



More hymn sheets

In June, *The Learning Curve* described several ways of writing down touches. In one page it was not possible to describe every scheme of notation currently in use, so this month we look at some more common ways of writing down touches.

Tabulating by lead number

Setting out longer touches by tabulating the position of the calls in successive courses was described in June. Using named calling positions (W, M, H, etc) as described then is not the only way to label the columns. The alternative uses the lead number (1, 2, 3, etc) in the course. In practice, there are usually some positions with no call in any course, so these columns can be omitted. Figure 1 shows a touch of 240 Double Norwich Major set out like this. The rows on the left are the course heads (with 78 omitted because they are unaffected). Notice that of the seven possible calling positions, only four are used, and so only these four are shown as column headings.

```

23456 1 4 5 6
46235 s -
35264 s - -
23456 -
    
```

Figure 1: 240 Double Norwich Major

Sometimes the information in the columns is collapsed to show a list of the leads that have calls, rather than using columns. When you do this, it is no longer possible to differentiate between the type of call using a different symbol (a dash for a bob and an S for a single) so each call is assumed to be a bob unless the number is suffixed with an 'S'. Figure 2 shows a touch of 287 Grandsire Caters set out like this.

```

23456789
65324978 2S 4S
42563879 2S 3
(34265879)1 2 3S
    
```

Figure 2: 287 Grandsire Caters

Touches of Stedman and Erin (Triples and above) also often use numbers to denote the position of the calls. They are not lead numbers, because Stedman and Erin do not have leads in the normal sense. The numbers refer to six ends instead, since sixes are the basic building block of both methods. Figure 3 shows a touch of 168 Stedman Triples set out like this

```

2314567 6 8 10 11
2314576 s - - -
2314567 s - - -
    
```

Figure 3: 168 Stedman Triples

You might wonder why this touch appears not to start with Rounds. In fact it does, but since in Stedman Rounds does not occur at a six-end, the starting point is by convention the last row of the six that contains Rounds. If you look at the figures for Stedman, you will find that the first six end occurs a whole pull after Rounds, and that it is indeed the row 2314567. This touch, only uses four of the 14 possible calling positions in

Stedman Triples, so there are only four columns.

Twin Bob touches of Stedman

If you ring Stedman, you have probably noticed that calls often come in pairs, in consecutive sixes. Perhaps you see this as a benefit, because it means that next time you go on the front, you go in the same way that you would have done without any calls. In fact twin bobs are mainly used to help the composer rather than to help you, but that is another story that we don't need to go into. Suffice it to say that many touches are based on pairs of calls at the four positions where the 7th is unaffected, ie 3 + 4, 5 + 6, 7 + 8 and 12 + 13. For convenience these are given mnemonic names, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Twin bob calling positions

Letter	Means	Work of 7th
S	Slow	In slow & first whole turn
H	Half	First half turn & last half turn
L	Last	Last whole turn & out slow
Q	Quick	In quick & out quick

By convention, pairs of bobs are shown with an 'x'. Figure 4 shows a touch of 1260 Stedman Triples set out in this way.

```

231456 S H L Q
246351 x x
432561 x x x
342516 x
    
```

Repeat four times

Figure 4: 1260 Stedman Triples

In this touch, the 7 is omitted from the course head rows, because it is always in 7th place at the course head, as it is in many touches (but not the one in Figure 3).

Repetition

Longer touches, for example quarter peals and peals, are often multi-part compositions - they consist of several identical portions. Rather than write out the whole thing, it is normal to set out one part, with a note to indicate how many times it is repeated. Look again at Figure 4. Even without the note, you would realise that three courses, 252 changes, is not enough for a quarter peal. A little mental arithmetic would tell you that $252 \times 5 = 1260$, so it must be a 5-part composition.

Hang on - the note says 'repeat four times' - surely something is wrong! This is one of those logical niceties that catches out many ringers the first time they meet it. The repeat note comes after what is set out, ie after the first part. If you ring one part and then repeat it four more times, you have in fact rung five parts, so it is correct. It can still catch you out though, especially if you look hastily at a touch. For some reason, many of us think naturally in terms of the total number of times we do something, rather than the number of times we repeat it after the first.

Increasingly these days, peal compositions begin by saying for example '3 part', which is much clearer. You still need to be aware of the traditional way though, or it will catch you out.

Labelled blocks

Often the whole touch does not fall neatly into a multi-part composition, but it uses one or more blocks several times over. These are often shown once, with a label, and then only the label used when the block is repeated.

```

23456 a 234567 b 234567 c 234567
34526 c - 752634 253746 s 57263
45236 c - 467352 - 672453 56742
53246 b - 467352 - 672453 56742
34256 b 436275 - 346572 - 345267
23456 a 423567 354267
    
```

Figure 5: 252 Grandsire Triples

A similar approach is used where several compositions share a number of blocks, as in Figure 6, a touch of 257 Stedman Cinques.

```

2314567890E A: ....
1543E276980 R R: 1 6 11S 13S 14 15 19
1324658709E T T: 12 3 6S 9S 12 13S 19
    
```

Figure 6: 257 Stedman Cinques

Coursing orders

In all the touches set out so far, the figures alongside have represented the row that occurs at the course head. The alternative is to use coursing orders. If you have not met the idea before, that not might seem a very helpful thing to do, but in fact it is much more useful as a means of checking things while you are ringing.

The coursing order relates directly to the lead end row - count down the odd numbers and up the evens, omitting the Treble. For a plain course, use Rounds, which for Minor gives 5324(6), for Major 753246(8), for Royal 97532468(0), etc. The Tenor is shown in brackets, because it is normal to omit it, with the coursing order counted from the Tenor. To get the coursing order for any other course, apply the same process to the course head row. For example, the course headed 134256 has the coursing order 5432.

Coursing orders have several attractions when conducting. They last throughout the course, and (depending on the method) can be checked in quite a lot of places, not just at the end of the course. You can very easily work out in your head what the new coursing order should be after a call, so you can check all the way through, even if you only actually remember a few landmarks in the composition. Coursing orders are normally set out to the right of the columns containing the calls.

Figure 7 shows a touch of 120 Plain Bob Minor set out with coursing orders. There is a separate column of figures for each calling position. In this case, the left hand column shows the coursing orders produced by calls at Wrong, and the right hand column shows coursing orders produced by calls at Home. Notice that this column starts (above the line) and also ends with the plain course coursing order 5324.

```

W H 5324
- - 3254 3542
- - 5432 5324
    
```

Figure 7: 120 Plain Bob Minor

Where there is no call, then the coursing order does not change, and it is conventional to leave a space, rather than to repeat the coursing order, as shown in Figure 8, which shows a touch of 240 Plain Bob Major (or 136 Little Bob).

```

W B M H 53246
1 s 65324 65423
- - s 54623 54236 53246
    
```

Figure 8: 240 Plain Bob Major

Tail End

All touches except Figure 3 are taken from the 2003 *Ringing World Diary*.