The Learning Curve

Something original

In most areas of life, the word 'original' conjures up a sense of authentic quality (or cynical marketing trying to pass something off as authentic). In ringing it has a specific meaning, though it is not often used. Many ringers have never heard of Original, and those that have might see it as just a pretentious name for something so commonplace as not to warrant a name - plain hunting. For those who do ring it, Original can be quite rewarding.

If you have read this far, and are still mystified, let me put you out of your misery. Original is a 'proper' method whose plain course consists entirely of plain hunting. That is perhaps why many people ignore it without stopping to think any further. Notice that I said that its plain course consists of plain hunting. If you are thinking that it is an odd sort of method with only one lead (and a boring one at that) then you have already missed the point - it does not just have one lead. To understand Original, you have to stand back and think about it from a different perspective.

Methods and principles

Most methods - Plain Bob for example - have a structure built around one bell (typically the Treble) repeating the same path over and over again, while the other bells cycle round a longer path. These methods are now called 'hunters', and the most familiar of them are what used to be called 'Treble dominated methods', since the Treble is the bell with the repeating line. This repetition is the basis for breaking them down into repeating blocks called 'leads', and the number of leads equals the number of working bells (ie other than the Treble or a cover bell).

A principle is a different sort of method that does not single out one bell in this way - all the bells share the same path, as they do for example in Stedman and Erin. You can still divide a principle up into repeating leads that contain identical fragments of line, but they are not characterised by one bell coming back to the same place every time.

Original is a principle

Having reminded ourselves what a principle is, now let us look at Original in this light. Figure 1 shows the plain course, with the starts for each bell shown circled.
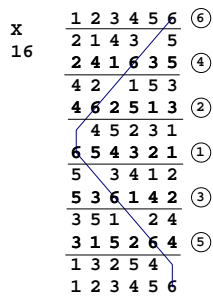
```
x    1 2 3 4 5 6  ⑥
16   2 1 4 3   5
     2 4 1 6 3 5  ④
     4 2   1 5 3
     4 6 2 5 1 3  ②
       4 5 2 3 1
     6 5 4 3 2 1  ①
     5   3 4 1 2
     5 3 6 1 4 2  ③
     3 5 1   2 4
     3 1 5 2 6 4  ⑤
     1 3 2 5 4 6
     1 2 3 4 5 6
```

Figure 1: Plain course of Original Minor

It is broken into six two-row leads. The 'x' and the '16' show the places in the first lead.

Calls

Convincing ourselves that a plain hunt is really six leads of two rows, rather than one lead of twelve does not seem to achieve very much - until you start to think about calls. Original can have bobs and singles like any other method. Figure 2 shows the places made at conventional calls in Minor and Major.
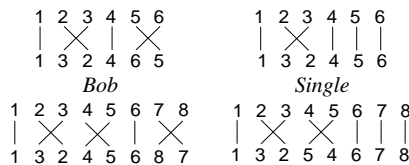
```
1 2 3 4 5 6        1 2 3 4 5 6
1 3 2 4 6 5        1 3 2 4 5 6
   Bob                Single

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1 3 2 4 5 6 8 7    1 3 2 5 4 6 7 8
```

Figure 2: Calls (conventional)

The calls occur where one bell leads and one lies (the 16 change in Minor, 18 in Major, etc).

A two row lead, means there could be a call every whole pull, which can get quite exciting - you must stay alert to ring Original.

Fourth place bobs

Original has last place made at the lead end and by convention such methods (like Double Court Bob Minor, Double Norwich Court Bob Major, or Stedman Triples) have calls involving places near the back (as in Figure 2). Strictly they don't need to, and methods like Kent and Bristol use calls with places made in 4th and below. Some people prefer these 'Plain Bob style' calls for Original, see Figure 3.
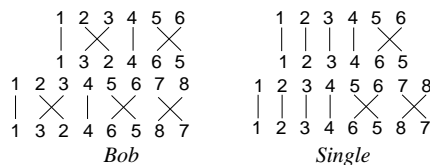
```
1 2 3 4 5 6        1 2 3 4 5 6
1 3 2 4 6 5        1 2 3 4 6 5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1 3 2 4 6 5 8 7    1 2 3 4 6 5 8 7
   Bob                Single
```

Figure 3: Calls (Plain Bob style)

Calling Original

You might find some touches in a book, but there aren't many - *Collection of Principles* gives an extent of Minor and peal compositions for Triples to Maximus, but no short touches. You can work one out in advance, or you can improvise - which is easier with Original than with most methods, because it is so short. Here is one approach that you can use from any bell.

Make a few calls, remembering how they affect you, until you come back to your home position (where you were in Rounds). That won't take very long. Then keep repeating the same pattern of calls until it comes round. This will not go on very long (but it might come round a lot sooner than you expect - see below). The touch length is equal to the length of the course (12 rows in Minor if you are unaffected) times the number of repetitions. In Minor, the maximum number of times you can ring the same block of calls using this pattern is 6. If you are affected, the basic block is a bit longer (2 rows extra for each dodge, and 8 rows extra for making the bob) but you would have to add a lot before risking a touch that was too long. With Major, the maximum number of times the block can repeat is 12, which if you are unaffected gives 192 rows - quite acceptable.

In practice, your touch is likely to repeat much less often than the maximum number of times, perhaps embarrassingly so - people using this approach have even been unlucky enough to put in a combination of calls that bring the touch round at the end of the first block - good for a laugh, but not quite what you were intending!

If you put the calls early in the block, and leave yourself a reasonable stretch of plain hunting before you get back to your home position, then you should be able to spot from the coursing order whether you are back in the plain course. (*The Learning Curve* discussed coursing orders in January and February.) If you are, then put in another call while there is still time, to get you out of the plain course and make the block repeat. A bob will make it run to three blocks and a single to two.

You can apply the same principle if you find yourself back in the plain course after two or three blocks and want to go on longer. Put in a call, and what you have rung so far will be repeated two or three times, providing that you remember to put in the same call at the same place in the right blocks. That might be hard if you have not kept track of how many blocks you have already rung.

This ad-hoc approach might not give you a true touch, but if someone suggests ringing Original at the end of a practice when you are not expecting it, at least you will be able to ring.

You can ring a fun touch (42 rows) if each of you in turn (Treble, 2nd, 3rd, ... 6th) calls yourself to make the bob. You need to be awake though, since the calls come in pairs.

Example blocks

Figure 4 shows some example blocks of calls. To work out how many times a block repeats, look at the position that one bell (say 1) ends in. Then look where the bell from that position ends, and so on until you get back to the one you started with. Pick a different bell and repeat until you have found all the cycles. Then multiply the cycle lengths (but don't multiply 4 by 2). This is done under each example.
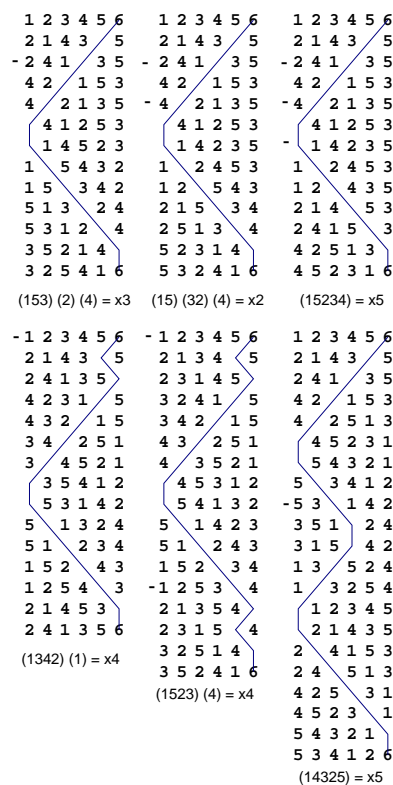
```
1 2 3 4 5 6      1 2 3 4 5 6      1 2 3 4 5 6
2 1 4 3   5      2 1 4 3   5      2 1 4 3   5
-2 4 1   3 5    -2 4 1   3 5    -2 4 1   3 5
4 2   1 5 3      4 2   1 5 3      4 2   1 5 3
4 2 1 3 5       -4 2 1 3 5       -4 2 1 3 5
4 1 2 5 3        4 1 2 5 3        4 1 2 5 3
1 4 5 2 3        1 4 2 3 5       - 1 4 2 3 5
1   5 4 3 2      1   2 4 5 3      1   2 4 5 3
1 5   3 4 2      1 2   5 4 3      1 2   4 3 5
5 1 3   2 4      2 1 5   3 4      2 1 4   5 3
5 3 1 2   4      2 5 1 3   4      2 4 1 5   3
3 5 2 1 4        5 2 3 1 4        4 2 5 1 3
3 2 5 4 1 6      5 3 2 4 1 6      4 5 2 3 1 6

(153) (2) (4) = x3   (15) (32) (4) = x2   (15234) = x5


-1 2 3 4 5 6     -1 2 3 4 5 6     1 2 3 4 5 6
2 1 4 3   5      2 1 3 4   5      2 1 4 3   5
2 4 1 3 5        2 3 1 4 5        2 4 1   3 5
4 2 3 1   5      3 2 4 1   5      4 2   1 5 3
4 3 2   1 5      3 4 2   1 5      4   2 5 1 3
3 4   2 5 1      4 3   2 5 1      4 5 2 3 1
3   4 5 2 1      4   3 5 2 1      5 4 3 2 1
  3 5 4 1 2        4 5 3 1 2      5   3 4 1 2
5 3 1 4 2        5 4 1 3 2      - 5 3   1 4 2
5   1 3 2 4      5   1 2 3 4        5 3 1 2   4
5 1   2 3 4      5 1   2 4 3        3 5 1 2 4
1 5 2   4 3      1 5 2   3 4        3 1 5 2 4
1 2 5 4   3     -1 2 5 3   4      1   3 2 5 4
2 1 4 5 3        2 1 3 5 4        1 2   3 5 4
2 4 1 3 5 6      2 3 1 5 4        2 1   4 3 5
                 3 2 5 1 4      2 4 1 5 3
(1342) (1) = x4  3 5 2 1 4        2   4 5 1 3
                 3 5 2 4 1 6      4 2 5 3 1
                 (1523) (4) = x4  4 5 2 3 1
                                  5 4 3 2 1
                                  5 3 4 1 2 6
                                  (14325) = x5
```

Figure 4: Example blocks

Tail End

Collection of Principles is available for £3, post free from: CC Publications, Mrs Barbara Wheeler, 2 Orchard Close, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1XE.