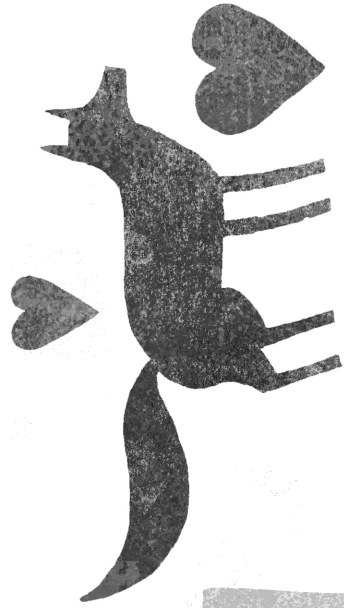


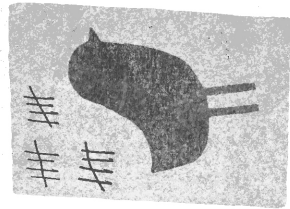
Number Five: Love nature

and share this with
others – we look after
what we love.



Number Four: List your

local wildlife and let
others know –
this important
information can help
conservationists
protect wild spaces.
Small actions
can make
a difference.



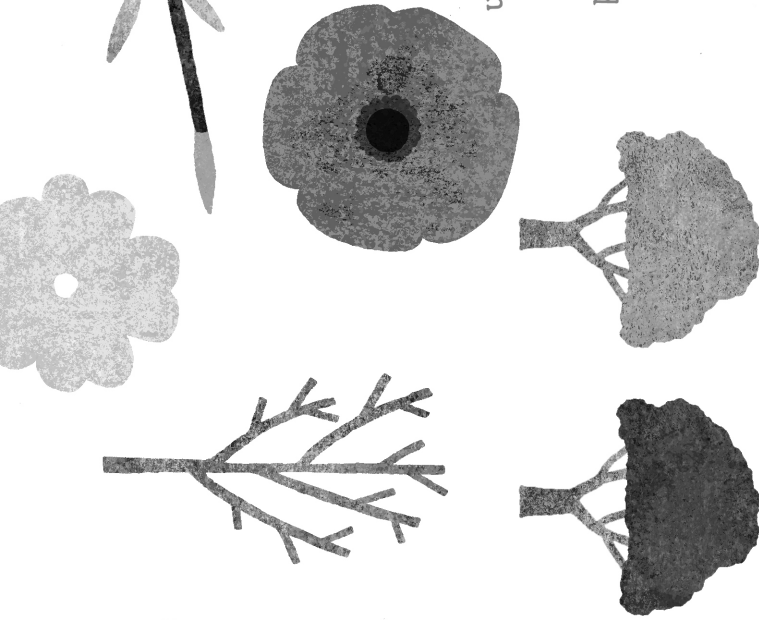
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Five Ways

to be a
Forest
Keeper

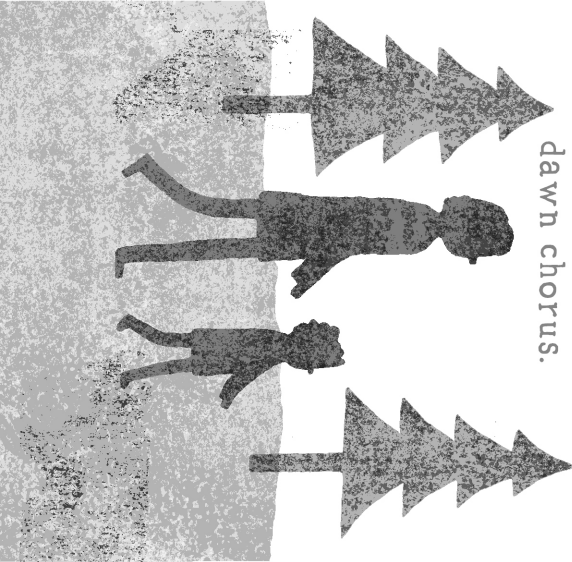


by Papa Herne

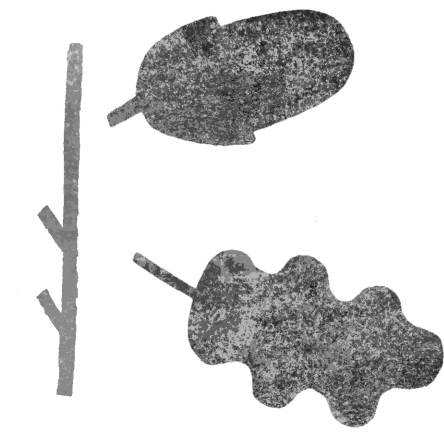
Number One: Look for
signs of seasonal
change – birch buds and
primroses in spring,
foxgloves and poppies in
summer. Broadleaved
trees change colour in
autumn, and lose their
leaves in winter.



Number Two: Listen to
forest sounds – take a
family walk during
dawn chorus.



Number Three: Learn
names – birds, animals,
flowers, insects, plants
and trees. We care more
for what we know.



Dear Forest Keeper,

Since I was a child, I've always loved being outside in nature, especially in woods and forests, surrounded by tall trees. Bradgate Park, a medieval deer park, was always a special place for me. My brother and I loved climbing inside hollow oaks, centuries old, like wooden castles, playing Robin Hood, Narnia and Brendon Chase.

We would often come home with souvenirs of our adventures, sometimes in matchboxes. Acorn cups, skeleton leaves, winged seeds and twigs — these were magical teleporters that could take us back to nature and our imagined stories. Books, too, are teleporters, transporting us into different times and lives.

On one visit to Bradgate, in the fading light, what had appeared to be a distant tree stood up and revealed itself to be a stag. This moment was forever burned in my mind, kindling the spark of an idea that began with a boy and a tree-stag. But then an acorn-shaped cradle came along, a tiny baby seemingly abandoned in an orphanage, and with that followed a tribe of tiny people. Soon a whole forest grew...

Sometimes all it takes is the smallest detail to inspire a new adventure. If you stop and take the time to look at nature close up — a necklace of raindrops on a spider's web, a nugget of pine sap turned to gold in the sun — you will start to see the magic in the miniature.

Now put on your Keeper cloak, saddle up your blackbird, and wing your way to Oakhome. Wick, Nissa and Papa Herne are waiting with seed-cakes and warm acorn cups of pine needle tea...

I hope you enjoy your time with Harklights as much as I have enjoyed dreaming, writing and drawing its pages.

Tim Tilley

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