

# The woodland sports day

**W**ise Owl was wide awake in the daytime, which was most unusual.

'I cannot get to sleep,' he hooted. 'I do not have the sounds of woodland creatures to help me.'

The wood was silent. Usually there were creatures going about their business, but lately they were becoming more and more lazy.

'What is wrong with everybody?' thought Owl.

Owl flew over the woods to the little school nearby. He perched on the fence and watched the children out on the field with their teachers. Some parents were coming through the gates.

'I wonder what is going on?' muttered Owl, curiously. Then he noticed a big banner saying, 'Welcome to our sports day.'

The children were taking part in all sorts of races – running, jumping, skipping and hopping, picking up beanbags and even trying to carry eggs on little spoons.

'That is just what the woodland creatures need to get fit and active,' he thought. 'I will organise a woodland sports day.'

Back in his nest, Owl wrote out a big notice: *Welcome to a meeting at 2 o'clock under this tree.*

Everyone crawled from their sleepy homes and gathered under the tree with growing excitement. What did Owl want?

'You are becoming lazier and lazier,' hooted Owl. 'So it is time that you all got active! When you are fit, I will organise a sports day. Please start practising today. Here are some ideas for races.'

The creatures looked at the list. Owl had thought of everyone.

Soon they were all practising hard. Rabbits were squeezing through burrows, hedgehogs were sticking leaves to their spines, deers were sniffing trees, woodlice



Races for  
woodland sports  
Rabbits burrow  
scamper  
Hedgehog leaf pick  
Deer tree sniff  
woodlice wander  
Ant hill build  
squirrel scramble  
vole vault

were scuttling along tiny trails, ant teams were building hills, squirrels were scampering up trees and voles were vaulting over sticks.

At the end of the day, they were all tired but happy. From then on, they practised every day and soon they were very fit.

A very pleased Owl announced, 'You are now ready for sports day.'

What excitement there was as the creatures took part!

The rabbits easily slid through burrows to the finishing line.

The prickly hedgehogs were skilled at rolling in the leaves to see who could pick up the most.

The deer stretched their necks high to sniff the special scent that Owl had put on a tall tree.

The woodlice wandered well-known trails at twice their former speed.

The ant teams built three enormous hills and climbed the winning hill to wave to the other creatures.

The squirrels scampered straight

up branches, leaping from one to another to the finishing tree. The voles vaulted over twigs, rolling over and over as they landed.

When the races were over, Owl presented leaf medals to all of his friends for taking part.

'I am proud of my active friends. Perhaps now I will sleep peacefully during the day, lulled by the noises of your active games.'

The creatures clapped and cheered the wise friend who had helped them to feel so fit.

'Three cheers for Owl and his "get active" plan. Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray!'

© Jean Evans