



Buddy and Hilary



Muscling in on Ant and Dec's partnership

Since appearing on TV at eight weeks old, this special pooch has amassed more celeb pals than you can shake a stick at



Enjoying a cuddle with Alan Carr



Getting Brian May's autograph

Who's the REAL su-paw star?

Walking into the television studio with his golden hair and gorgeous brown eyes, this star instantly turns heads.

But this is no handsome, A-list actor, it's Buddy, a yellow Labrador puppy, who's charmed celebrities left, right and centre since he began appearing regularly on *This Morning* to show viewers how assistance dogs are trained by the charity Dogs for Autism.

From Ant and Dec and comedian Alan Carr to Hollywood stars like Julianne Moore and Jeff Goldblum, Buddy has been rubbing paws with the stars since he was just eight weeks old.

Hilary Armour, 56, the founder and programmes director of Dogs for Autism, believes Buddy was always destined for stardom.

'I was approached by *This Morning* about bringing an assistance dog in training on to the show to explain to viewers how it all works and as soon as I met Buddy, I

knew he'd be the one,' she says. 'He was sociable and confident but also calm and really easy to train. Of course, he is absolutely gorgeous too.'

The first time Buddy visited the ITV studio, before he'd even appeared on the show, he had stars waiting to meet him.

'I was walking Buddy up and down the corridor trying to get him to go for a wee before we were due on air and someone asked if they could say hello,' she says. 'Not looking up, I asked for them to wait until he'd done his business first and it was only afterwards I realised it was Ant and Dec's handlers asking on their behalf. They gave his fur a good ruffle and were so pleased to meet him.'

Buddy soon made himself at home in the television studio, cuddling up to presenters Cat Deeley and Ben Shephard and befriending Alison Hammond

and Dermot O'Leary.

For the next year, Hilary spent every day training Buddy and each week, they'd visit the *This Morning* studio to update viewers on his progress.

Hilary says, 'Along with the presenters, he met everyone from Simon Cowell to Paddy McGuinness. They all wanted to cuddle him and Buddy is

so loving he was happy to oblige.'

Buddy encountered plenty of special moments.

'He visited Queen guitarist Brian May in his dressing room and he began singing *We Will Rock You* to Buddy, as a line of the song says, "Buddy, you're a young man..." That was pretty amazing to witness,' Hilary recalls.

As he began to grow, the pup had his cheekier moments too.

'Around 12 months, Buddy went through the teenage rebellious stage,' Hilary says. 'He knocked over a glass of water when Miranda Hart

was on and got zoomies when interacting with Joel Dommett, but everyone always forgave him.'

Luckily, he was very well behaved when Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh visited the Dogs for Autism training centre to look at the work they do.

Buddy also formed a special bond with *This Morning* regular Gyles Brandreth and has since been invited to appear on stage with Gyles in London.

In fact, Buddy has made a lasting impression on a few of his celeb fans.

'After he met Sir Ian McKellen, Buddy was invited to see him in a play at a theatre in London, which was great training for Buddy to adapt to different social situations,' Hilary says. 'A few weeks later, Sir Ian suffered a fall and the Dogs for Autism team were able to facilitate Buddy staying at his house for a week to keep him company while he healed.'

'He even slept in a crate in his bedroom. Sir Ian loved him and we've kept him up

to date with Buddy's progress since.'

Buddy's since been placed with partner Millie Gee, 22, who was diagnosed with autism at 15.

But while it means he's left his celeb life behind, it doesn't make him any less special.

'Before I had Buddy, I found it incredibly hard to travel anywhere alone,' Millie, from Ware, Hertfordshire, says. 'I get too anxious to use public transport and so relied heavily on my mum to get about. I'm studying at the University of York but I rarely left the campus as I'd become too anxious to use transport myself, and Mum would have to travel back and forth to bring me home.'

Since having Buddy in their life, Millie's entire world has been transformed.

'With Buddy by my side, my whole world has opened up,' Millie reveals. 'I'm able to travel to and from university on public transport without suffering panic attacks and go into town with my friends. I've even travelled into

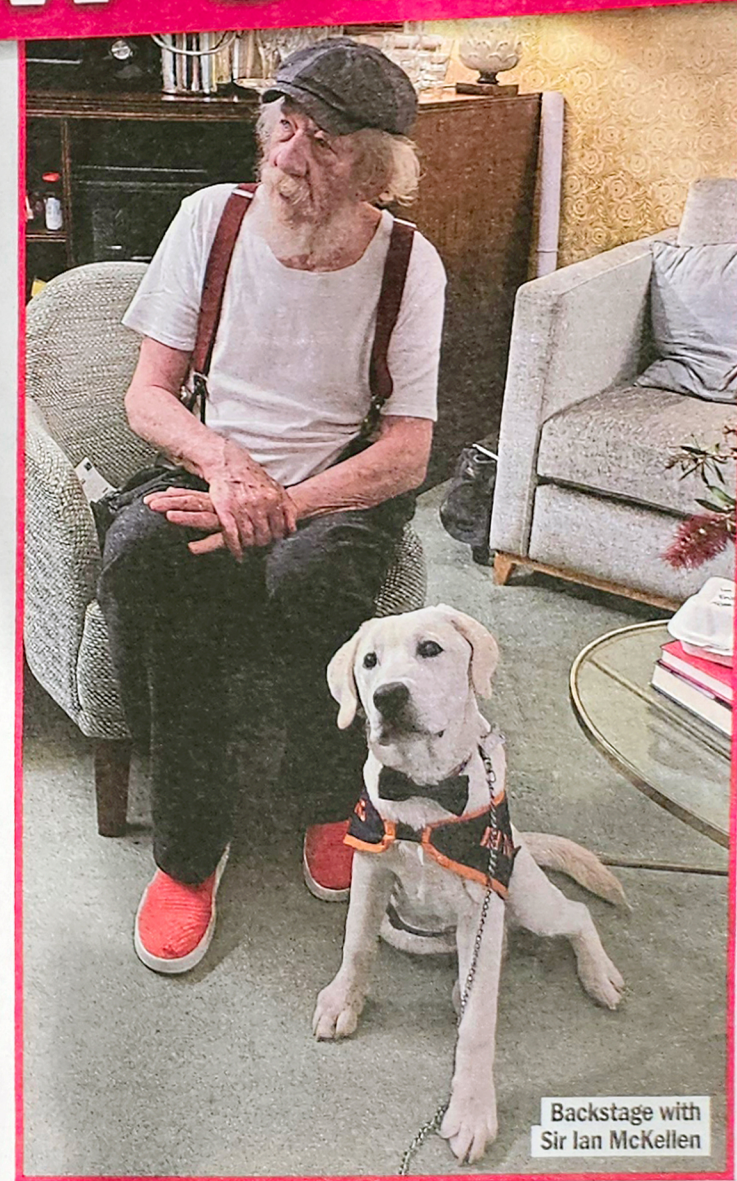
London on my own now, which I would never have done before.'

Now, Buddy's lapping up campus life and has fitted in seamlessly thanks to his extensive, if glitzy, training.

'Thanks to his experience going to *This Morning* and different events, Buddy is comfortable around lots of people on campus and at student media events, which I'm involved in,' Millie explains. 'I do my own radio show, so he's used to relaxing in the studio too! He's so calm, and a little lazy, so he loves nothing more than snoozing on the floor next to me.'

While Millie loves Buddy's early fame, it's his training that's been invaluable to them.

'I knew he was a superstar before I met him and he's met all these celebs,' Millie explains. 'But to me he's so much more than a celeb magnet. He's changed my whole world for the better and I can now see a really bright future ahead with no limits!'



Backstage with Sir Ian McKellen

By Anna Matheson. Pictures Dogs for Autism. Lyrics from *We Will Rock You* by Brian May, written by Brian May, published by Queen Music Ltd/Sony/ATV Music Publishing