

TRACER

IMO No: 9204702 GENERAL CARGO 1999 / 6714 GT

COMPANY:

West African Shipping. Co. NV,
Netherlands Antilles
(Graig Ship Management Ltd, UK)

YARD INFORMATION:

Zhonghua Shipyard
(China) 406
Design: Graig Confidence Class
(Heavylift)

DEMOLITION:



Delaware River 1/2/2000 © J. Curdy (S. Wiedner collection)

2004: To Biglift Shipping BV (Spliethoff's Bevrachtings BV), Netherlands.

2016: BigLift Holdings BV, Netherlands became managers.

2019: Sold to undisclosed interests / class & flag suspended (reportedly arrived in Eritrea 7/7/2019 ?)

BASIC DATA:

GT: 6714
DWT: 8734
TEU: 371
Reefer: 24
Loa: 100.70 (BB)
Bmd: 20.40
Draft: 8.20
Engine: 1x oil Wartsila 8L46B
Power: 7800 kW
Speed: 16.5 kn
Cranes: 2x275t
Decks: 2

OWNER & FLAG HISTORY:

TRACER since 01/08/1999
Flag Date of record Source
Not Known since 01/07/2019
Netherlands since 01/04/2004
Registered owner Date of record Source
RPTD SOLD UNDISCLOSED INTEREST since 22/07/2019
TRACER REDERIJ since 28/07/2012
TRACER during 2004
Ship manager Date of record Source
RPTD SOLD UNDISCLOSED INTEREST since 22/07/2019
BIGLIFT HOLDING before 08/2016
SPLIETHOFF'S BEVRACHTINGS BV since 07/04/2004
BIGLIFT SHIPPING BV during 2004

EX-NAMES:

TRACER	1999-04	Pine Maritime Ltd., Netherlands Antilles
TRACER	2004-12	CV Scheepvaartonderneming "TRACER", Netherlands
TRACER	2012-19	Rederij Tracer, Netherlands
TRACER	2019-	Undisclosed interests, class suspended, flag not known

GENERAL VESSEL INFORMATION:



TRACER, IMO 9204702 (NB-124), 9-8-1999 (BV) opgeleverd door Zhonghua Shipyard, Shanghai (406) als TRACER aan Pine Maritime Ltd., Willemstad-N.A., roepsein PJFB, in beheer bij West African Shipping Co. N.V., Willemstad en Graig Ship Management Ltd. 6.714 GT, 2.897 NT, 8.734 DWT. 650 TEU. 16 kn. 10.604 EPK, 7.800 kW, Wärtsilä 8L46B, Wärtsilä NSD Corp., Turku/Abo. 16,5 kn. 26-9-1999 gearriveerd bij Vlaardingen Oost Shiprepair B.V. 29-9-1999 verhaald naar Wilton-Fijenoord B.V., Schiedam voor plaatsen van de kranen door Huisman, 8-11-1999 opgeleverd door Huisman. 11-11-1999 vertrokken van Rotterdam. 15-11-1999 van Grangemouth naar Turku. 2001 in beheer bij BigLift Shipping B.V., Amsterdam. 2004 verkocht aan C.V. Scheepvaartonderneming "Tracer", Amsterdam, 6-4-2004 te Porto Nagaro, Italië onder de Nederlandse vlag gebracht, roepsein PHAC, in beheer bij BigLift Shipping B.V., Amsterdam. 3-3-2006 tijdens een reis van Bilbao naar Lobito de haven van Gijon binnengelopen nadat de lading kettingen in slecht weer was gaan schuiven. 10-3-2006 (e) in de vaart. 28-7-2012 (e) verkocht aan Rederij Tracer, Amsterdam, in beheer bij BigLift Shipping B.V., Amsterdam. 7-7-2019 gearriveerd te Massawa, Eritrea. 6-2019 verkocht, 31-7-2019 (V) geen vlag en de klasse opgeschort.

(14 September 2019)

Fleet list and history GRAIG AND THE CONFIDENCE CLASS David Jenkins and Roy Fenton

Origins of the Confidence class

In his Chairman's annual report for 1981, the founder's son Desmond Williams reported that, recognising that the centre of the shipping industry was moving to the Far East, a subsidiary company named Sektau Shipping Ltd. had been registered in Hong Kong. Although this would prove to be little more than a brass plate company, China was indeed where Graig's interest would be focussed from the mid-1990s onwards. In 1995, contact was made with Danish shipping company Clipper Group, established in Copenhagen in 1972. Clipper sought a partner for a project to build four 9,000dwt multi-purpose single-hold cargo vessels, equipped with two 75-tonne cranes mounted on the port side, and capable of carrying 660 containers; the single hold, in which 'tween decks could be fitted, was 65 metres long and 15 metres wide. As deep-sea container vessels had become larger, passing 10,000TEU, the number of ports they could use contracted, so that there was a growing demand for feeder container ships. However, a key feature of the design was to prove its single large hold, making them suitable for the transport of large, indivisible items of project cargoes, especially for the petro-chemical industries. Movable bulkheads and 'tween decks allowed the hold to be subdivided to accommodate individual items, whilst the fitting of two substantial cranes meant that they were self sustaining.

All these vessels were to be built at the Zhonghua Shipyard in Shanghai, China. An agreement was reached between Graig and Clipper whereby a joint company called Danwel (Danish-Welsh) Shipping was established. On 3 November 1995 a contract was signed between Danwel Shipping on one hand and Zhonghua Shipyard and the China Shipbuilding Trading company on the other for the construction of four vessels, of a type to be known as the Confidence class. Graig co-wrote the specification of the vessels with Danish ship designers CarlBro and was also to oversee their construction and provide subsequent technical supervision. An office was opened at the yard under the management of a former Graig master, and this presence would later become formally established as Graig China Ltd., with offices in Shanghai. The commercial management of the Confidence ships was to be provided by Clipper. July 1996 saw a further contract signed for four more identical vessels, with the first launch due to take place in May 1997.

In all, nineteen Confidence vessels were built at Zhonghua shipyard between 1997 and 2002. A potential major problem had to be faced halfway through the construction of the series when SOLAS rules relating to the maximum permitted size of single holds were changed. Fortunately, a dispensation was granted to build up to 20 vessels of the same type, providing that all successive vessels were built exactly to the original specifications. The Confidence class ships proved very successful, with a number chartered to Maersk to serve as feeder container ships. They also proved their value in the transport of complex project cargoes, as well as indivisible items like railway carriages, yachts and sections of aircraft fuselage. Four were taken up by Dutch heavy-lift ship specialists Mammoet (later BigLift); these vessels were fitted with two 150-tonne cranes mounted on opposite sides of the ship.

Financing the ships

In order to finance the construction of the class, single-ship companies were mostly established, which sought capital from a wide range of institutional investors. Initial ownership by single ship companies, some with quirky names like the Bluebottle Shipping Co. Ltd. of Nassau, often disguises the source of the finance. Names originally carried by the 15 basic ships of the class give some indication of the significance of Graig and the Clipper Group in control of their owning companies. The six carrying Welsh place names plus CEC CASTLE (which was openly owned by Graig) and probably CLIPPER CONFIDENCE all indicate the predominance of Graig, with CEC COPENHAGEN and CEC CULEMBOURG suggesting a Danish influence. CEC CALEDONIA was financed by the Bank of Scotland. The significance of the names CLIPPER WESTOE (from a Tyneside settlement), CEC CRUSADER and CEC COURAGE, are lost on the authors. The four heavy lift Ts were probably financed on behalf of Mammoet until their 2004 sale to Spliethoffs of Amsterdam.

In April 2004 an agreement was reached with Clipper to divide up the vessels. Graig retained seven vessels and these were then sold to the Hamburg-based finance house Ownership Emmissionhaus G.m.b.H. in an \$84m sale and charter-back deal. The company's structure allowed Germans to invest directly in shipping with tax-advantages plus zero liability. To make it even more attractive this was linked to a tonnage tax promoted by the German government which was characterised by a flat-rate assessment of a ship's cargo capacity rather than its profitability. At its height it is estimated that some 440,000 German citizens invested

Subsequent history

Sales of the 15 non-heavy lift members of the class to outside companies began in 2007. Between 2008 and 2012 others were transferred to a Clipper subsidiary (or more precisely to a subsidiary of Thorco Shipping A/S) named Clipper Projectships Ltd., Nassau, signalling the end of Graig ownership of ships of the class. Subsequent sales saw ownership quite widely dispersed, with known beneficial owners including those from Greece, Africa, the Middle and Far East, USA, Russia and Turkey.

Confidence class list

Names listed in the headings of each entry were those carried whilst in the ownership and/or management of Graig and its partner the Clipper Group/Clipper Elite Carriers.

9. TRACER 1999-2004

IMO 9204702 6,714g 2,888n 8,734d.

100.7 x 20.6 x 11.1 metres.

8-cyl. (460 x 580 mm) 4SCSA oil engine by Wartsila NSD Finland Oy, Turku, Finland; 10,605 BHP, 16.5 knots.

12.4.1999: Launched by Zhonghua Shipyard, Shanghai, China (Yard No. 406).

3.8.1999: Completed for Pine Maritime Ltd., Monaco (Graig Shipping plc, Cardiff) (Graig Shipmanagement Ltd., Cardiff, managers) as TRACER under the Netherlands Antilles flag.

2004: Sold to C.V. Scheepvaartonderneming Tracer (Spliethoff's Bevrachting B.V.) (BigLift Shipping B.V., managers), Amsterdam, Netherlands.

7.2012: Transferred to Rederij Tracer (Spliethoff's Bevrachting B.V.) (BigLift Shipping B.V., managers), Amsterdam.

8.2016: Managers became BigLift Holdings B.V., Amsterdam

7.2019: Sold.

2.2021: Believed to be still in service.

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