



Ship Fact Sheet



ORONSAY (1925)

Base data at 19 January 1925. Last amended April 2009

* indicates entries changed during P&O Group service.

Type	Passenger liner
P&O Group service	1925-1942
P&O Group status	Owned by subsidiary company
Former name(s)	
Registered owners	Orient Steam Navigation Company Ltd
Managers	Anderson Green & Company Ltd
Operators	Orient Steam Navigation Company Ltd
Builders	John Brown & Co
Yard	Clydebank
Country	UK
Yard number	500
Registry	Glasgow, UK
Official number	147948
Signal letters	KSDT
Call sign	GJRZ
Classification society	Lloyd's Register
Gross tonnage	20,001 grt
Net tonnage	11,441 nrt
Deadweight	10,649 tons
Length	200.34m (657ft 6in) loa, 194.08m (637.7ft) b/p
Breadth	22.86m (75.0ft)
Depth	14.32m (46.9ft)
Draught	9.060m (29ft 9in)
Engines	Brown-Curtis single-reduction-g geared steam turbines
Engine builders	John Brown & Co
Works	Clydebank
Country	UK
Power	20,000 shp
Propulsion	Twin screw
Speed	20 knots
Passenger capacity*	600 first class, 1,200 third class
Cargo capacity	4,631 cubic metres (163,570 cubic feet) refrigerated
Crew	About 430
Employment	UK/Australia mail service, and cruising

Career

- 16.08.1924: Launched by Viscountess Novar, wife of a former Governor General of Australia.
- 14.01.1925: Ran trials.
- 19.01.1925: Delivered as *Oronsay* for Orient Steam Navigation Company. She was the second of Orient Line's five 20,000-ton ships built in the 1920s. Her name is taken from an island in the Hebrides.
- 07.02.1925: Maiden voyage Tilbury/Brisbane.
- 1925: Programme of summer cruises from the UK.
- 26.09.1929: Opened new entrance lock at Tilbury Docks.
- 1935: Third class converted to Tourist. Passenger capacity now 501 first class, 482 tourist class.
- 1936: Made first Orient Line call at Hobart, Tasmania with 250 passengers.
- 06.04.1940: Requisitioned in Tilbury as a troopship.
- 03.05.1940: First trooping voyage Clyde/Southampton/Cherbourg/Gibraltar/Malta.
- 29.05.1940: Sailed from Liverpool for evacuation of Norway.
- 17.06.1940: Heavily bombed while in St Nazaire evacuating troops and survivors from the *Lancastria*, escaping with damage to the wheelhouse and after part of the bridge.
- 08.10.1940: Machine-gunned by aircraft off the coast of Ireland, when carrying troops from the Clyde to Egypt. Returned to Gourock under her own steam.
- 12.08.1940: Sailed from Liverpool with 351 children evacuated to Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- 08.10.1940: En route for Egypt with a troop convoy when she was attacked by a Focke Wulf bomber off the northwest coast of Ireland. Escorted back to Glasgow for repairs where she stayed until June 1941.
- 28.06.1941: Sailed from Glasgow via the Cape with troops for the Middle East.
- 05.05.1942: Served as Commodore ship in the capture of Diego Suarez during the Madagascar campaign, at the end of which she evacuated 114 French officers, 688 Senegalese troops, 33 women and 42 children as prisoners-of-war.
- 09.10.1942: When she was off the coast of West Africa south-west of Freetown, homeward bound from Cape Town with 319 crew, 27 gunners and 130 passengers and carrying 5,200 tons of copper slates and 3,000 tons of oranges, she was hit by the first of four torpedoes from the Italian submarine *Archimede* at 0520hrs, though she did not sink until after the fourth torpedo 2½ hours later in position 04°29'N-20°52'W. Five crew were killed in the explosions. Most of the survivors were picked up by British ships after 8-9 days, except for one boat containing 37 crew, 1 gunner and 25 passengers who were interned by the Vichy French West African authorities after being picked up by their colonial sloop *Durmont Durville* after 12 days.

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