

It's a dog's life for Ruby

SHE had no previous experience of estate agency, no academic qualifications, not even the slightest grasp of how to answer a phone, yet the new recruit to the team at Fine & Country's Berkhamsted office was an instant hit with her co-workers and the clientele.

Ruby the beagle has been going to work with her owner, agency director Jan Foo, since she was four months old – she's now nine months – and ever since her photograph appeared alongside pictures of the rest of the staff on the agency's website the puppy has become a local celebrity.

She looks forward to her twice daily walks through the town with Jan's colleague Eveline Wright, not least

because of all the attention she attracts. 'People come up to them and ask "Is that the estate agent's dog?" and make a fuss of her. Everyone wants to



know about Ruby,' says her owner.

Jan admits friends thought she was barking mad to choose a beagle because she was determined to take it

to work with her. 'I couldn't leave it at home all day. Everyone said I'd chosen the wrong breed and she would be a nightmare.'

Well, Ruby hasn't been a nightmare, she's a dream dog, mainly because Jan enlisted the help of a professional dog trainer, Hanne Grice from Walk the Dog in Berkhamsted.

Jan added, 'She said Ruby had to understand that she had two homes – the office and her home with the family. In the office she stays in her bed all day except when she goes for walks. She automatically gets into her basket

as soon as we arrive each morning.

'Ruby is a joy. She's an asset. She's a great part of the family, here and at home.'