

## The UT704

The UT704 almost deserves a chapter of its own. It is the most prolific supply vessel type ever built, and may only be exceeded in numbers as a ship type by the American Liberty and Victory ships built during and after the Second World War, a total of ninety-one having been built all over the world between 1975 and 1987.

Between the appearance of the first 704 in 1975, and the end of 1976, nineteen ships had been built all for Norwegian owners, and all but two operated under the Norwegian flag. These vessels allowed the Norwegians to become a major force in the British sector, which as we saw in the previous chapter, had up to that time been dominated by traditional British ship-owners.

The UT704 was a quantum leap forward. The first vessel to enter service was the Skaustream built in Finland by Oy Laivarteolisuus, who also built three further vessels in the same year. It was powered by two Nohab diesels giving 7040 BHP, and was provided with a single 500bhp bow-thruster. In this configuration bollard pulls of between 90 and 100 tons were claimed for the design.

Accommodation was spartan by today's standards, the winch being set well forward between the funnels, giving a clear deck area of 124ft by 36ft.

It seemed to have combined all the possible requirements for offshore anchor handling and supply operations in a single vessel without sacrificing anything. Some of the Smit-Lloyd and

*The UT704 revolutionised the design of the anchor-handler with its large roller and rounded quarters. For twenty years it was to be the workhorse of the North Sea.  
Picture: Victor Gibson.*

