



**Friends of Suntrap**  
 Registered Charity No. 1102119  
 Patron – Lord Palumbo  
 Honorary President - Ken Hoy MBE



## Newsletter No. 42 – January 2015

### Family activities



400 visitors enjoyed activities at the annual Open Day in October including pond dipping, map trail, microscopes, guided forest walks and crafts.

At the beginning of November families came to celebrate autumn in the forest, including making crowns made of autumnal leaves.

Then at the end of November over 70 made lanterns from glass jars, before using them to light their way up to the field to enjoy a burger, warmed spiced apple juice and marshmallows round a roaring fire.

We have lots more family activities planned for 2015, make sure you don't miss out by visiting [www.suntrapcentre.weebly.com](http://www.suntrapcentre.weebly.com) and clicking on the Family Fun tab.



### Hedge Laying

We are very lucky that Suntrap has 7 acres of grounds with many different habitats including ponds, log piles, meadow, woodland and hedgerow. These habitats have been developed over many years.

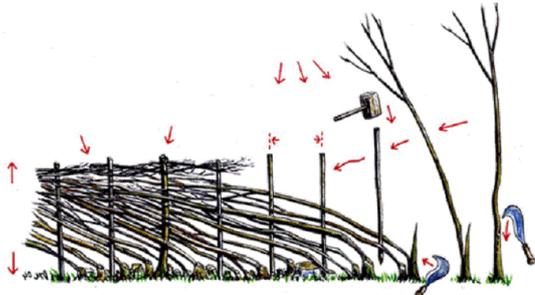
Back in 2002 new hedges were planted by young tree wardens, Suntrap staff and volunteers, using native mixed plants including hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn. One of these hedges has

been left until now and was in danger of developing very poor weak growth, open up at the bottom, becoming top heavy and no longer providing a useful habitat.

The answer is to lay the hedge. Laying the hedges promotes new growth from the ground keeping it healthy and thick for years to come, providing a wildlife haven for birds, insects and small mammals. The hedge also acts to sequester carbon (carbon capture).



Planting the hedge in 2002



To lay the hedge the stem of the tree is partially cut at its base at an angle. The art is in knowing how much to cut through the stem while keeping life in the remaining connected piece and allowing the flexibility needed to

bend the trunk without breaking. These remaining stems are known as pleachers. After pleaching, additional stakes are driven into the hedge for added support. Diversity of species within the hedge is best for ensuring longevity and attracting biodiversity.



In November Peter Vaughan a member of the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers, the National Hedgelaying Society and also the South of England Hedgelaying Society, along with a team of volunteers provided Suntrap staff with a practical workshop on this ancient craft. The result is (we think) a beautifully laid hedge, which will provide a great habitat.



Suntrap staff working hard and very proud of the end result!

**Bird Bonanza** Thursday 19th February 10am-1pm (drop-in).

Come and dissect an owl pellet (£4 per pellet) or make a bird box (£7 per box). Have a go at the forest bird trail (£1 including a souvenir pencil) or bird themed craft activities (£1 for each).

**Family Orienteering** Saturday 14th March 2015 11am-1pm (drop-in) £2 per person

**Suntrap Spring Surprise** Thursday 9th April 2015, 10am-1pm (drop-in) £1 per activity

**Pond dipping & guided forest walk** Thursday 16th April 2015, 10-1pm (drop-in) grounds open until 3pm for picnics. £2 per person

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If you have anything you'd like to contribute to the Friends Newsletter please send it to Suntrap, Church Road, High Beach, Loughton, Essex, IG10 4AJ or by email to: [suntrapcentre@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:suntrapcentre@walthamforest.gov.uk) or phone: 0208 508 0611