

## LISTENING

## Audioscript

### Part 1

I'm Jilly, and I'm just about to take part in the Ten Tors Challenge, which is a special event organized by the army for young people aged between fourteen and twenty. It is one of the most demanding of outdoor challenges. The aim is to complete a long trek across a moor. Although it has to be completed within 34 hours, it isn't actually a race. It's a test of endurance.

The challenge takes place on Dartmoor in the southwest of England. Dartmoor is a wild and beautiful area of high moorland, and is very popular with walkers. It is famous for its 'tors'. These are large hills topped with granite, which is a very hard rock, and there are 160 of them. I've taken part in three Challenges so far, and I'm preparing for my fourth.

The event takes place every year on a weekend in May. It's a two-day trek across Dartmoor, climbing ten of the tors. Depending on how old you are, the trek can be 35, 45 or 55 miles. I've just done the 55-mile route this year for the second time. You have to travel in teams of six people. You sleep on Dartmoor overnight, so you have to carry everything you need with you, like food and drink, tents and spare clothes. So it really helps if you are fit and strong! You also have to find your way across the moor. Each team has to navigate around the course that it has been given by the organizers. And you have to report to the army checkpoints on each tor that you visit. They need to know where you are, because it's very easy to get lost. And finally, you have to get back to the start by 5 p.m. on Sunday to complete the race.

You have to train long and hard for the event. My school organizes training weekends on Dartmoor every year, and you learn how to read a map. And you practice hiking with a backpack, of course. The most difficult thing about the race for me is getting over the rivers. You have to wade through ice-cold water with all your kit and try not to get wet. I dropped my backpack in the water once and we all had to rescue it because the water was flowing quite fast. That was a nightmare, and it was twice as heavy to carry after that! The weather can also make life really

difficult. It changes very quickly on Dartmoor and will catch you out you aren't completely prepared for it. It can be hot, cold, windy, foggy and snowy – all in the same day! Last year, for example, the event had to be stopped on the Saturday night, because there were sudden high winds and torrential rain, which made the conditions too dangerous to continue. The army had to evacuate us to safety. It was scary, but quite exciting at the same time.

People ask me why I do it. Well, it's an incredible challenge, and if you finish it, it's an amazing achievement. It really boosts your self-confidence. This is my last year doing the Ten Tors Challenge and I want to make sure that it is my best year ever!

## **Part 2**

P = Presenter

S = Sally Jefferson

P: Ants, spiders, snakes and rats may not sound like ideal house companions, but as Sally Jefferson can confirm, an increasing number of animal lovers in the Radio Carston area have taken to keeping them as pets. Sally is the owner of Animal Crackers, a large pet shop in the centre of Carston. Sally, why the move away from cats and dogs?

S: Well, primarily, I think the trend reflects changing lifestyles. Cats and dogs need a lot of looking after, whereas insects and spiders, for example, are very low-maintenance – they more or less take care of themselves. And that's perfect for busy working couples who are out of the home most of the day and can't afford to spend a great deal of time on the more traditional kinds of pets. And, er, and then, of course, there's the so-called educational pet, ants in particular.

P: Yes, I was surprised to hear that you sell a lot of them in your shop.

S: That's right, leaf-cutter ants mostly. You can create your own colony in an ant farm – that's a glass box like a big fish tank filled with clean sand or soil. You can watch them in their nest, digging tunnels and cutting leaves, all collaborating to achieve a common goal. It's a great lesson in the benefits of teamwork, especially for children. And for that reason a lot of parents come in and buy them.

P: And do the kids like them?

S: Yes, most do – after all, ants are fascinating creatures to watch close up. But of course, they are not furry or cuddly, and children can't interact with them in the same way that they can with a cat or dog. If you pick them up or try to play with them, they can give you quite a nasty bite.

P: Right. And how about spiders? You were telling me before the programme that you sell tarantulas – can they be handled?

S: It's not advisable, but in this case it's more because of the risk involved to the tarantula than the owner. They do bite, of course, and as we've seen in films, sometimes with fatal results. But a bite from the species we sell is rather like being stung by a bee. No, the main problem is that they are fragile creatures and if they run around when they're on your hand or arm, there's a danger they'll fall off and hurt themselves very badly. So best not to get them out of their cage too often.

P: No, indeed. Now let's move on to another type of pet that seems to be in fashion these days – snakes. Do they need a lot of care and attention?

S: That really depends on the species you buy – different species have different requirements. What's common to the corn snakes and ball pythons that we sell is that they can sometimes go for months without eating. So, if you're going on holiday you don't have to worry about finding someone to feed them while you're away.

However, it's important to realize that many snakes a lifespan of more than twenty years – so you need to be aware that you are making a long-term commitment when you buy one.

P: And what sort of things do they eat?

S: Mice, mainly, and perhaps rats or even rabbits for some of the larger species. It's better to give them pre-killed animals, which can be bought frozen at reasonably little cost from pet stores. Besides being more humane for the mice and rats and so on, it's also safer for the snakes. A rat can seriously wound a snake when it's acting in self-defence.

P; Interesting that you mention rats, because of course, they too are kept as pets nowadays, aren't they?

S: That's right. They make very good pets and they don't buy quite as readily as most people think. You need to bear in mind, though that they like being with other rats, so the really need to be kept in pairs or even groups, and in a large cage, too. Technically, of course, they are nocturnal animals but they're very flexible creatures – they will adapt to their owners' schedules and are happy to come out and play when people are around during the day.

P: You don't feed them to the snakes, do you, Sally?

S: No, don't worry, we never do that ...