

Inspiring Confidence

If I hadn't gone to Voice I might not have got my 5 minutes of fame. My name is Steven Hastings I am 30 & have OI. In April Last Year I went to my first Voice in Edinburgh, which is a Brittle Bone Society weekend for young people, aged 16 – 30. I hadn't been to a BBS event for a few years and was a bit nervous. In the end I had a great time meeting lots of new people. The weekend gave me a lot of confidence that I hadn't had before which made me feel better about myself and my future. I have been an Admin Volunteer in my local Citizens Advice Bureau for 10 years but for a long time I have wanted to be an extra on tv. I thought about it a lot but never had the confidence to do it before. Not long after getting back from Edinburgh I contacted an agency for extras but wasn't sure if I'd get anything. I waited about 4 months and then I got the chance to go & film on the set of River City which is a Scottish soap filmed near me. I couldn't quite believe I was getting my first job, I was so excited. My dad took me to the set and waited with me for assistance. We went to the canteen then when called went outside. There is a bus that the extras sit in while waiting but I was taken to a building that is the community centre in the show. Then I was called with others on to set. The scene was a fun run for Alzheimers, I thought I'd be in a crowd scene but was asked to be in the race. I wore my hoodie from Voice 2012, which has a ribcage on it and the BBS logo as a heart. I was the only wheelchair user in the race but that didn't bother me. I was just behind some of the actors who were going to run which felt great. Part of the scene was one of the Characters leading us in a warm up dance, which was great fun. After the morning filming a famous Scottish entertainer & actor called Johnny Beattie said hello and shook my hand, all the cast were very nice. For the morning session the weather was dry but by the afternoon it was bucketing down so I had to wear a poncho, as did most of us although it didn't spoil it much. A well-known actress called Eileen McCallum was on a stage as her character was speaking to the crowd before the race. She was smiling at me and seemed to be pleased there was someone with a disability involved in the programme. We were to run this time, so we all went on the starting horn, I use an Electric Wheelchair and there were a few cobbles to go over which seemed to slow me down. The director then came over and asked me to move to the front, as I was a bit slow for the camera, which I thought, was great. So they started the race again, I knew I wouldn't be as fast as everyone else but that didn't matter. I could feel the hood of the poncho blowing about and I didn't think I'd make it over the cobbles but I did. We had to start the run a few times to get different camera angles and balloons were set off as well which was great to watch. So I was there all day and it was brilliant talking to different people and seeing what it's like on a TV set.

So it's now Tuesday 15 January 2013 the day the episode of River City will be on. At 8pm I sat with my Mum & Dad to watch. The programme is an hour long so about 30 minutes in, there I was on TV quite close up with the actors doing a scene round about me. Then I was in it a few more times and you saw me in the race smiling as I went over the cobbles. I didn't think I'd be shown as much as I was and it gave me a bit of a buzz. My mum and dad were very proud of me, my Sister and all my family & friends thought it was great. I have also bumped into people I haven't seen for a while who couldn't believe it was me and liked it.

Thanks to The Brittle Bone Society as had I not gone to Voice this might not have happened and thanks to the BBC, the agency I'm with and everyone involved with River City. I would love to do more work on other shows and River City, maybe even be an actor or presenter one day. No matter what you want to do with your life try not

to let your disability or anything else stand in your way and age doesn't matter, it's never too late to fulfil your dreams. Might have used a cliché there but it's true.