



# Ship Fact Sheet



## RANGOON (1863)

Base data at 4 July 1863. Last amended November 2008

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

Type	Passenger liner
P&O Group service	1863-1871
P&O Group status	Owned by parent company
Former name(s)	
Registered owners, managers and operators	The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company
Builders	Samuda Brothers
Yard	Blackwall
Country	UK
Yard number	
Registry	London, UK
Official number	47376
Signal letters	VNQH
Classification society	
Gross tonnage	1,776 grt
Net tonnage	1,253 nrt
Deadweight	
Length	89.85m (294.9ft)
Breadth	11.61m (38.1ft)
Depth	5.36m (17.6ft)
Draught	
Construction (if not steel)	Iron
Engines	Tandem compound inverted direct-acting steam engine (Wolf's double cylinder design)
Engine builders	Humphrys, Tennant & Dykes
Works	London
Country	UK
Power	1,870 ihp
Propulsion	Single screw
Speed	12 knots
Passenger capacity	
Cargo capacity	
Crew	
Employment	Suez/Calcutta service

**Career**

- 04.04.1863: Launched. The drag chains failed to hold her and she ran across the river and stranded at East Greenwich, remaining aground until the following day when she was refloated through a channel that had been cut through the foreshore.
- 05.04.1863: Refloated at 0100hrs.
- 04.07.1863: Registered.
- 04.08.1863: Ran trials at Stokes Bay and delivered as *Rangoon* for The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. Though named after the capital of Lower Burma, and later that of the whole country, she never actually went there.
- 31.08.1863: Maiden voyage Southampton/Galle/Calcutta arriving 4<sup>th</sup> November.
- 10.12.1863: Stranded near Aden when on her first voyage from Calcutta to Suez. The local Sultan's troops had to be used to keep off looters until she was refloated.
- 25.12.1863: Towed into Aden by *Norna*.
- 18.01.1865: An explosion in her magazine and aft hold between Bombay and Aden caused fatal injuries to the child of a first class passenger. The fire took 3 hours to put out.
- 1871: Galle/Sydney mail service.
- 01.11.1871: Stopped outside Point de Galle waiting to disembark the pilot when a current put her across Kadir Rock and she was holed several times amidships. Six hours later she slipped off the rocks and sank stern first in deep water, but with no casualties except the pilot's reputation - he was given the entire blame for the accident. Mails were forwarded by *Behar*.

**WRECK OF THE RANGOON**

*"Annual Register" 1 November 1871*

This Peninsular & Oriental Company's steamer, with passengers and mails for Australia, struck on the Kadir Rock, about a mile from the mouth of the Point de Galle Harbour at 6 pm. and sank six hours afterwards. The *Rangoon*, an iron ship of £78,000 value and 1,780 tons burden, was commanded by one of the oldest of the P&O Company's officers, Captain Skottowe, who upon this occasion was making his last trip before retiring from the service, having never previously met with a casualty. The Purser of the ship, Mr Liversage, was wrecked for the second time, he having been on board the *Colombo* when that ship was lost. The wrecked vessel had taken on board the Australian mails and passengers arriving by the *Indus* from Suez on the previous day.

Intelligence of this disaster reached Leadenhall Street nine hours after its occurrence. We subjoin extracts from a letter of Lieutenant Bridges, which appeared in the "Times" of November 29.

"Leaving the harbour last night at 6 pm (with) pilot on board, almost dark when we weighed, we struck on one of the numerous reefs at the entrance, and the ship sunk in 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours in 12 fathoms, about 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles off the mouth of the harbour. Most providentially there were (a most unusual thing) two ships at anchor out there waiting to come into the harbour, or at very least, the discomforts would have been very great, and probably loss of life. We left at six, as I have said, leaving the mail boat behind. When we got about half-a-mile out she came out to us; we stopped about ten or fifteen minutes to hoist her up, and it was then that the current drifted us broadside on, out of the channel, and when we went ahead again straight, thinking, I suppose, we were still in the channel, she struck a reef on the right hand side of it, first starboard side forward, then the keel aft, and bumped very heavily, came off and commenced filling. We anchored, but kept for a short time turning ahead to keep the engine-pumps going, and parted the cable, then anchored again much farther off. Fires were put out and she filled fast...We got all the women away in the lifeboat about seven,...and then we got everybody else away, and all went on board a ship at anchor outside. I left in the last boat, but about nine borrowed one of the boats of the ship we were on board and went back. Found the ship deserted...Met the Captain and with the aid of, first of all, eight Lascars and one officer, and assisted afterwards by two stewards and two more officers, saved much of the cabin baggage and mine bags of mails. I left about 11.40 pm awfully and entirely 'done up' and couldn't get my boat to stay longer; but I brought away as much as she would hold, and there was too much water on the main deck to do much, and a heavy swell rolling her so much. The most curious part of the affair is that we got no assistance, or a boat even, till ten, though close to the harbour; two Peninsular and Oriental ships and two Trinity Lighthouse craft, all with fires banked in the Harbour; and we fired four guns and burnt dozens of blue lights and rockets; but they thought we were communicating with the China steamer, the arrangement being that if we met the China steamer outside (which we ought to have met here, but she was overdue and we left), we were to attract her attention and take the mails from her;

and in the harbour they thought we were doing this. Once a pilot went to the Master Attendant and told him the *Rangoon* was on shore; he manned his boat and went outside to look, thought he saw the two steamers communicating, came in again, and went out to dinner, the pilot being also convinced it was a mistake and apologizing for spreading a false report.

The passengers and crew were all saved, but a considerable proportion of the mails and baggage sank.

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