

## Churchillian Stroll with the WI

### 3 ½ miles around Churchill - no stiles

There's something special about September. The weather was gentle and warm, trees and hedges were beginning to take on their autumnal hues and the light was beautiful. It was great to get out with a group of friends to walk the valley near Churchill.



stopped here? Wonderful views towards Kingham Hill School. Turning right at a junction with a new drive we continued along a metalled road, which eventually turns left to Lower

Kingham Hill Cottages. Taking the track straight ahead until we reached the road again; turning right over Swainford Bridge and across an old railway bridge.

### Interesting Memorials

Parking near the church, it was sad to see that the building had suffered a serious fire and was closed for repairs. Walking through the village towards Hastings Hill we passed an ornate Memorial Fountain, erected in 1870 in memory of James Langston, whose money paid for the new church. Presumably, Langston House in Milton and Langston Priory at Kingham are also named after him.

Just a little further on, almost behind the bus shelter is a simple memorial to William Smith, a pioneer of the science of geology, who spent his childhood in Churchill. Turning left here, we headed down Hastings Hill, named after Warren Hastings, Governor of the East India Company, who was born in Churchill and later returned to the family estate at Daylesford. On the left, we passed an old church, now a heritage centre and open at weekends. It was replaced early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Smith's 'new church'. At the bottom of the hill we carried along a road marked as 'no through', eventually passing through the small hamlet of Sarsden Halt; so the railway once

### Mind the Ruts!

We kept along the road looking out for a post on the right at a field edge. The path now followed field boundaries towards Churchill Grounds Farm. We took the path to the left and then right, close to the farm buildings; making for a small gate at the corner of the pasture field. Keeping the hedge on our left for a few yards until there is a break in the hedge; we crossed the next field at 45°, right to the far corner.

Be careful of the ruts at your feet; one of our number tripped at this point and now has her ankle in plaster. Turning left through a spinney, along the field edge, through another farmyard, past a Dutch barn and through a gate, the tarmac track brought us back to Hastings Hill. Why not come along with our little group? Ring Rosemary Wilson on: 01993 831810.

*Editor's note: The Oxford Fieldpaths Society provides an extensive programme of walks of varying length. Check the website [www.ofs.org.uk](http://www.ofs.org.uk)*