

This sixth article introduces Kaleidoscope exercises. As with call changes, they can be introduced as soon as the student is coping well with rounds. Both Kaleidoscope and call changes allow practice at very simple changes of position, but Kaleidoscope requires less mental effort from the student to work out where they ought to be.

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The kaleidoscope as an optical instrument may rely on mirrors, if not smoke, but there's nothing deceptive about Kaleidoscope ringing exercises. They are practical, useful and very effective.

At what level is Kaleidoscope useful?

Kaleidoscope refers to a whole group of exercise rather than just one, so these exercises cover quite a wide range of levels. They are most useful for students who can ring rounds and can adjust the speed of their ringing to achieve reasonable striking. Now they are moving on to learn how to change position, as a step towards plain hunting then ringing methods. The simpler Kaleidoscope exercises can be introduced at about the same stage as call changes, but without the 'Who am I following now?' panic that sometimes happens during call changes, notably when the student's bell moves down in towers that **call the changes up**¹, or moves up in towers that **call them down**¹.

What is Kaleidoscope?

A Kaleidoscope exercise is any ringing in which the conductor sets a pair of adjacent bells swapping positions in some consistent pattern. More than one pair of bells may be involved. So in *Diagram 6.1* the conductor has first set 2 and 3 making places ('2 and 3 go places'), and then later has also set 4 and 5 dodging ('4 and 5 go dodging'), before calling it round ('That's all'). (In reality of course each section would go on a lot longer.)

In call changes, each change of position is the result of a specific instruction such as '2 to 3'. So Kaleidoscope may well be the first time your student is expected, after a single instruction, to embark on some long and continuing series of alterations. This is second nature to experienced ringers but is new territory to our student. Therefore when introducing this concept we give them a very simple pattern of work.

In *Diagram 6.1*, the student on 3 merely has to change to second place over the treble for a handstroke/backstroke pair, then back to third place over the 2, which will be rounds, and keep repeating this. The bell they follow is always the 1 or the 2, which is easy for them to see without needing to look around, and they should also be able to hear their bell as it moves between second and third place, with the treble always leading.

Even so, many students will find this difficult at first, and it is helpful for the teacher to stand in front of the pair of bells that are being asked to swap, and indicate verbally or with gestures exactly who should be where at each stroke.

Is this useful? More useful than call changes?

Yes, it certainly is useful. It introduces the student to the idea of continuing to change their position after an initial instruction, which is what method ringing is all about. For the first time they must keep track of where they are and what they need to

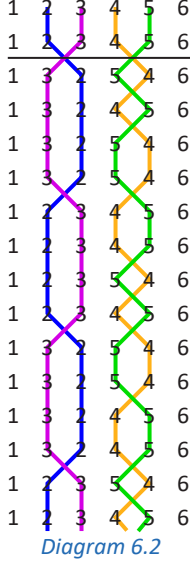
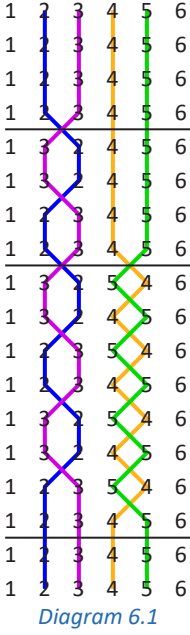
do next. Also, like call changes, it is a very useful exercise for improving striking. Well-struck call changes involve moving at one stroke accurately perhaps from 2 to 3 and staying there (rather than going 2.0, 2.0, 2.8, 3.2, 3.1, 3.0). Equally once the whole band has got used to a particular Kaleidoscope exercise, you can ask everyone (not just the student!) to listen and concentrate on the accurate placing of their bell. It is much better to develop the technique of accurate dodging or place-making in your student now (when this is pretty much all they have to concentrate on) rather than leaving it until they ring something like Plain Bob Doubles (*When do I dodge? Is the treble leading now? Who do I dodge with? Who am I ringing after? Do I need to look left or right? What do I do after the dodge? What's my next work? And you expect me to concentrate on making the dodge accurately as well as all that?*)

Note that there are many pair-swapping patterns other than making places or dodging — for example long places or continuous **Cambridge places**², and you may wish to explain to everyone in advance what to do and just call 'Go' to set it all happening (see *Diagram 6.2*). You should choose the particular exercise based on the needs of the band. The long 2-3 places in *Diagram 6.2* may suit a student whose striking is inaccurate and who takes several blows to position their bell exactly after a change; the Cambridge places are particularly suitable if you are aiming to practice really accurate striking when making places and dodging.

There are other uses for Kaleidoscope exercises, and we'll look at another one in the next article.

As for 'Are they more useful than call changes?', this is not the right question to ask! The good teacher has an array of exercises and will use whichever is most appropriate to the immediate needs of a given student or band. Both Kaleidoscope and call changes are useful as students move from rounds to Plain Hunt. In each case, if the band is coping with the mechanics of the exercise, the teacher can sensibly concentrate on accurate striking. In call changes the student receives a specific instruction every time they need to move their bell, but they need quite a bit of brain-power to interpret the call and decide how, if at all, they are affected; they also need to keep track of several bells (*who am I following, and who is that bell following?*) and may be moved quite a long way from their rounds position. In Kaleidoscope the movement is much more limited and the patterns are simpler, but the initial instruction sets in place an ongoing sequence of changes that the student needs to comprehend and track.

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Jargon Box

1. Call changes: calling up or down?
To change the order of the bells from 1234 to 1324, some conductors say "2 to 3". 2 is being told to move **UP** one position; 3 needs to realise that it must move down one position and (the tricky bit) that it is now ringing after the 1. We refer to this way of conducting call changes as "**calling up**". Other conducts say "3 to 1". 3 is being told to move **DOWN** one position; they will be ringing after the 1; the tricky bit is that 2 must realise that they are affected, and that they must move up one position. This is referred to as "**calling down**".

2. Cambridge places
Certain patterns of work crop up in many different places in method ringing, and we give them names. In *Diagram 6.2*, bell five rings in these positions: 4 5 4 4 5 5 4 5 4 4 5 5 4 5... We could describe this as "dodge, places, places, dodge, places, places, dodge", but this is a bit lengthy! It is a pattern that occurs a lot in a method called Cambridge (though it happens in positions 3-4 in Cambridge Minor, not 4-5). We call this pattern 'Cambridge places'.