

# Interview with a Paraclimber – Hampshire's Laurence Morgan

With the ClimbScotland  
Paraclimbing Festival on the horizon, one  
competitor has driven all  
the way up from Hampshire to take part.

Laurence Morgan suffered a brain injury at the age of 12 and suffered paralysis from the neck down and faced a long period of rehabilitation and had to learn how to use his body and communicate all over again.

He suffers from  
spasticity of his left arm which severely limits movement as well as  
a weakness in his right leg due to reformation of his tibia following  
surgery.

Despite his, admitted,  
physical limitations, Laurence decide – egged-on by some  
friends –  
a year or so ago, that climbing was the sport for him....

We met up in Princes'  
Street Gardens for a wee chat and some photos....



Paraclimber Laurence Morgan is in Edinburgh for the Paraclimbing Festival at the EICA

**Tell us a bit about Laurence Morgan –**

I am a middle child,  
with two sisters, and I live in a tiny village called Kingsley  
in  
Hampshire. It has one pub and a church, so it's peaceful and a  
highlight is a pheasant walking through the garden.

I'm an artist, swim  
teacher and para-climber. I love Star Trek, and only really  
like  
foreign films – I can't speak any foreign languages – and  
Scandi  
police dramas.

The brain injury leaves  
me no memory of my life prior to 12 and I can't access  
memories or I  
encode them wrong. That's why I explore emotions through my  
drawing. A  
natural 'leftie', once I'd discovered I could draw quite  
accurately,

I re-learned to use my right – non-dominant – hand.



'Chute'. Charcoal drawing by Laurence Morgan

When I can, I work with  
the homeless at 'Crises Open Christmas' in London, and that's  
been  
for the past fifteen or so years.

I love and feed off  
learning how to bond or win over and capture the imaginations  
of the  
kids I teach.

**Where do you fit into the climbing world? –**

As a sport paraclimbing is newer and fast expanding. In the  
last year I've been on the podium twice at competitions,  
finishing in 2nd place.

With

each competition there's excitingly fresh and new awesome climbers,  
which brings more competition, but its super for the sport and I have  
ramped up my training to try and hopefully keep up my attainments.

I  
compete in the RP1 category. There are three groupings with the 'R'  
(reach) and 'P' (power) section. The '1' signals that my reach  
and  
power is lesser than an RP2 or RP3 climber.

I'm  
very excited for Sept 8th at EICA and have two other UK Nationals in  
October and November.

There's  
tremendous cognitive resource needed for the tiniest of things  
which  
leaves me too fatigued a lot of the time. Which is what drives  
me –  
esp. with climbing. Not wanting to succumb, and resigning to  
limiting  
factors.





Laurence was having a couple of days in the Capital before his event.

Having

met and spent time with Laurence, he comes over as a determined

individual with a great sense of humour and one who has not let the

accident he suffered at 12 define what he does or who he is.

Best of

luck to him for Sunday.

Laurence's Instagram 'presence' can be found [@laurenceparaclimbing](#) and [@laurencemorganart](#)

The Scottish Paraclimbing Festival is taking place this Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Sept. at the EICA at Ratho. The day also sees the finals of the Scottish Lead Climbing Championship and details of both events can be found at <http://www.climbscotland.net/>