



Ringling methods in hand - 2

Continuing Helen McGregor's introduction to double handed method ringing on handbells.

Lesson II

Get another sheet of graph paper and draw out the path of the 3rd in blue and the 4th in red. What do you see as the relationship this time?

- The back part of the pattern is a mirror image of the front part.

When one bell leads the other lies, when one is in second's place (one away from the front) the other is in fifth's place (one away from the back), when one is in thirds (up against the mirror) the other is in fourths (also up against the mirror on the other side).

This pattern is called 'opposites'.

To ring it, replace the "elastic" analogy we used for coursing and think "mirror" instead. Then as before **just** think which hand is closer to the front, what place is it in, apply the mirror and ring the "reflection".

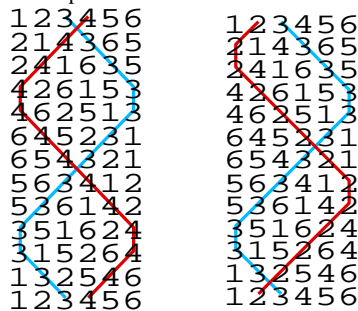
For plain hunt on six bells ringing the 3rd and the 4th we have:

Rounds	at hand
Rounds	at back.
Cross over	Still <u>third's</u> and fourth's place, but 4th is nearer the front than 3rd.
Spread	4th hunts down to <u>second's</u> place. Apply mirror, ring the other hand
Spread	Ring the 4th at <u>lead</u> . Apply the mirror and ring the other hand
Repeat	<u>Lead</u> again with 4th & reflect the other again
Close	Ring the 4th in <u>seconds</u> place and the reflect with the other hand
Close (meet)	Ring the 4th in <u>third's</u> place and reflect (together in the middle)
Cross over	3rd now closer to the front (in <u>third's</u> place), so now count its place and ring 4th as a reflection
Spread	Ring 3rd in <u>second's</u> place and reflect the 4th.
Spread	Ring 3rd at <u>lead</u> and reflect the 4th etc.
Repeat	<u>Lead</u> again with 4th & reflect the other again
Close	Ring the 4th in <u>seconds</u> place & the reflect with the other hand
Close (meet)	Ring the 3rd in <u>third's</u> place and reflect (together in the middle)

Don't confuse yourself by trying to hold too much information in your head at the same time. Know which hand is closer to the front, what place is it in and ring the reflection with the other hand. The only **places** you should be counting are underlined in the table.

Don't proceed further if you ever consciously think of a place higher than thirds! Everything higher than thirds is simply a reflection of your other hand – the one closer to the front. Notice also that there is always an even number of spaces between the two bells.

As an interesting aside spare a moment to realise that the treble and tenor are also ringing the same pattern relative to each other!



Lesson III

Now please humour me and write out the path of the 2nd and the 3rd.....

What is their relationship?

- A gap of three bells where the Trebles had a gap of one bell.

You have to look a bit harder to see this - because we are only ringing minor the pattern doesn't really get a chance to become established before one of the bells arrives on the front or back and the gap shrinks momentarily until the bells meet, cross, hunt and re-establish the three bell gap. If you have the time and inclination please write out the pattern of the 2nd and 3rd plain hunting for major (eight bells). Now the bells have enough space to cement the pattern.

Recognise that the bells meet and cross when they are one place away from the front (in second's and third's place), and the back (in fourth's and fifth's place for minor, and sixth's and seventh's place for major).

I'm afraid if there is an easy way to ring the 2-3 pattern I don't know it, but see below for a suggestion. You must just practise it until you have the feel, there is a rhythm to it, trust me, ring it as fast as you can manage, knowing the music of plain hunt should now be a help.

Practising different positions

How do you practise the 2-3 position - when do you ever ring this "un-natural" pair?

- Pass the bells round!

Sit in your circle with the two friends you are learning with, everyone puts their left hand bell down on the floor next to them. Change your remaining bell from your right hand into your empty left, use your right hand to pick up your right hand neighbour's discarded bell. Someone has 2nd & 3rd, someone else 4th & 5th (which also ring in the 2-3 position) and the last one has the Treble and Tenor (which ring in opposites).

Persevere until you can ring reasonable plain hunt on six. Repeat the bell swapping manoeuvre **again** putting **left** hand bell on the floor to start the swop. Work out who is ringing what pattern and then ring it. Keep practising until the plain hunt sounds OK, move the bells around again, and so on. Eventually you will get back to where you

started, with everyone having practised all three positions: coursing, opposites and the 2-3.

Take a moment to reflect that if you shuffled all 6 bells on the floor and everyone chose any two bells, worked out how to make rounds and what are your starting places, then to ring plain hunt you will all be in one of the three patterns, starting somewhere along a familiar path although not necessarily at what you might think of as the beginning. Practise the shuffling and plain hunting so that you come to recognise that if you have picked up, e.g. the 3rd and the 5th then you will be coursing out to the back. If you selected the 4th and the 5th then you are in the 2-3 position splitting away from each other to start. Now just choose any two numbers between 1 & 6 inclusive and announce their relationship for plain hunt.

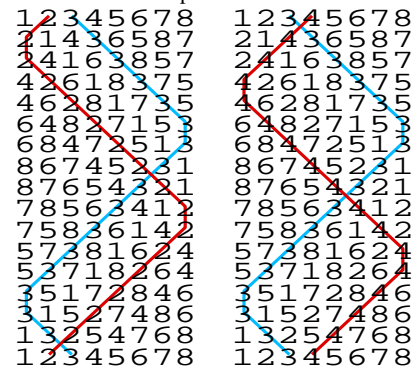
Appreciate that there is never any choice of pattern; it is fixed by which pair you have chosen, and by where they strike in rounds.

The 4th & 6th course, the Treble & 5th are in the 2-3, and so on.

How many patterns?

For minor there are only three patterns - coursing, opposites and the 2-3. The 2-3 position is a bit tricky to appreciate with only six bells, but the relationship is a lot easier to ring in Major.

Another interesting aside: For Major although the 2/3 is a lot easier to ring than in the Minor there is a whole extra pattern the 3/4 to learn.



Here there is a gap of five bells but the pattern hasn't really got a chance to establish itself before one of the bells leads or lies and the pattern is "lost". 3-4 is quite straight forward in Royal, but when ringing Royal there is another new pattern with 7 between yours, the 4-5 position. And so it goes on. Every time you add a pair of bells, e.g. to grow from Royal to Maximus the pattern that was new becomes straight forward but the price to pay is a new (tricky) pattern which hasn't really got the space to become established.

All these patterns are hybrids between 'opposites' work and 'coursing' work. Before and after you cross, the gap between them gets wider or narrower by two places each row, reflecting in a mirror. Instead of a single mirror in the middle, there is a temporary mirror in each crossover position. When one of the bells hits the front or the back it can't go any further so on the next row the gap widens by one place, and then you switch to running parallel, like coursing, but with whatever gap you have built up until one bell hits the other end stop. Then they close by one space, and you switch to reflection in the other mirror, closing two spaces each row until they meet and cross.

How many patterns in Minimus (4 bells)?

- Just two: coursing and opposites.

Helen's final lesson is in the next article.

Tail End