

“Living with a Disability for the Day”



My perspective of being on a mobility scooter for Disabled Access Day.

I don't think you can think about what obstacles there are until you see them first-hand. Firstly, trying to get through a door without getting off your seat takes a big stretch to reach the handle, then reversing while holding onto the handle and throwing it backwards while trying to get through before the door shuts on you. I have long arms and am quite agile, and I don't know that many people could manage this manoeuvre without assistance or having to get off their scooter.

Once outside it takes a keen eye to spot the dropped kerbs or sometimes lack thereof, and again quite a stretch to reach the button for the crossings.

Due to the size of the scooter I was unable to take it on any busses, I was unsure whether a taxi would take it so decided against that.

Trying to set up the table for Disabled Access Day was a bit of a challenge, trying to get close enough to put everything out and then manoeuvre myself into a position to assist anyone who approached the stand.

I went for coffee at a local café, this was around one o'clock and so was very busy. I had to leave the scooter outside as there were no tables free downstairs, I realise that not everyone would be fortunate enough to be able to get off the scooter like I was. There is lift access to the main seating area and also to the floor below which is where the toilets are located. The manager wasn't sure if the lift would be able to take a scooter and even if it was there would be no chance I would have been able to navigate the busy café without taking most of the tables with me.

It made me realise that every day would have to be planned out, everything takes a bit longer and there are many places I would not even attempt to get into. I could feel every bit of cold that I would usually not notice with walking around. I also got caught in some showery weather and that was slightly unpleasant and I was a bit concerned about the scooter getting wet.

I don't think I realised what a challenge it would be, I was determined not to get off my seat for anything but unfortunately there were situations where I had no choice.

Although I think I had the better deal than Gillian in her manual wheelchair and Sorrell on her crutches, I'm very thankful that I have full use of my legs and don't have to rely on this method to get me around every day.