



Viewed from the Treble

Most of the time, we ring ‘Treble dominated’ methods. That means that the Treble’s path repeats every lead – simpler than for the other bells. The very concept of a ‘lead’ is based on the Treble’s repeating work, and all the other bells’ work revolves around the Treble.

The *Learning Curve* discussed this in October 1999 (Volume 1, Chapter 5) but from the perspective of the other bells, in particular how they could obtain clues about what they were doing by observing the Treble. This month, in response to a reader’s request, we turn the telescope round, to think how things look from the Treble’s perspective.

It is slightly paradoxical that the Treble is often rung by the least experienced ringer (because the line is simpler) whereas one might expect the key bell to be rung by the most reliable ringer. Because inexperienced Treble ringers are less aware of how methods work, they are more likely to be thrown off course when the bells around them don’t seem to behave as expected.

Hunting

If you go from front to back (or vice versa) you must meet all the other bells. The reason is fairly obvious – if they are all behind you to start with and in front of you at the end, then you must have crossed the path of each one.

This leads to a further rule. If you plain hunt from one end to the other, you meet each bell just once. Again the reason is clear – you swap with one bell for each place that you move, which is the same as the number of bells.

Turning round

Things are more interesting when you stop, make a place, and turn round. Then you meet one or more of the bells you have already passed, but which you meet where depends on what they have been doing since you passed them. If they have all been hunting (as they do underneath you in Plain Bob for example) then you meet them in the same order as when you last met them. The corollary is that if they have been doing anything other than plain hunting, then you do not meet them in the same order, so don’t expect to.

They could have done lots of different things (they are having fun ringing a fancier line than you) but until you get quite experienced, you won’t be able to keep track of them all. There are some simple things you can look out for though, which people often trip up over.

Leading and lying

While you lead, the bell over you might turn round and take you off lead again, see Figure 1 (a). That throws some people when they aren’t expecting it – or when they are, and it doesn’t happen, as in Figure 1 (b). Find out if the method being rung includes someone making 2nds place at the lead end (eg Plain, Little, Cambridge, ...). If so, then expect the bell you turn from lead to make a place over you and then turn you from lead. If

the method doesn’t have 2nds place made (eg Single Court, Double Norwich Court, Kent Treble Bob, Norwich Surprise, Bristol Surprise, ...) then a different bell will come down to turn you from lead.

Now think about calls (which affect what happens at the lead end). If the method has a 4th place bob (eg Plain, St Clements, Cambridge, ...) or a bob place made 3 from the back (eg Double Norwich Court, ...) then again, no one makes 2nds place over you, as in Figure 1 (c). Beware though, because if the method has a 4th place bob, it will have a 123 place single, where yet again someone makes 2nd place over you, as in Figure 1 (d).

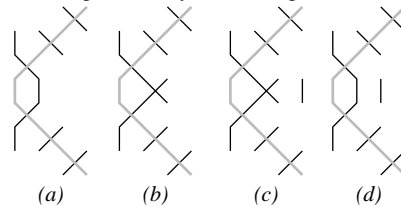


Figure 1: What happens over Treble’s lead

At the back, there is a similar effect if someone makes a place immediately under you (in 5th place on 6 bells, in 7th place on 8 bells, and so on). This doesn’t happen in most common methods (eg Plain Bob, St Clements, Single Oxford, Kent Treble Bob, Bristol Surprise, ...) but it does happen in several double methods (eg Double Bob, Double Oxford) and several common Surprise methods (Cambridge, Yorkshire, ...). Figure 2 (a) and (b) show the two possibilities.

The Treble doesn’t always turn round right at the back. In Little Bob, it turns round in 4th place, before you get to meet the bells above you. There is no 3rd place for you to worry about, since the bells underneath you just hunt, as shown in Figure 2(c). In some ways it seems like ringing the Treble to Plain Bob Minimus, but don’t be fooled. A different group of bells comes down past you each lead, so you meet them all in due course. Which bells come down depends on whether there was a call.

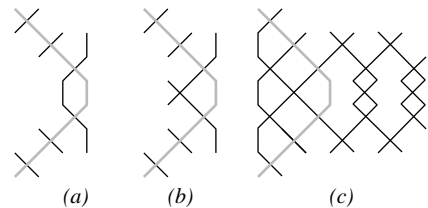


Figure 2: What happens under the Treble

Treble Bob hunting

Ringling Treble to Treble Bob or Surprise is useful for improving ropesight. More happens around you, but you spend longer with each bell as you dodge with it, instead of whizzing past. The principles described above about passing bells still apply, providing you think of dodging with a bell as ‘a slow way to pass it’. Figure 3 shows how the Treble meets bells at the front and the back, with and without a place being made next to it, while Treble bob hunting.

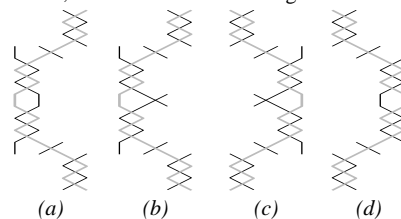


Figure 3: Treble Bob hunting

Farther from the Treble

Quite a lot can happen farther away from the Treble’s lead or lie, depending on the complexity of the method, and it would be impossible to describe all possibilities here. The important thing to realise is that if the other bells are not hunting, then you won’t next meet them in the same order as you last did.

In particular, if a bell turns round soon after you meet it, you can meet it again very soon. For example, in both Single and Double Court Bob Minor, and Double Norwich Court Bob Major, the bell you turn from lead, turns round in 4th place, so you meet it again very quickly. Likewise, its mirror image turns round just after you meet it on your way down, and then it turns you from the lead, as shown in Figure 4 (a). In Reverse Court and Double Court Bob Minor, and Double Norwich Court Bob Major, the corresponding thing happens when the Treble is at the back, as shown in Figure 4(b). The same thing can happen when you are Treble Bob hunting. Figure 4(c), and (d) show what happens around Treble’s lead and lie in Bristol Surprise.

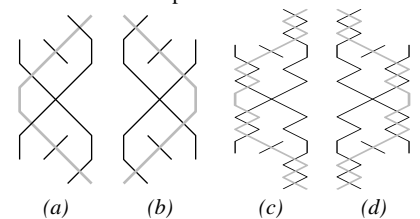


Figure 4: Bells turning round near the Treble

Finally

The ability to see what is happening in the method around you is a very valuable skill, whatever bell you ring. To develop it, you will need both an understanding of how the method works, and good ropesight, ie the ability to take in the overall pattern of the moving ropes, and make sense of it.

What you should not do is to memorise, or work out, the order you follow the bells, as a substitute for knowing the place that you should be in, and being able to put your bell there, regardless of seeing a rope to follow. Such last minute actions lead to poor striking, and leave you more vulnerable to going wrong when the bell you follow is in the wrong place.

Move your bell between places by rhythm. Check your striking by listening, and use your awareness of the other bells working around you to make ringing more interesting, and to give you confidence by checking that things are still OK. If you see someone slip up when they should pass you, give them a nod or a wink. You might be surprised at the idea of a Treble ringer helping the others, but when the method revolves around the Treble, prompts from that quarter can be very useful.

If you do not yet ring the method, learning something about its structure, and seeing it work around you while ringing the Treble, can provide a gentle way in to learning to ring it in due course.

Tail End

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