

## 18<sup>th</sup> December Winter Solstice – Lower Tamar Lake to Dexbeer Bridge

It was a couple of days early, but a break in the weather and an imminent holiday over Christmas decided the day for the walk for me. In the event it was a bright, dry, windless day with no cloud and a low, bright, wintry sun.

Commencing from the car park at Lower Tamar Lake meant there were lots of birds to record. Three types of tit on the feeders and an unusual Little Egret on the lake. Goosanders were also back on the lake for the winter.

Along the Aqueduct trail there was little to see partly due to the low bright sun in my eyes. This was exacerbated by remnant early morning mist and steam rising from the drying wooden posts and gates. Hemlock Water Dropwort was emerging from a very wet aqueduct bed and lots of midges were dancing and catching highlights in the sun.

Underfoot was very wet and muddy making me have to watch where I put my feet and taking them away from spotting nature. Nonetheless, Hazel catkins and bright fruiting Hawthorn berries brightened up the otherwise bare trees.

The only flower was the ubiquitous Red Campion – certain to be seen in every month of the year. Even fungi were almost totally absent with only a group of very etiolated mushrooms near Broomhill Bridge.

Birds were more heard than seen but Goldcrest and Treecreeper were identified by both sight and sound. A small flock of winter visiting Redwing were a bonus at Dexbeer Bridge.

Due to the really difficult muddy and slippery footpath I decided to return to the car by road. An interesting round trip but I would have much preferred a dry route along the aqueduct.



Misty morning



Dewy Spider Web



Haws



Fungi past their sell by date