



Hilary sailing the wooden dinghy just outside Cairo

Sailing the Nile Class

Hilary Munro handles tricky conditions on the Nile in the river's eponymous dayboat

A strong and fluky easterly wind tested our skills aboard the nifty Nile Class boat, which we were sailing on the River Nile. I enjoyed the novelty of reading the wind in both the water and the date palms lining the banks!

This traditional wooden boat was reminiscent of the Enterprise I had sailed off Dun Laoghaire, Ireland, back in the mid-1970s, with a similar stepped-forward mast, sloop rig, and small jib.

The Nile Class was designed by the British in the 1930s for

river sailing and built by various yards in Cairo and Khartoum in Sudan. None of the original Cairo dinghies survive, but the design was resurrected and built from 1995 onwards by a local Cairene enthusiast. There are also now metal Nile Class boats sailing at Khartoum with a regatta being arranged in September so that owners can get together and test their skills in the same river, although they have very different handling characteristics to the traditional wooden versions.

■ *If you're holidaying in Cairo and are interested in sailing a Nile Class dinghy, call Hamid Sabry. Tel: +20 100 133 6699.*