



It's A Funny Old World

This Week's Columnist: BBC Radio London Broadcaster Jo Good

'How odd to become so maternal in the autumn of my life'

“ I was never into dogs until I reached middle age. I'd always assumed my latent maternal instincts were so hidden as to be invisible. I didn't notice babies, puppies, the young of any species. And nor did I mind.

But five years ago, my partner, Big George – we both worked for Radio London – suddenly presented me with a bulldog I called Matilda. I quickly came to realise she was our surrogate child, our 'fur kid'.

I fell hook, line and sinker. Anyone seeing me queuing up in John Lewis for baby gates, changing mats, perfumed poo bags – you name it – could be forgiven for thinking I was going through a sort of phantom pregnancy.

How odd to become so maternal in the autumn of my life. But Matilda has without doubt taught me to look at everyone's offspring with real interest. I caught myself watching a documentary the

other day about a polar bear leading her two cubs across the Arctic in search of food, the tears streaming down my face.

It's as if Matilda has released a secret valve in me. Mind you, she's also got me into any number of scraps and scrapes. Along with my friend, Anna Webb, we've become known as the Mad Dog women*.

Sadly, two years ago, Big George suffered a fatal heart attack. I was pretty inconsolable. One day, with a blizzard raging, I knew I had to get out of London. Matilda and I got in the car, and I drove in a more or less straight line until we fetched up in Sheringham, Norfolk. There, right in front of me, was a massive hotel on the cliff edge. 'Do you take dogs?' I asked the man at Reception.

'Look behind you,' he said. So I turned round, and there were two Great Danes, an Irish wolfhound... dogs as far as the eye could see. Well, don't tell me Matilda hadn't

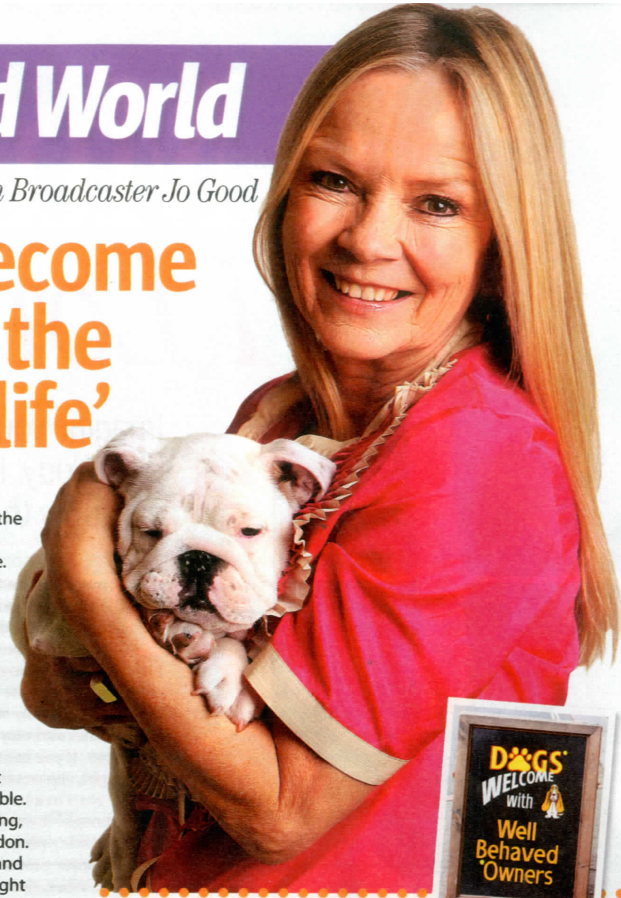
guided me there. And we had the best weekend ever.

Matilda's eyelids recently had to be lifted because the lashes were growing into her eyes and her nose had to be broadened to help her breathing. That cost £3,000, which I'd earmarked for a facelift of my own. Did I care? Not one jot. Matilda has

shared every chapter of my life. I love her with all of my heart – and she feels the same about me.'

* *The Barking Blondes* by Anna Webb and Jo Good (£12.99, Hamlyn) is out now.

Next week Marina Lewycka



Jo and Matilda know where they're wanted



Photos: Alamy, Eyemagine, Getty



Something about you looks familiar

It's been a funny old week...

Where I've been... To dog shows all over the country where I judge categories such as 'Whose dog looks most like its owner?'

What I've seen... People offering money in the hope of their dog being well-placed in a show. Really!

Who I've met... A terribly handsome policeman who looked just like his dog, so I slapped a rosette on each of them.

What I've bought... A deodoriser that hangs off a dog's tail to negate the effects of any flatulence – and people say I'm crazy.

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