

Name	Sarah
Age	21-30
Position	Archaeologist, Professional Body
Disability	Restricted Mobility

I grew up with a rare condition known as 'internally rotated femur'. I was diagnosed at the age of 9 when my legs started to bend at strange angles. Basically, this means lots of bones in my legs and back were twisted or had ended up in the wrong place. On my training dig ten years later, it became apparent fieldwork was not for me when I ripped my hamstring away from the back of the knee, it was not the most intelligent thing I could have done. Apparently it was kneeling for extended periods over two weeks trowelling that caused this. With the work I pulled it too far too fast, and it just snapped away. I did not do it on site, that is the weird part. It was coming back from the pub one evening; I suddenly hit the ground in great pain. What made it worse was the Site Director did not believe anything was wrong with me. It was not going to get any better, after almost five years it still causes me daily pain, and even four years of physiotherapy have done little to relieve it.

The second training dig was a lot better as I was in the middle of physiotherapy at the time. I went in with this injury not being able to dig. They were very good about it: I was bucket, barrow and finds girl. It was just about all I could do on site. I did all the post-ex, washing finds and things like that. I could probably have done a bit of digging if I had not been barred by my physiotherapist. I was put on particular jobs they thought I would be able to do. I think it would be dangerous for me ever to take part in another excavation. The bones have now straightened out themselves, more or less, but I am left with a pronounced tracking problem in both knees - they face each other and the soft tissues are not strong enough to hold the knee caps in place properly - and a twisted pelvis causing the lower back to sit crooked. When it gets very cold my knees tend to seize up. I like a nice warm climate. A lot of joints pop out spontaneously, but I think that is because things are in the wrong place.

I have no regrets about doing archaeology; I have always found it very interesting. I got a book from my grandfather about ancient civilisations: my treasure and from then on I was absolutely hooked on it.

I have since been diagnosed as dyspraxic (the two are unrelated), about three years ago. It usually links to dyslexia, but not in me! It does also come under the DDA. Mine is quite mild in comparison to some,

but it can still take over some basic aspects of my daily life. Mostly, it just makes my handwriting and other manual manipulation tasks awkward, like household chores. I really have to concentrate to do some things. In the realm of computers, it almost gives me an unfair advantage as I find logical things such as web-coding very easy to learn and understand. This is also helped by a photographic memory.

I am now working as a computer archaeologist, desk-based and office work and quite happy doing it. Websites are my major hobby and getting paid for doing it is a bonus. I do miss the fieldwork a bit, not so much the dig I was on because I never found anything.