

televisionexpress

Barking up the right tree

JUST so we're clear about this, **THE PET TALENT AGENCY: BARKING MAD** (C4, 10pm) is a documentary. In other words, it's a programme about real people in the real world doing real stuff, for real. Believe me, I've double-checked.

That's because at times it feels more like a mockumentary, one of those shows poking fun at the documentary format, or using the documentary format to poke fun at something else.

But I'm not saying this to be mean. I'm saying it because the character at the centre of it all, Karen Chamberlain, seems such a



Mike Ward
previews
tonight's TV

brilliantly eccentric, made-for-TV personality.

Karen's agency, based in Dover, really does deal in talented pets. Talented in a fairly broad sense, I'll admit. They can't all play Beethoven's Fifth on the ukulele, for example, so you'll need to check the small print if that's what you're after. But what they

can all do is earn decent money. Karen, who used to work in recruitment, stumbled upon the idea of this agency after finding her beloved bulldogs in demand.

First, they were booked to become the faces of a Rugby World Cup photo shoot. "I was so proud of my babies," she recalls.

Then they were hired to advertise everything from Churchill insurance to the National Lottery.

"The photo shoots led to calendars, led to us being on products, on billboards in New York City. I didn't know I had a load of old show-offs sitting at home, wanting to be megastars."

Having spotted the earning potential here, it was only a matter of time before Karen broadened her horizons.

And now, well, she sees her agency as a one-stop shop, catering for all your pet hire needs – films, adverts, music videos, you name it.

It sounds quite demanding work, mind you.

"We have to supply everything our client wants," she points out, "from an alpaca to a duck to a giraffe to a zonkey."

At which point, some chap off camera asks, not unreasonably: "What's a zonkey?"

"A zonkey," Karen explains, as if amazed he has to ask,

"is a zebra crossed with a donkey."

Of course it is.

Elsewhere, in **10YEARS YOUNGER IN 10 DAYS** (Channel 5, 9pm) we meet Tom, a retail assistant hoping for a radical makeover.

Right now, Tom looks like one of the Hairy Bikers, which is ironic because he happens to be a biker. And hairy. It's a look Tom used to be happy with. Now he feels it's "very scruffy".

So, hmm, that's a tough one, isn't it? What on earth could a chap with long straggly hair and a long scruffy beard possibly do to alter his appearance? Beats me.

Best watch and find out.