

Otters return to Waterperry!

To cheer us all up in the post-Christmas period we have some really good news – at last some firm evidence that otters have returned to this stretch of the River Thames.

The big freeze which we experienced over the Christmas period froze the river by Bow Bridge, near Waterstock Mill. A light dusting of snow on top of the ice meant that the footprints of assorted wildlife showed up very clearly. Several local residents were intrigued by some sets of large paw prints next to the bridge and some suggested that these might well be otter prints. The prints clearly showed five toes rather than four, so could not have been made by a cat or a fox, and were too large to be a mink.



Photo by Tricia Hallam

The photo above was sent off by Henry Manisty of Waterstock Mill to the Environment Agency, which has been monitoring otter recovery. Their otter expert, Graham Scholey, confirmed that these were indeed otter tracks and reported that he had also found other evidence of otters near Waterperry during the past year. They are now planning a new survey of this stretch of the river prompted by our evidence.



Photo by Tricia Hallam