

## From the same hymn sheet

We all have different ways of learning and remembering things, but when it comes to communicating them with other people, it is important to speak the same language. Even more important is to write things down in ways that other people can correctly interpret, since there is no one to query if you don't understand.

This month, we will look at the way touches are written down. There are several different ways of doing this. You might condemn the Exercise for allowing such a confusing state to emerge, but it is quite not so simple - some notations are better suited to certain purposes than others.

There are three main schemes:

- Writing down what happens at every lead
- Writing down only when there is a call
- Using a standard framework to show calls

There are further variations on these basic approaches.

### Every lead

This is the most basic notation. It is simple to understand, and requires no knowledge of what any particular bell is doing to interpret it. It is a very long winded notation, and therefore most suitable for very short touches. P is a plain lead, B is a bobbed lead and S is a singled lead. Some examples are:

PSPBPSBP = 79 Grandsire Doubles.

BPBPBPB = 60 Plain Bob or Grandsire Doubles

SPSPSPBP = 97 Grandsire Triples

Where the pattern repeats, the description can be shortened, for example:

(BSBP) x3 = 120 Grandsire Doubles.

This notation becomes a bit indigestible if you use it to describe longer touches. An alternative approach, still listing every lead, includes the row at each lead end as well as the call (if any) as in Figure 1a. This is the same 97 of Grandsire Triples shown above, but it shows the row that starts each lead (the 'lead head'). Because the Treble is always leading at the lead, it is omitted from the figures. The start row (Rounds) is above the line at the top. The bottom row for a touch of even length is also Rounds, but in this case, since the touch comes round at handstroke the lead head is the row that would come after Rounds (if you kept going). It is in brackets because you don't actually ring it.

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 234567   | 234567     |
| S 572634 | S 572634 1 |
| 567423   | S 435267 2 |
| S 435267 | S 764523 2 |
| 423756   | - 357264 1 |
| S 764523 | (325476) 1 |
| - 357264 |            |
| (325476) |            |

(a)

(b)

Figure 1: 97 Grandsire Triples

Setting out a touch like this lets you see who is doing what. If one bell does the same work at

several calls (none do in this example) it might be easier to call from that bell.

### When there is a call

For longer touches, it is normal to miss out the leads with no call, as in Figure 1(b), which shows the same touch. The extra number at the right of each row shows how many leads have elapsed since the previous call. A 1 means it was the previous lead.

The space saved in this example is not a lot, but for longer touches with calls further apart the saving can be much more. A touch containing more than one course normally has the course ends marked with dividing lines, as in Figure 2.

Note that a course in this context might not be of the standard length. The course is defined by when the Tenor comes home (its position at the end of a plain course). If the Tenor is affected by a call, the course might be shorter or longer than normal. For example if the Tenor makes 4ths at a call in Plain Bob, it shortens the course by two leads. If the Tenor runs out or in at a bob in Plain Bob, it adds a lead to the course, and since this repeating lead puts the Tenor back in the same place, the course can be extended several leads by a string of consecutive bobs. Figure 3 shows a 10 lead touch of Plain Bob Major (3 more than the normal 7).

|         |           |
|---------|-----------|
| 23456   | 2345678   |
| - 23564 | - 2357486 |
| 36245   | 3728564   |
| 64352   | 7836245   |
| 45623   | - 7864352 |
| - 45236 | - 7845623 |
| - 45362 | - 7852436 |
| 56423   | 8273564   |
| 62534   | 2386745   |
| 23645   | - 2364857 |
| - 23456 | - 2345678 |

Figure 2:

Figure 3:

120 Plain Bob Minor

160 Plain Bob Major

### Touches based on courses

For Minor and above, touches are often designed and written out using the course as a basic component, especially for longer touches. Figure 4 shows the same touch as in Figure 3, but set out in courses. It is a two course touch, and the figures on the left are the course ends (the lead heads where the Tenor comes home) as you can check with Figure 2. The two columns to the right represent the calling positions Wrong (W) and Home (H). The Wrong is where the Tenor dodges 5-6 up (in Minor). The dashes represent bobs, and show that in this case there is a bob at both Wrong and Home in each course, as you can also check from Figure 2.

|       |     |
|-------|-----|
| 23456 | W H |
| 45236 | --  |
| 23456 | --  |

Figure 4:

120 Plain Bob Minor

|       |         |
|-------|---------|
| 23456 | W B M H |
| 64235 | - - -   |
| 23456 | - 1 - - |

Figure 5:

136 Little Bob Major

Figure 5 shows a slightly more complicated touch of 136 Little Bob Major. (You can call the same touch of Plain Bob Major, but then it is 240 changes.) Now there are four columns, representing four calling positions: Wrong, Before, Middle and Home. Calling a bob Before (Tenor runs out) repeats a lead as we saw above, so instead of a dash, there is a number to show how many Befores there are - in this case just one.

### Calling positions

Calling positions (W, H, etc) are defined relative to the Tenor. This is different from

Doubles, where it is common practice to call different bells as observation. Most methods (those based on Plain Bob) on higher numbers use a common scheme. The common calling positions are W - Wrong, V - Fifths, IV - 4ths (make the bob), B - Before (run out), I - In (run in), M - Middle and H - Home.

Table 1 shows where these occur on different numbers of bells. Each column shows the Tenor's work at each lead. The rows are ordered as in Plain Bob (which brings out the pattern) but in some other methods they come in a different order. The rows are aligned to show the use of each name with different numbers of bells. The work in brackets is what would have been done if there had been no call. The dodging positions in rows without a name are not normally used for calls. (u = up, d = down)

Table 1: Names of calling positions

|    | Minor             | Major             | Royal             | Maximus           |
|----|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| W  | 5-6 u             | 7-8 u             | 9-10 u            | 11-12 u           |
|    |                   |                   | 7-8 u             | 9-10 u            |
|    |                   |                   |                   | 7-8 u             |
| V  |                   | 5-6 u             | 5-6 u             | 5-6 u             |
| IV | (3-4 u)<br>4ths   | (3-4 u)<br>4ths   | (3-4 u)<br>4ths   | (3-4 u)<br>4ths   |
| B  | (2nds)<br>Run out | (2nds)<br>Run out | (2nds)<br>Run out | (2nds)<br>Run out |
| I  | (3-4 d)<br>Run in | (3-4 d)<br>Run in | (3-4 d)<br>Run in | (3-4 d)<br>Run in |
|    |                   |                   |                   | 5-6 d             |
|    |                   |                   | 5-6 d             | 7-8 d             |
| M  |                   | 5-6 d             | 7-8 d             | 9-10 d            |
| H  | 5-6 d             | 7-8 d             | 9-10 d            | 11-12 d           |

Notice that some of the calling position names are tied to the back, while others are tied to the front. For the calls on the back you can see that for (n) working bells:

H = call at which Tenor is in (n)ths place

W = call at which Tenor is in (n-1)ths place

M = call at which Tenor is in (n-2)ths place

In some methods, eg Kent, where the tenor is affected by a call, then the call is made so that it becomes (n)ths, (n-1)ths, (n-2)ths etc.

### It's not all plain sailing

With methods on odd numbers of bells there is a problem. Many older books use the rule above, but since conducting by coursing order has become much more widespread, a different convention has also grown up based on what the call does to the coursing order. A future edition of *The Learning Curve* will explain about coursing orders. Suffice it to say that the meaning of M and W in Bob Triples can be the opposite way round to what you expect. It is always a good idea to check which convention is used before you start to call a touch. It can be embarrassing to find out part way through a quarter peal that it is not what you thought. This once happened to *Tail End*, but fortunately conducting it mentally for practice, while walking to church before the quarter peal.

Tail End

The table is adapted from *The Tower Handbook*, available from CC Publications.