

Hi Helen,

Well...where do I begin? Since my breakthrough success at the IPC European Championships in August 2014 I have been slowly, but surely, keeping Rio firmly in my sights!

2015 brought new challenges, and new successes. I had to balance studying for 10 GCSEs (which thankfully I passed gaining 3 A\*, 5 A and 2 B grades) alongside training for the IPC World Championships in Glasgow. This was an important meet as all the athletes I would be competing against in Rio were there. Once again I managed to gain 2 individual bronze medals in the 100 fly and 100 back, together with a bronze and a gold in the women's 4x100 medley and freestyle relays. The freestyle relay was the very last race of the competition and it was the most incredible feeling to be on the podium looking at all the Union Jacks listening to the National Anthem. What a great way to end a World Championships! And what motivation for Rio!

My season didn't quite end there though, as I then went on to the British Nationals in Sheffield, where I set a new European record for the 100 fly. Had I managed to swim this time the week before at World's I would have got the silver! Grrr. Nevertheless, I now hold 15 S10 British records and 2 European records – not bad for 17 year old, even if I say so myself ☺

April saw me back in Glasgow at the Paralympic trials. Unfortunately, I had been out of the pool for 2 months at the start of the year due to a relapse in my condition, so I was under real pressure to hit those qualifying times. I am delighted to say that I managed it- just about- and I will be joining 30 other GB Paralympic swimmers on that plane to Rio.

It seems really weird to say that- to refer to myself as a Paralympic athlete, but hard work and the right financial support do mean that dreams really can come true. I go to Rio ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world in my two main events, and, despite a significant deterioration in my condition I am aiming to be on that podium.

Thank you to Radcliffe's for your continued support, hopefully I can bring back the medals!

Alice