

The heart of the matter

How many people would run or walk 1,000km in a year to raise money for children born with a heart condition, and undertake that challenge just a few weeks after leading a group of adults born with a heart condition on a 68 mile sponsored walk down the Thames Path?

Paul Willgoss, a civil servant, hasn't let his own heart condition stand in his way. In the past eight years he's led groups which have raised over £10,000 in events such as walking across Hadrian's Wall and climbing Mount Snowdon.

He's motivated "to give something back" to The Grown Up Congenital Hearts Association (GUCH) and The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) – organisations that have helped him and also given people the opportunity to meet others in similar circumstances.

And Paul is proving a role model to others. "One of my proudest moments was when a little girl, who has the same heart condition as me, donated her pocket money," says Paul. "She'd been told by her teacher that people like us couldn't do sport and she was happy she could tell her teacher that 'an old man with my heart runs and runs, and I want to too.' It's moments like this that makes it all worthwhile".

