

Capital climbing coach on gold medal success

Edinburgh-born climbing coach Rachel Carr had a ringside seat as Team GB's Toby Roberts struck gold at the Paris Olympics

And even though Rachel, at 28, is young enough to have taken part herself especially having previously represented Great Britain and won various titles she wouldn't have had it any other way in providing active support to Roberts, Hamish McArthur, Erin McNeice and Molly Thompson-Smith in the Le Bourget Climbing Arena.

"I think I am much better suited to coaching" says former Royal High School student Rachel who was one of four GB coaches in Paris and is currently head of a major performance centre in Sheffield.

"So, no regrets. To see what these athletes do in nine hour days I would have struggled, Also, they have so much natural talent.

"As a coach I brought a realisation of the things I couldn't quite do, grips etc, and use those experiences to work out ways I can help others.

"Moving from Edinburgh to Sheffield wasn't that drastic. I knew a lot of coaches and within six months I was promoted to head coach."

Toby Roberts earned his gold medal when a main rival slipped within touching distance of finishing his climb.

“I’ve not been involved with Toby as much as one of the other coaches and his father but I have supported him between competitions for the past three years.

“Watching him win was bizarre – even he didn’t think he’d get gold – but the Olympic event itself was similar to world championships given the size of the arena.

“Next up are more of these world championship events with the season running until October and I’m look forward to those.”

Rachel is also optimistic that Paris success will mean an appropriate level of funding going towards the Los Angeles Games..

“It isn’t so much Toby’s gold medal as the fact that GB were one of only a few teams to enter all four events that should help when submitting a new funding bid which will be required soon” she says.

Maybe by LA, too, some Scots will force their way into selection?

“There are certainly a few coming through” she says in a reference to the Ratho Centre where her Olympic journey started, aged eight.

One of those might be Andrew Goodall, a 19-year-old from Currie highlighted in these columns a few months ago and of whom Rachel says: “Speed climber, definitely up and coming at the minute.”

