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Ringing methods in hand - 3

This article concludes Helen Mcgregor's tutorial on method ringing two-in-hand.

Lesson IV

So much for plain hunt, how can we ring Plain Bob Minor?

• Plain hunt most of the time

• When the Treble leads, on the backstroke the other bells reverse one step along the hunting path (ie dodge) or make seconds if turned from lead by the Treble.

• Recognise the relationship between your bells at this backstroke and carry on plain hunting in the appropriate position until the next Treble lead.

You might find it easiest to have the Trebles for your first few attempts. That should eliminate the guess work of wondering when the Treble is leading – it is in your right hand!!

On a piece of graph paper write out one lead of plain hunt for the Treble, finishing with its second blow at lead. Write out one lead of plain hunt for the 2nd to fit in with it - note that it is coursing relative to the Treble. When the Treble strikes its first blow at lead, the 2nd is coursing down after it and strikes in thirds place. The Treble makes it's backstroke lead, and the 2nd steps back to ring in fourths place. Since you have just rung this backstroke striking in first and fourths place, you must be in the 2-3 position for plain hunting.

Now write out the next Treble lead and write out the plain hunt lead of the 2nd in the 2-3 position relative to the Treble. When the treble strikes its first blow at lead, look where the 2nd is - it has just left the back and is in fifths place. Now when the Treble makes its backstroke lead, step the 2nd back to ring in sixth place. Since you have just rung this backstroke striking in first and sixths place (last), you must be in opposites for plain hunting.

Continue in this fashion - plain hunt for a while, see where you are at the Treble's backstroke, take the 2nd one step backwards, recognise the new position and carry on hunting. The pattern between your hands will change every time the Treble leads. The next lead you will strike in first and fourths at the backstroke, stepping back to first and thirds place. Yippee back into coursing – **but beware -** things are the other way round. This coursing has the Treble sounding first out of your pair on the way to the back and the 2nd sounding first on the way down to the front.

The following lead you strike in first and seconds place at the backstroke. The 2nd can't step backwards (because the Treble is there) and makes seconds. **That's all.**

As a safety net you might wish to learn the order in which you ring the patterns: coursing, 2-3, opposites, 2-3, coursing. Notice that the pattern starts closed up, gets progressively more open, and then closes up again. Even so, it is best to

ring it just by hunting, dodging, hunting and so on, working out each position as you come to it. You will need to do that when you start to ring touches.

The other pairs

Ringing $3\overline{\&}4$ or 5&6 to Plain Bob Minor is **exactly** the same – dodge with both hands (or make seconds) when the Treble leads - but some differences come from not having the Treble.

Ringing the Trebles you change the position you ring **every** lead end, but ringing an 'inside pair' you only change position if one of your bells makes seconds (or is affected by a bob). If both bells dodge then you come out of the lead end ringing in the same position as you were when you went into it.

If you are ringing the Trebles, you have no excuse for missing the lead end, because you are ringing the Treble in your right hand. If you are ringing an inside pair, you have to watch or listen for the lead ends.

So there is a trade-off. On the Trebles you know where the lead ends are but have to change positions every time. On an inside pair it is harder to know where the lead ends are, in order to dodge or make seconds, but you do not have to switch positions every time. You might find you develop a preference for the Trebles or for ringing inside.

	First & fourth = 2-3 position ++++++ ++++++ +++++++ ++++++++++++++	
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++	+++++ ++++++ +++++++ +++++++++++++++++	+++++ ++++++ +++++++ +++++++++++++++++

First & fifth	First & third
= 2-3 position	= Coursing
++++++	++++++
++++++	+++++
++++++	++++++
+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++	+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++	+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
++++++	++++
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Calls

The same principle applies for calls as for plain leads - plain hunt until the Treble's handstroke lead, make the appropriate moves onto the backstroke, and then continue hunting in the new position. The new thing to learn is the move from handstroke to backstroke at the lead, especially on an inside pair.

A bell in fifths place and above does exactly the same as at a plain lead. There are only two of them in Plain Bob Minor, but there are lots more on higher numbers. The bell in fourths at handstroke stays in fourths at backstroke and the bells in second and thirds place change places. It is not as tidy as a plain lead and it takes more practice to think what the bell in each hand is doing, but it is not difficult in principle. Just a thought about calls – you might find it easier to give a quick thought for the actual place of the shadow or reflection hand as you approach the lead ends in touches. This can help you to work out whether or not you are affected by the call. Once you have successfully negotiated the lead end then revert to pattern.

After Plain Bob, what next?

Try Little Bob. The leads are like Plain Bob, and some bells are affected at the Treble's half lead too. Plain hunt and either dodge or make seconds when the Treble leads just like Plain Bob. Also when the Treble makes its second blow in fourths if you are higher than the Treble (fifths or sixths in Minor) then dodge but if you are under the Treble then just plain hunt. Recognise the new hunting position after both lead and half lead and carry on according to pattern.

Draw out the figures and look at this. You will see that the sections of plain hunting from Treble lead to half lead and vice versa only last for three blows! So it is only up-down-up in pattern before the next time you have to think on the down. Rather more thinking than in Plain Bob!

Then what?

Try St Clements Bob Minor. The leads are like Plain Bob, but between the leads two bells keep dodging in 1-2 while the others plain hunt above them.

Plain hunt and dodge or make seconds when the Treble leads. When hunting down from the back turn around in thirds unless the Treble is under you, in which case dodge in 3-4 down and go onto the front. Once on the front, keep dodging until the Treble comes to you, then make seconds (the lead end) then lead and dodge some more (up).

How do you know when to stop dodging up? Anticipate the Treble coming through you (you must pass it in 2-3) so when it strikes over you in thirds place, go up to dodge 3-4 up and onto the back, ie hunting from thirds to sixths between the leads. Remember that when you are on the front if you are dodging down lead at handstroke and if you are dodging up you lead at backstroke.

After St Clements you could move on to Kent Treble Bob (the slow bell making 2nds forces everyone else to dodge, and 3-4 places instead of dodges either side of the Treble lead), Oxford Treble Bob (like Kent but with different places in 3-4 that turn the bell around), Gainsborough Bob Major (like Little Bob but the Treble turns around in sixths place). These are very sketchy descriptions of course - you need to learn more than this!

You probably know these methods from ringing a single bell in the tower, so you already know the lines. You might be tempted to try to learn the work as two lines. **Do not learn the lines. Work out how the method hangs together and find out the rules.**

Enjoy!

That concludes Helen's series of articles on handbell ringing. Each article has included diagrams to help you as you read, but please heed Helen's advice. Don't just look at these diagrams. Find some paper, draw them out for yourself and make sure you really understand how things work before you try ringing. It really does help you to learn better.

Tail End

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