

of life for her because you have to be so committed to make it.

"When we first came to Boldmere Tully was still very raw with her strokes, and we've still got things to improve on but she's come along no end."

And, like Tully, Amanda has been nothing but impressed with Ashley's tutelage.

"Ashley's always been very much in tune with Tully's needs," she says. "Sometimes people find it difficult to understand that her body forgets how to do things – it's not that she forgets, it's just that she's got very poor proprioception."

"When we move around our bodies tell us where we are in space, but Tully's body doesn't do that very well – the messages get mixed up. Somebody can tell Tully to change something, and another swimmer would do that straight away. Tully might change it the first time but the next time her body forgets what she needs to do."

"Ashley realises he may have to tell Tully things more than once and it's never been a problem."

Tully made her debut with the Great Britain team at the German Open in Berlin earlier this year.

"It was exciting but scary at the same time," says Tully. "It was quite a daunting experience but I really enjoyed it."

After initially agreeing to let Tully venture to Germany with the team alone, mum Amanda decided to fly out to Berlin for a surprise visit.

"She only makes her debut once, and I couldn't miss it," Amanda says.

"The training regime was strict and they weren't allowed to talk to us at all during the day. After training from 7am until 7pm they had a team dinner and watched videos of their races to get feedback. Then they could talk to us for 15 minutes, and by that time they were all shattered."

"It was quite hard to stand back, but I was so impressed with how well they took care of Tully, and how good the physio was – they did all her stretches and really looked after her. So it put my mind at rest. And Tully swam really well too."

"Really well" is something of an understatement. Tully swam long course personal best times in the 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m freestyle races and the 100m fly, winning one gold medal, three silvers



Clockwise from top left: Tully on her final record-breaking lap of the 200m butterfly at Boldmere's Water Carnival last month; an ecstatic Tully clocks her time; first on the board – and a record breaker; and competing in her favourite freestyle event.

and three bronzes in her age group. In the open age events within her classification, Tully took gold in the 200m individual medley and silvers in both the 200m and 400m freestyle, qualifying for the multi-classification open age finals in the process.

But her success in Berlin came at a price. The week of competition was the longest Tully had experienced, and it took a toll on the young swimmer.

"Everyone noticed how bad Tully's walking was when she came back," says Amanda. "The spasticity in her legs increases significantly the

more exercise she does and the GB coaches and the doctors over in Berlin were quite concerned. She's now in a splint for her left foot and she hasn't needed a splint since she was quite young."

"The complex in Berlin is absolutely massive," adds Tully. "There are two pools which are far apart so there was a lot of walking involved as well as all the swimming."

Tully's difficulties in Berlin have led the Great Britain coaches to advise she uses a wheelchair for big competitions to relieve some of the pressure of her condition and cut down on the physical exertion. But the determined teen won't let her disability hold

her back when it comes to competing. Swimming against able-bodied athletes from 23 clubs from as far afield as Middlesbrough and Havering in Boldmere's popular Water Carnival last month, she produced a fantastic performance to win the demanding 200m butterfly event, smashing a British record in the process.

With a previous best of 2:55.97mins, Tully sliced three seconds off the existing British record, set back in February 2009, to take the title with a time of 2:45.91mins. Tully's time will be a British Disability Swimming female short course record in her classification, and is awaiting ratification by

British Swimming. Tully hopes to follow in the footsteps of double Paralympic gold medallist Eleanor Simmonds, who also trained at Boldmere. Her performances this year have led to selection for the Diamond Programme – a fast-track scheme for young disabled swimmers identified as having potential for the 2012 and 2016 Paralympics.

"For 2012 Tully's aim is to qualify and just be at the Paralympics, but the programme Tully's on is for younger athletes who are being fast-tracked with the potential to win gold at Rio in 2016," says Amanda.

"She now trains six days a week, and on Tuesdays she does the main session and then gets back in the pool and does some one-to-one work with a coach on technique and pacing."

As well as pool-based work, Tully does three sessions of land training, both to work the muscles in her legs and to condition her body for injury prevention.

Land work is an integral part of training for all of Boldmere's swimmers, and involves a mix of pilates-style exercises with core strength and conditioning.

The selections for the London 2012 Paralympics take place in March next year, so for the time being Tully is focused on her chances of earning a spot on the team.

This month she's off to the Paralympic simulation camp at Bath University, before competing in the UK School Games in September and the National Short Course Swimming Championship two months later.

"It's really exciting but at the moment I'm just working really hard to try and get there," says Tully.

"I train seven times a week with one day off and for my programme I have to log all my sessions and complete a certain amount of metres."

Tully is the picture of quiet determination, and her hardworking, heads down approach to both training and competition has paid dividends so far.

"She doesn't get nervous or fazed by anything," says Amanda. "After coming back from Berlin she wasn't in a good physical state but she was due to



Tully Kearney with mum Amanda and Boldmere Swimming Club head coach Ashley Cox.

go to Wales for a competition and we agreed she would do it. On the day everything went wrong – right to the point where she was on the block ready to start the race and her goggles snapped. She'd forgot her spare pair so she had to hobble down

the poolside to get another pair. But she then did an absolutely fantastic time. "I think if she gets to London 2012 that will be a huge achievement for Tully. I'm so proud of her." Back at Boldmere, her coaches agree the future

certainly looks bright. "The facts speak for themselves," says Ashley. "Tully's getting European qualifying times and she's stepped it up in the World Class programme. The times she's knocking out speak volumes."

focus on Doug Hyde

Join us and let Doug Hyde, the nation's best selling artist, bring a smile to your face and warmth to your heart this summer.

Receive a complimentary copy of Doug Hyde's retrospective book *Heart & Soul* with every purchase of one of his Limited Editions.

For a limited time only.

GALLERY FINE ART Barton Marina | Barton-under-Needwood | Burton on Trent | Staffordshire | DE13 8AS
01283 712 900 info@gallerythree.co.uk www.gallerythree.co.uk

divorce?

- Are you looking for practical, sound and common sense advice in an area of law that seems daunting?
- Do you need a specialist in relationship disputes where company or partnership assets are at stake?
- Whether you need to negotiate or stand firm, we provide a bespoke high quality service tailored to your needs
- We can discuss a number of flexible funding arrangements with you

“ legal talk ”

Q My relationship with my wife has broken down. I have worked hard to build my business; will it be destroyed by any settlement?

A Almost certainly not.

The Family Courts are very reluctant to interfere with successful businesses - to get rid of the "goose that laid the golden egg".

In many cases a business is the only source of income and there may also be fellow partners/shareholders interests to consider. It is almost always possible with skill and expertise to ensure finances are reorganised to come up with effective answers. With our commercial experience we will explore with you all the options available and tailor them to what you require.

Family Law is an art and not a science so any avenue can be explored providing that the final outcome helps to achieve a satisfactory settlement to both parties given all their individual needs and circumstances.

One approach is, for example, to consider offsetting business assets against other assets such as the family home or private pension. This may mean a larger share of non-business assets to a partner in return for the release of business assets.

about bell lax:

We are a well established firm of Solicitors specialising in handling complex commercial and business disputes. We have expanded and now offer our expertise to clients who are divorcing or separating and who will have to deal with business assets or interests. Our Family Team, headed by Heather Bell includes amongst others an Accredited Resolution solicitor specialising in financial settlements and children matters.

With the joint expertise of our commercial disputes and relationship department you can be sure of receiving a unique quality service to protect these interests.

Our service is tailored to your needs offering practical solutions at a difficult time. We can explore a range of business solutions and help you stand your ground to achieve the best practical and legal outcome. We will work hard in your best interests, seek to avoid unnecessary confrontation and endeavour to resolve issues quickly and with the least cost possible. We can help you by providing a variety of funding packages to help you with the cost of your case.

At a difficult time you'll find us approachable and supportive.

0121 355 0011
FREEPHONE
0800 197 5535

email: heather.bell@bellax.com

bell lax SOLICITORS

Bell Lax Solicitors is regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority
New Bank House, 21 Maney Corner, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, B72 1QL

www.bellax.com