



bayfield - maitland



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Photos: Glenn Spence

No one seemed anxious to leave the bakery in Clinton. Herb Pohl had guaranteed us good weather, but there we were sitting in our jackets, not wanting to venture into the cold. For many of us it was to be the first trip of the season. Even so, the threatening skies seemed to have already dampened our enthusiasm. Should we change into our wet suits in the tiny restrooms downstairs or at the put-in on the Bayfield River?

Once in our canoes and paddling, we soon warmed up and our attention turned from the sky to the river. With the low water levels prevailing in the area, the Bayfield River turned out to be a nice warm-up for the coming season. All crews looked sharp - even Linda Butler and Bob Haskett with their borrowed paddles. Eric Freebold was working partner Tony Bird pretty hard, it seemed to us (20 eddy turns before lunch!). Glenn Spence made do



We lingered again the next morning, if only to luxuriate in the beautiful spring weather. What better place to spend such a day than on the Maitland River? Everyone was immediately impressed by its breadth and scenic beauty. Coming from Auburn, we encountered the first of many light rapids at Benmiller. Now there was plenty of water to make these ledges rapids several in succession and stretching from shore to shore, a nice challenge for us. These culminate in a magnificent falls that is well-disguised from upstream. Herb shepherded us over to the right where we lined down a shallow chute. We managed to keep our growing appetites suppressed until we had reached Herb's favourite lunch spot, located between the two most interesting rapids of the trip. Several more light rapids followed. The final drop before Goderich left its mark on at least two rather recklessly guided canoes. At the take-out one could easily have distinguished the canoeists from the fishermen by the big smiles.

without his periscope; Cameron was in the bow. Paul Karpenko and Del Dako were out for a lark in their kayaks. Eventually strong winds blew away the clouds, the sun shone and Herb was vindicated. The Bayfield cuts through glacial moraine and the beige sandy gorges stood out strikingly against the blue sky. Down in the bottom of these gorges we scraped and bumped amongst the rocks. The rapids would be very interesting with a little more water.

