

The main event!

Miniature Bull Terrier
Prudence's reaction to the limelight has **Anna Webb** worried about Crufts.

Prudence was not even a year old when we set off in torrential rain to our first event, Dogfest in Cheshire. The weather conditions didn't bode well for fair-weather Prudence.

Travelling on the passenger seat of my Mini, buckled up in her seatbelt, I just knew our weekend away would be a steep learning curve. Prudence sat bolt upright, fixed on the road ahead just like a co-pilot, and stared at the driving rain.

Glad to have packed my Hunter wellies, I was confident there'd be enough distractions to take her mind off the weather once we got there.

As we made our entrance to the showground, I was mid-calf-deep in the squelch. Trying to hold Prudence, remain upright, and retain any decorum was slipping away.

Prudence just couldn't contain her excitement:

lunging from side to side, trying to see everyone and do everything all at once. I imagined it was like being at Glastonbury with a teenager desperate to see Justin Bieber on the main stage.

Caked in mud, cold, and a tad bedraggled, our hotel beckoned with the promise of warmth and food. That was until my Mini got stuck in the mud, delaying our departure.

Sunshine at our second Dogfest brightened the outlook. We cheerily absorbed the vibe of tannoy, people, dogs, balloons, and children. Prudence was awestruck.

In a burst of enthusiasm at a friend's stall, she accidentally crashed into a display of scented candles. Fortunately, nobody was hurt. Defending my dog's honour, I picked up the smashed goods and settled for the damages. Humbly apologising for the



The perfect sit-stay at Anna's book-signing.

ABOUT ANNA

Anna Webb is co-presenter of BBC London's 'The Barking Hour' and also appeared regularly on 'The Alan Titchmarsh Show'. She recently moved out of London to enjoy an alternative lifestyle with her pets. Find out more at www.annawebb.co.uk

10th time, we called it a day.

Mixing a sprinkling of showing into our training regime was like taking Prudence to ballet class. Showing is about the practice of standing still — good discipline for us both. It's also excellent for practising loose-lead heelwork.

When we entered our fourth championship dog show, which was indoors in a lovely hotel, it hadn't occurred to me that any clapping would be amplified. As the raucous celebratory noise commenced, Prudence went doolally. She whirled, twirled, and screamed. We managed to regain our composure after an hour, just in time for our class.

Frayed at the edges, I did my best, but my nerves zapped down her show lead. Prudence may as well have been plugged

into an electricity pylon.

After this dress rehearsal for Crufts, including our hotel etiquette practice, I only had two weeks to reduce Prudence's unexpected reaction to clapping.

Learning that the timings of Mini Bull judging clashed with my airing of 'The Barking Hour' live from Hall 3, I was initially disappointed. On reflection, I knew this could be just what Prudence needed — to be shown by a renowned Mini Bull breeder with decades of show ring experience. Forewarned is forearmed, and I was honest about the negative potential of clapping.

Receiving text messages from the ringside as I was on air, I wasn't surprised that yet again clapping had caused Prudence to pogo, rather than trot. But I was stunned minutes later, when I was proudly announcing Prudence's second place!

From the show ring to a 'Barking Blondes' book-signing, Crufts was just as much about Prudence holding a perfect sit-stay. She posed regally for a professional photographer, despite immense distractions around us, proving that perseverance pays off.

Roll on the summer season of dog shows, where we'll master the art of ignoring clapping!



Anna and Pru visit the Your Dog stand at Crufts.



Showing off her rosette.