



Ship Fact Sheet



BENTINCK (1843)

Base data at 24 June 1843. Last amended November 2008

* indicates entries changed during P&O Group service.

Type	Passenger liner
P&O Group service	1843-1860
P&O Group status	Owned by parent company
Former name(s)	
Registered owners, managers and operators	The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company
Builders	Thomas Wilson & Co Ltd
Yard	Liverpool
Country	UK
Yard number	
Registry	London, UK
Official number	31146
Signal letters	
Classification society	
Gross tonnage*	1,800 grt
Net tonnage	942 nrt
Deadweight	
Length	66.27m (217.5ft)
Breadth	10.97m (36.0ft)
Depth	9.29m (30.5ft)
Draught	5.87m (19.3ft) [1852]
Construction (if not steel)	Wood
Engines	Side-lever steam engines
Engine builders	Fawcett, Preston & Co Ltd
Works	Liverpool
Country	UK
Power	520 hp
Propulsion	Paddles
Speed	10 knots
Passenger capacity	102 passengers, 50 passengers' servants
Cargo capacity	
Crew	173: Captain, 7 officers, 5 engineers, 58 seamen (35 Asian), 71 firemen (67 Asian), 31 stewards and servants (10 Asian)
Employment	Suez/Calcutta mail service

Career

- 01.1841: Specification agreed with P&O's agents in Liverpool who supervised the contract. A response to P&O's receiving a grant of £20,000 per year for 5 years from the East India Company and the indecisive state of negotiations over the acquisition of another ship built for Indian service, *Precursor*.
- 18.05.1841: Ordered.
- 19.01.1843: Launched. Her name was in memory of Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of India 1827-1835, who on his return to the UK was active in promoting the development of mail services by steamer until his death in 1839.
- 24.06.1843: Registered as *Bentinck* for The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company at a cost of £89,000. She and her near-sister *Hindustan* (1842) were built to open the Suez/Calcutta mail service, and *Bentinck* was the first actually to link with the Overland Mail across Egypt. She had iron watertight bulkheads and carried firefighting apparatus, passengers were carried in 20 single, 22 double and 12 'large' cabins along the centreline of the ship with corridors between them and the vessel's sides, and the saloon was placed right aft.
- 26.06.1843: First engine trials in Coburg Dock, Liverpool.
- 07.1843: Left Liverpool calling at Dublin where P&O's Irish 'proprietors' could look her over.
- 24.08.1843: Sailed from Southampton with 54 passengers (paying £40 per head) via the Cape (where she was open to the public for charity) and Mauritius to Calcutta where she began running to Suez. For this voyage she was insured for £75,000.
- 1850: Returned to UK (reportedly under sail due to the state of her boilers) for extensive refit costing £35,000, including fitting patent feathering paddles which noticeably increased her speed, and much improved and extended passenger accommodation.
- 20.11.1851: Southampton/Alexandria service.
- 10.1852: Aground in the Solent homeward bound.
- 1853: Returned to the Indian station.
- 04.05.1853: Made Galle on her port paddle after she broke a shaft.
- 1857: Trooping voyage Calcutta/Rangoon.
- 1857: Gross tonnage re-stated as 1,974 grt.
- 1858: Attended the wreck of *Ava* off Ceylon.
- 02.1860: Ran aground in Gulf of Suez.
- 11.05.1860: Sold to the Indian Government for service as a store carrier.

THE BENTINCK

"Illustrated London News", 12 August 1843

This magnificent steam-ship is now moored in the river, off Blackwall, and a more glorious burthen has never been borne by our Thames. She is the property of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, whose patriotic efforts to shorten the distance between Europe and the East so thoroughly deserve the success that has attended them. The vast benefit conferred upon Great Britain and her Oriental possessions by the establishment of the mails to the Levant, and thence to India, has been most materially extended by the formation of the new packet stations at Ceylon, Madras, and Calcutta; and we have little doubt that ere long the commercial necessities of Great Britain will induce this company to extend the line to Hong-Kong. The advantages of the new route have been now sufficiently felt to obviate any necessity for commentary. By the old mode of transmission a letter or passenger seldom reached any of the presidencies in less time than four or five months, making an interval of from eight to ten months before an interchange of communication could be effected between Great Britain and the Indian possessions; whereas now Calcutta has been brought within less than forty, and Madras within about thirty-five days' post of London.

The *Bentinck* is intended to ply between Calcutta and Suez; touching at Madras, Ceylon, and Aden; she is admirably adapted for this voyage, being as compact as she is colossal, and every contrivance which art and arrangement could suggest having been adopted to create and continue the ventilation of the vessel. The length of the ship from the head to the taffrail is 250 feet; her breadth is 40 feet; her depth 31 feet; and she admeasures - including the spar-deck - 2,020 tons. Like all the other larger class vessels of this company, the *Bentinck* is fitted with water-tight iron bulkheads, by which her hold is divided into a number of water-tight compartments. The advantages of this arrangement are of a most important nature. The bulkheads materially strengthen the vessel, and effectually prevent her from sinking in case of springing a leak, as no more water can enter her in such a case than would be sufficient to fill to the water-line the particular compartment in which the leak may occur. Had such means been adopted on board some of the steam-boats which have recently been lost - the *Pegasus*, for instance - the immense and fearful sacrifice of human life might have been prevented. Besides this important protection the *Bentinck* is fitted with the patent paddle-box life-boats, and has a complete apparatus, including a powerful force-pump, for extinguishing fire instantaneously in any part of the ship. She also is fitted with Mr. Williams's smoke-consumers, which prevent the issue of smoke from the funnels.

The interior arrangements of the *Bentinck* are especially elegant, commodious and complete. She possesses accommodation for 102 cabin passengers, having 20 single cabins, 22 double cabins, and 12 family and general cabins. They are fitted up with every attention to comfort and convenience; and, above all light and ventilation, so desirable in tropical climates, have been abundantly provided. Each has its marble-covered basin-stand, mirrors, drawers, writing apparatus etc. Venetian blinds are inserted in the upper part of the doors, and, wherever possible, in the sides of the cabins also; and plates of perforated zinc, and all manner of contrivances, are introduced to ensure a constant circulation of wholesome and refreshing drafts of air. The spar-deck forms a magnificent walk, the full length of the ship, with convenient

seats abaft. The main-deck, below, is also comparatively open and airy, and forms, with the houses on each side, a spacious and well-lighted arcade, which may be resorted to in showery or boisterous weather. The principal cabin or saloon, under the quarter-deck, is a large square apartment, well-lighted from the deck, and from the stern and side windows. It affords room for 100 persons to be seated commodiously at the tables; is lofty, and differs somewhat from those usually constructed, being nearly square; and free from the inconvenience of the several berths entering immediately into it, as it occupies the whole width of the vessel in the stern, and is upwards of 30 feet each way, having besides large stern windows, spacious ports on each side, thus giving abundance of light and air, and a full view of the sea in nearly every direction. The decorations of the saloon consist of several highly interesting views of Cabul, Ghuznee, etc., painted, or rather enamelled, on slate. The gildings are gorgeous, and all the fittings are correspondingly superb. The ladies' saloon is quite an unique apartment. It is entered by the side of the staircase, and presents a quiet, pleasing contrast to the more brilliant decorations of the grand saloon. This room, and the range of cabins adjoining it, are appropriated to the use of ladies exclusively.

A wide passage communicates with the state cabins, and terminates with a good flight of stairs, spreading each way, at the top, to the upper deck. Amongst the other contrivances for ministering to the health, comforts, or luxury of oriental voyagers, are cold, hot, and shower baths; and, for their intellectual recreation, a well-selected library has been provided for the saloon.

The engines of the *Bentinck*, two in number, were manufactured by Faucett [sic], Preston, and Co., of Liverpool. The power, 540 horse, having cylinders of 78 inches diameter, and 8 feet stroke, which are fitted and cased over. The side beams are about 8 tons weight each; and the framings, which are of a very handsome pattern, are of the same patterns as the late *President* steam-ship's engines; and have, fitted in a case, to match the general appearance of the engine, on the starboard side, a counter, for showing the number of revolutions of the engines, which corresponds with a timepiece, fitted in Gothic cases – the style of the framing.

The condensers are of no novel description, but their action is very satisfactory, the exhaustion, as shown by the vacuum gauges, being 28lb. The air pumps contain nothing novel.

The boilers, four in number, two forward and two aft, are felted and cased in front and have four furnaces in each, with patent smoke-burners. The steam pipes run close to the deck, and are 18 inches in diameter, felted and cased with canvas, with stop valves, by which one or more boilers may be kept from working, in case of repair or accident. Working steam 5lb: per square inch, and consuming 6½ pounds of ordinary coal per horse power per hour.

The engine-room is divided into two compartments by a perforated platform, on which the engineers stand while working the engines, having starting bars, throttle, injection, and expansion-valve handles within reach.

The engines were first tried in the Coburg Dock, Liverpool, June 26th, since which time they have increased two revolutions per minute, then making but 14, at present 16 ½

nearly.

The *Bentinck* is commanded by Captain Kellock, an officer of great experience, who had made many voyages to India, and whose skill as a seaman is equalled only by his eminent social qualities. She will proceed from Southampton on the 24th of August, for Calcutta, *via* the Cape of Good Hope, touching at Gibraltar, Cape de Verde Islands, the Cape, Mauritius, Ceylon, and Madras, and will start from Calcutta on her first trip for Madras, Ceylon and Suez, on the 15th December next, and will thenceforward continue to ply on the line between India and Suez, in conjunction with her sister vessel, the *Hindostan*, which has already been for some time on that station. The brief period of time in which her voyage is likely to be accomplished may be calculated from the fact that her average speed on her passage from Dublin to Southampton was 13 miles an hour, and occasionally she ran 14 miles per hour.

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