on the block which is fluorescent yellow, black and red!

Since last October I have been the lollipop lady on the pedestrian crossing just outside our house. I am having such fun!

I cannot believe how lucky I am to have a job around which I can fit my life. Should I have 35 coming for supper, I can still pop out and do my shifts between making puddings.

I love the contact with the children. I know their names, their siblings, their grannies and their dogs. I get shown wobbly teeth, new shoes and poorly fingers.

I have been given conkers, dandelions, drawings and someone's last Rolo. In fact I am busy perfecting the ten-second party.

I greet hundreds of adults as they cross; I wave at policemen, traffic wardens and bus drivers and feel so much more part of the local community

the last word

by Sarah Stevenson
the bishop's wife

than ever I did. It is not always easy to see inside the cars but dog collars shine out like beacons.

One adjustment I have to make is that when chatting on the pavement my attention has to waver. I feel like one of those terrible people at parties who is always looking over your shoulder to see who else is around.

I am always careful before I step out in the middle of the road, but the most dangerous thing is my lollipop. In repose it is held upside down but I have to bring up the head before walking into the road.

Those standing nearby are in danger of being felled by five feet of black and yellow metal. The winter hat is also a



personal hazard; a cross between a baseball cap and a képi of the French foreign legion, it is hardly a fashion statement but it does its job in the freezing cold (writing in the warmth it is difficult to remember how cold it was. And when it rains so hard that you get water in your pockets...!).

So wave at me or hoot your horn as you pass, and if you want to lollipop yourself, do ring your local authority!