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Fitzwilliam Museum: Take a Walk in My Shoes

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Take a Walk in My Shoes: reflections to myself

This research project explored experiences of how it feels to 'be' in the Museum and how the experiences of people affected by non-visible disabilities can be used to inform and support health and wellbeing in the Museum. We've created this postcard blog series as a way of sharing our experiences with you - in each series we reflect on different aspects of being in the museum, and share our thoughts as postcards to a friend.

Emily, Georgie, Jo, Alex, and Dale

The research project was facilitated by Dr Emily Bradfield (Practitioner Researcher).



This series includes our reflections to ourselves on participating in the research project.

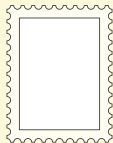


Take a Walk in My Shoes: reflections to myself

When I started planning this research project in late 2023, I had no idea where the journey would lead. The goal was simple: to put yourself in someone else's shoes! Working with adults with non-visible disabilities, we stepped into the unseen, challenged assumptions, and discovered what a museum feels like from different perspectives.

Emily

Image: stone lions outside the Fitzwilliam Museum.



Take a Walk in My Shoes explored multi-sensory experiences of being 'in' the museum

FLOOR

1

WILLIAM BLAKE'S
UNIVERSE

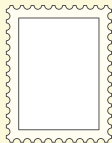


Take a Walk in My Shoes: reflections to myself

As I embarked on this research with Emily, I entered the Fitzwilliam for the first time in my wheelchair. As someone with M.E. and, in this instance in my wheelchair, it was interesting to reflect and relay my observations of viewing the exhibits and being in the museum. I didn't encounter anything unexpected to me, but it was interesting to focus on the positives and negatives of my experience through conversation.

Jo

Image: lift door showing William Blake exhibit on doors.



Take a Walk in My Shoes was a research project which took place from March to October 2024.



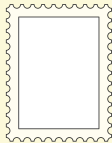
Take a Walk in My Shoes: reflections to myself

Hey you, I know you've been having a tough time, PTSD is making the things you used to love doing feel really scary right now. I went to the Fitzwilliam Museum today and just for a moment I got engrossed in the ceramics collection. Everything else in the world stopped. It was like I could exhale. I know you'll be able to get back there soon too, and you'll find those little details, like the Minoan figurines, and carved Mediterranean pots, and you'll feel a bit more at ease again. I'm proud of you x

p.s. put your headphones on the first time you go,
it makes it a lot easier!

Georgie

Image: display case of ceramics.



Take a Walk in My
Shoes was funded by
the Fitzwilliam Museum
Marlay Group and HEIF.

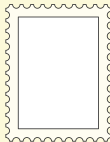


Take a Walk in My Shoes: reflections to myself

I feel the wheelchair access is at a disconnect with the grand entrance and multiple steps, as I must enter through the anonymous façade with corridor entry. Although this is juxtaposed as the friendly faces greet me! In my wheelchair, I am directed to the right past a 'corporate' open-plan gift shop and café beside it. Then discover opposite closed doors that open on to flowing magical beauty of cabinets full of curiosities that surround a central expansive glass case overseen by 'Seated Bodhisattva' - she appears to calmly greet me!

Dale

Image: view of Courtyard Entrance at the Fitzwilliam Museum.



Take a Walk in My Shoes explored experiences of how it feels to 'be' in the Museum.

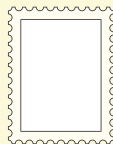


Take a Walk in My Shoes: reflections to myself

Four years ago, you couldn't stand outside of the Museum by yourself. Because of your PTSD, it was scary, exposing, and overwhelming to be alone in such a public place. And last week you sat outside on a bench for a whole hour, enjoying the feel of the grass and the sun on your face. Taking that walk with Emily was a reminder of how space changes over time and how very much has changed! It's not so easy to stop and be still, less so to stop and be still and think. But learning the pathways of the Museum: its layout, its collection, its people, has been a revelation. Stopping in the Museum was a brave thing to do and now, it is a reminder of how far you've come.

Alex

Image: looking into galleries 24 and 25 at the Fitz.



Take a Walk in My Shoes involved adults affected by non-visible disabilities in walking interviews.