



# Ship Fact Sheet



## OPHIR (1891)

Base data at 30 October 1891. Last amended October 2001

\* indicates entries changed during P&O Group service.

Type	Passenger liner
P&O Group service	1918-1922
P&O Group status	Owned by subsidiary company
Former name(s)	
Registered owners	Orient Steam Navigation Company Ltd
Managers	Anderson, Anderson & Company and Frederick Green & Company
Operators	Orient Line
Builders	R Napier & Sons
Yard	Glasgow
Country	UK
Yard number	
Registry	Glasgow, UK
Official number	98673
Signal letters	MJGD
Call sign	
Classification society	Lloyd's Register
Gross tonnage	6,814 grt
Net tonnage	2,920 nrt
Deadweight	
Length	146.86m (482.0ft)
Breadth	16.24m (53.3ft)
Depth	10.39m (34.1ft)
Draught	
Engines	Triple-expansion steam engines
Engine builders	R Napier & Sons
Works	Glasgow
Country	UK
Power	11,400 ihp
Propulsion	Twin screw
Speed	18 knots (service); 18.75 knots (trials)
Passenger capacity	892 in 3 classes
Cargo capacity	
Crew	
Employment	UK/Australia mail service

**Career**

- 11.04.1891: Launched by Miss Green, daughter of one of the Orient Line's managers.
- 22.10.1891: Began two days of trials in the Clyde.
- 30.10.1891: Handed over as *Ophir* for Orient Steam Navigation Company. She embodied a complete break from what had become the conventional design for Australian run ships, whether Orient or P&O, and her two widely-spaced funnels and heavily raked masts gave her a unique appearance. *Ophir* was the name of a goldfield district near Bathurst, New South Wales, though it derives from an unidentified source of gold mentioned in the Old Testament.
- 06.11.1891: Maiden voyage London/Australia. She was the first twin-screw steamer on the Australian run, which proved useful when she had engine trouble in the Bay of Biscay outward bound. She had little cargo space, and her 125 tons/day consumption rendered her expensive to run, so during some off-peak seasons she was laid up off Southend, but despite this and notwithstanding being rather 'wet' she had a high reputation.
- 21.12.1891: Beginning of a 65-day arbitration with the builders over her speed, consumption and lifting capacity. Napiers suggested that though she was not strictly to contract she was therefore more suitable for the route. The matter was resolved in favour of Orient Steam.
- 09.11.1900: Chartered to the Admiralty for 6 months to act as Royal Yacht to take the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George V and Queen Mary) to Australia for the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament.
- 27.02.1901: Left Tilbury after extensive redecoration and refurbishing.
- 16.03.1901: Left Portsmouth for Australia. She then took the Royal Couple to New Zealand, Mauritius, South Africa and Canada before returning to the UK.
- 02.01.1902: Recommenced commercial sailings.
- 03.08.1904: Received bottom and keel damage when she struck a rock in Valdres Channel South of Aalsund while on a Norwegian cruise but was repaired by the London & Glasgow Shipbuilding Company, Govan.
- 05.02.1915: Purchased by the Government and converted to an armed merchant cruiser.
- 03.03.1915: Commissioned. Employed in the North Atlantic on patrol and examination duties between Gibraltar and the Canaries with the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Cruiser Squadron.
- 23.04.1915: Captured Swedish steamer *Marta* off Las Palmas carrying cargo taken from the German ship *Cap Ortegat* at Santa Cruz; the prize was sent to Gibraltar.
- 26.03.1916: Began three month refit at Gibraltar.
- 12.08.1916: Ran aground briefly at Dakar.
- 06.1917: Paid off at Liverpool, then fitted with new boilers.
- 02.1918: Re-commissioned as a hospital ship, serving in the Far East and then off the west coast of South America.

- 11.12.1918: The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company acquired controlling interest in Orient Line.
- 02.1919: Laid up in the Clyde.
- 1920: Offered for sale by auction but withdrawn because the highest bid (£45,000) was below reserve.
- 1922: Sold for £6,000 and scrapped at Troon.

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