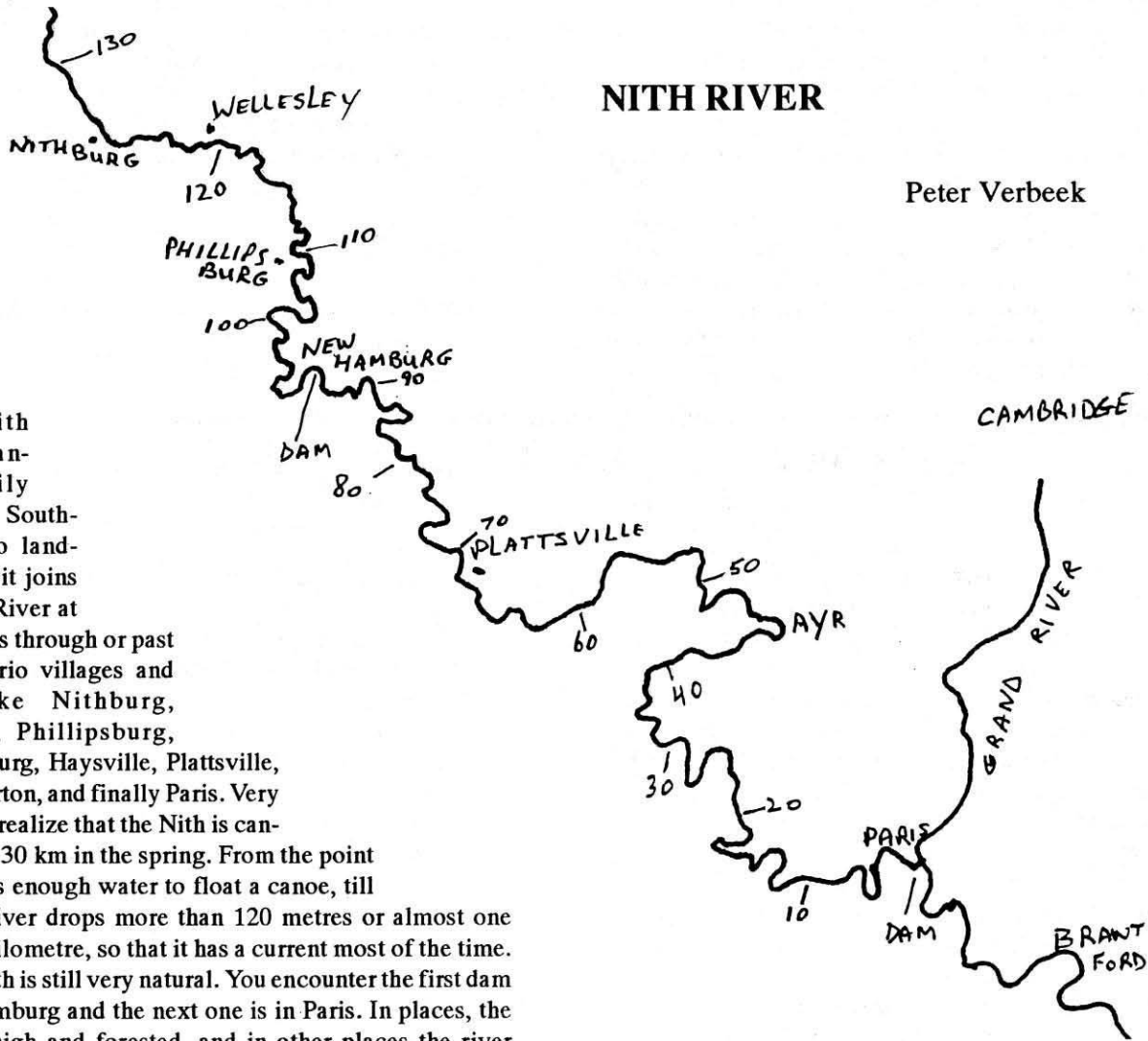


NITH RIVER

Peter Verbeek



The Nith River meanders lazily through the Southern Ontario landscape until it joins the Grand River at Paris. It runs through or past many Ontario villages and towns like Nithburg, Wellesley, Phillipsburg, New Hamburg, Haysville, Plattsville, Ayr, Wolverton, and finally Paris. Very few people realize that the Nith is canoeable for 130 km in the spring. From the point where it has enough water to float a canoe, till Paris, the river drops more than 120 metres or almost one metre per kilometre, so that it has a current most of the time.

The Nith is still very natural. You encounter the first dam in New Hamburg and the next one is in Paris. In places, the banks are high and forested, and in other places the river winds through fields and meadows. There are frequent riffles and a few places where you have to line your canoe through the remains of old mill dams. South of Phillipsburg there are a couple of (very) low roads that you must lift your canoe over. Only in the last ten kilometres before Paris does the Nith become wilder with some real rapids.

In recent trips on the Nith, I observed many muskrats, turtles, blue herons, kingfishers, ducks, geese, turkey vultures, hawks, a large owl, and many other birds that I did not recognize. Fish were jumping in many places and the odd fisherman that I saw told me about catching good-sized trout and bass.

The Nith can be canoed comfortably in four days. The

first day could go from the bridge on Wellesley Township road 18S, north from Waterloo Road 7, map location 40P/7 NU124155, to a bridge in location 40P/7 NU222043, for a distance of 31 km. The second day would continue onward and end at the bridge just west of Plattsville for a distance of 30 km. The third day would end at Wolverton after a trip of 35 km. The last day would see the series end in Paris. Of course, one can make the day trips longer or shorter as may be preferred.

If I get enough expressions of interest, I shall organize two weekends in April 1993 which will be devoted to canoeing the Nith River. Watch for the announcement in the Spring 1993 issue of *Nastawgan*.

CORRECTION

It has come to my attention that there is an error in my article A Grand Wayfaring in the Summer 1992 issue of *Nastawgan*. In the third to last paragraph I state that the Michelin main tilt is under water in Smallwood Reservoir. It turns out that it is not. Flour Lake still exists although there are flooded areas immediately above and below it on the watershed and these are related to the Churchill Falls plant. That section

would read more accurately if it said: "I am haunted. It matters not what the fate of the Michelin tilt is by time. Its remains exist on a point that has been spared direct flooding, but is bracketed by diversions and control structures that are part of the vast Churchill Falls Project. It may not matter what Horace has shown us along Grand River . . ."

Garrett Conover