

## **ALONG THE ESK**

**Start and Finish : The Woolpack**

**Grade : Easy**

**Duration : 2 hours**

**Whats it all about? A very easy stroll along the middle reaches of the River Esk with ever changing views of the valley, following good paths all the way**

This is a circular walk that can be started and finished either at the Woolpack Inn or St Catherines Church. When Sherill and I did it, we started at the Woolpack, which has the added advantage of being able to have a beer at the end of the walk!



From the Woolpack walk along the road towards Boot for 200yds and turn off to the left at Penny Hill Farm. Follow the road to Doctors Bridge but don't cross the bridge, instead take to the path on the right hand side of the bridge. This lovely path follows the river, climbing slightly above it at one point, as it meanders its way towards Boot. Either follow this all the way to the church and use the stepping stones to cross the river (only recommended when the river is low in dry spells) or about quarter of a mile before the church, take a left fork across an open field to rejoin the river at the old railway bridge. This bridge seems out of place, but it was originally used for an extension of the Ratty railway (when it was used for transporting Iron Ore rather than people). Cross the bridge and make your way along the river, heading back towards the Woolpack. In half a mile the path climbs away from the river and joins a wide grass track. This is one of the many old tracks that meander around the valley, connecting the various farms and dwellings. Follow this track and in  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile you

arrive at Toms Tarn, a wonderfully peaceful place where you can sit on the bench and set the world to rights. From here the track continues, reaching Low Birker in  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile and then back to Doctors bridge and the Woolpack in another  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. You will have been amazed at the variety of the scenes as you wander along this beautiful stretch of the river.