

Drum Majors' Dress Belts and Staffs*

by John Rawlinson

In 1926 a standard pattern staff was introduced for the RNSM as well as for many of the C-in-Cs bands. The year before the Adjutant General had given orders for the standardisation of Drum Majors' dress belts, by 1929 the trend for uniformity had continued with the introduction of a common pattern staff for Divisional Bands.

Records of this standardisation process have survived at The National Archives and are contained in ADM1/8808. Within this file are sketches produced by each Division of the staffs in use during the 1920s.



Fig 1. Drum Major, Depot Band, Circa 1902-1910.



Fig 2
Sketch of the
Drum Major's
Mace and
Pace Stick
[sic] in use at
the Depot,
1929

The Mace
was supplied
to the Depot
in 1892 at a
cost of
£9.15.0

* ADM1/8808 also shows that each part of the Corps had a different name for the Drum Major's Staff. During the 1920s the RMA referred to it as a Staff, Plymouth Division referred to it as a Stave whilst the Depot called theirs a Mace, by the 1950s the use of Stave was prevalent whilst this in turn has changed to the current practise of referring to the Drum Major's Staff.

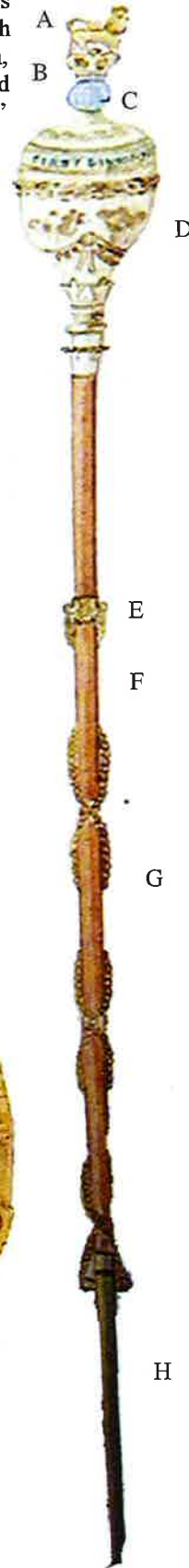


Fig 3 Plymouth Division Stave
 The head and ferrule were made of gilded brass, the cane Malacca with gold cord and tassels.



Fig 4 Chatham Stave
 A Golden Lion
 B Golden King's Crown
 C Silver Globe engraved details
 D Golden Dome, engraved with scroll, oak leaves, floral design, and "Per Mare Per Terram" and "First Division Royal Marines"
 E Golden Band
 F Tapering Malacca cane, 3ft long
 G Gold Tassels and Cord
 H Tapering Brass Ferule 18½ in long

Total Length 5ft 6in.



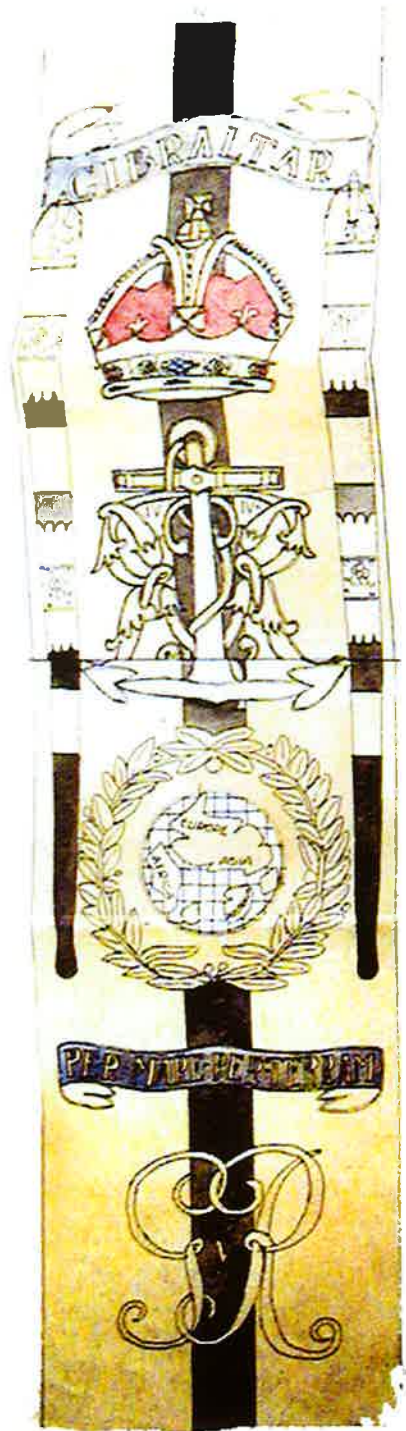


Fig 7 Drum Major's Dress Belt
The standardised pattern introduced in 1925.

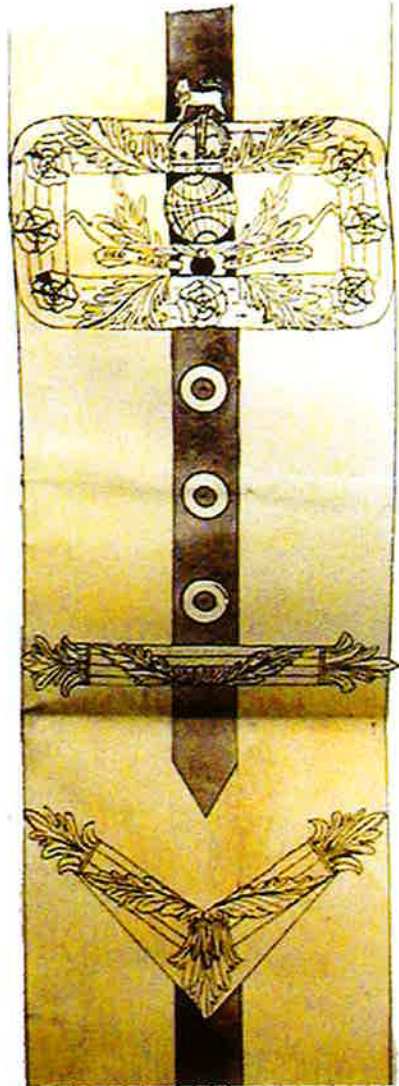


Fig 8 & 9
Unadopted design for a
standard pattern staff, 1929



After much correspondence the Portsmouth Staff, similar to the RMA and Depot Staffs, was used as the basis for the standard pattern—the design that is still in use today.

Fig 5 Staff, Drum Major, RNSM.

A Similar pattern for Bands of the C-in-C
 Portsmouth
 Plymouth
 Atlantic
 Med.
 China

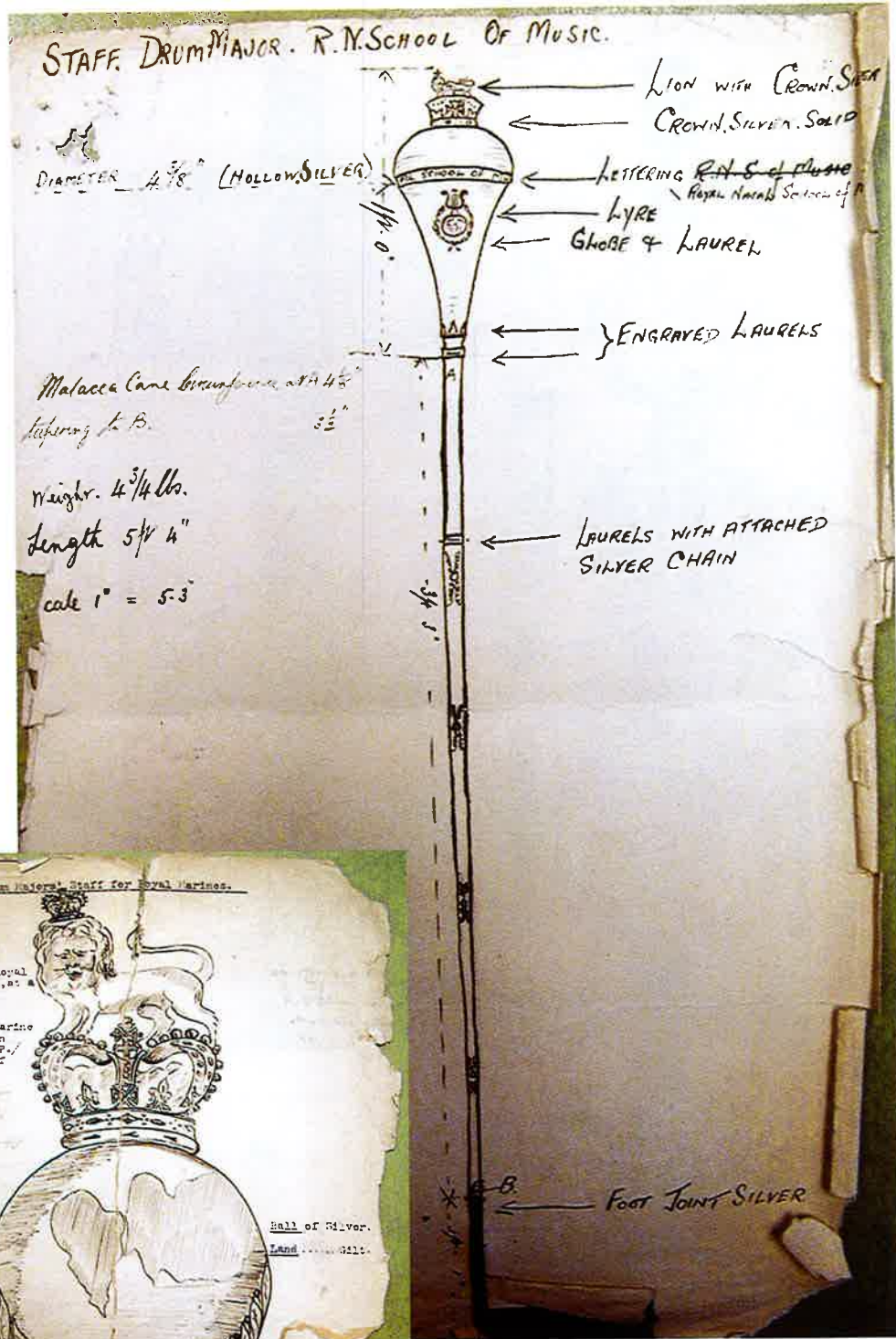


Fig 6 Drum Majors' Staff Royal Marines
 This pattern was supplied to the Depot in 1892, to the RMA in 1897 and to Portsmouth Division in 1900.