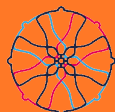
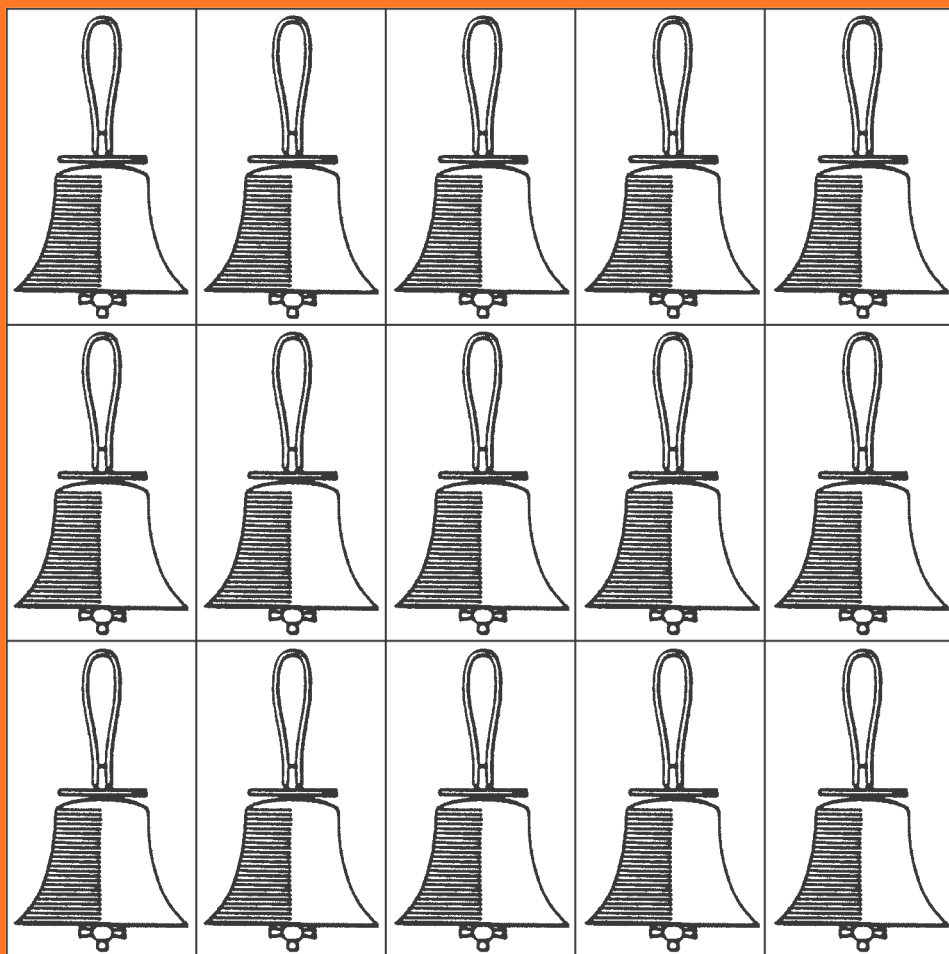


The Beginner's Guide to Change Ringing on Handbells

William Butler



THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH
BELL RINGERS

A Central Council Publication

**THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF
CHURCH BELL RINGERS**

**THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
CHANGE RINGING ON HANDBELLS**

How to start double-handed change ringing

by
William Butler

Reprinted 2001

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

PROGRESSIVE CHANGE RINGING SERIES

Introduction

Ringers who have struggled to plain hunt on a tower bell usually consider that change ringing on two handbells is impossibly involved and far beyond their capabilities. The purpose of this short book is to disprove this! I have yet to find someone who could not be taught the rudiments of plain hunt on two handbells within the course of an evening's instruction.

Part of the problem is approaching the subject with the right mental attitude: you have to convince yourself that you can and will do it! All you then require is a little knowledge, a lot of application and a tremendous amount of concentration - and a set of handbells, of course! You will also find the Central Council cassette, "Teach Yourself Change Ringing on Handbells", obtainable via The Ringing World, a valuable aid.

If you are still interested, then read on!

Stage one

First you must learn to hold the bell correctly. English handbells have a leather strap as a handle which is rivetted to the shank of the bell. Unlike a school or town crier's bell it has a clapper that will swing only in one direction, striking the bell in two places one hundred and eighty degrees apart. Look at Figure 1:

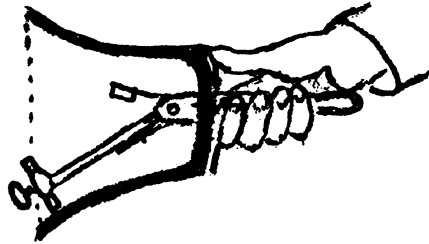


Figure 1

Open up your hand and grip the handle with the fingers, the forefinger being curled around the strap where it joins the shank of the bell. The hand now closes around the strap so that the fleshy part at the base of the thumb restrains the handle and the thumb naturally rests on the leather cap (see Figure 1). Do not grip too tightly; if you do you will find that your hand will quickly start to ache and cramp may set in. Conversely, you must grip it tightly enough to prevent it slipping out of your hand.

The bell is struck using a wrist action and not merely by the movement of the forearm. At the end of the motion the bell stops suddenly, and the clapper flicks over and strikes the stationary bell. It is this jerk that flips the clapper over, and not just the swing of the arm. It is possible to ring a bell by this action even if the forearm is resting on a table, or the elbows on the arm of a chair! However, I don't recommend the latter, or indeed, any exaggerated "round the houses" action. Anything that is distracting or confusing to other members of the band should be avoided.

As in tower bell ringing, there are two strokes, hand and back. If you are seated, and hold the bells parallel to your lap, they are in the handstroke position (Figure 2). If they are upright, parallel to your body, they are at backstroke (Figure 3).



Figure 2



Figure 3

To summarise stage one, grip a bell firmly - but not too tightly - in each hand, the heavier bell, or lower note, being in the left hand. Curl the fingers round the strap, and rest the thumb on the leather cap. The bells may rest on your lap. Raise the bells to a vertical position, stopping them with a jerk: this is striking at handstroke. Reversing the procedure so the bells are once more resting on your lap is ringing at backstroke. The bells should sound at the end of the swing, not at any stage in between. Finally, make sure that your bells do not twist round and prevent the clappers moving freely in the up and down position.

Stage Two

You can now ring both bells more or less every time at handstroke and backstroke. You now need to involve two more people in the next stage - to ring good rounds.

Before you start this you need to organise the room. Set out three chairs - preferably comfortable, upright chairs - placing them an equal distance apart in a triangle, so each chair faces the gap between the other two. I suggest that you keep the circle fairly small; it assists considerably with the ropesight.

In handbell ringing, rhythm is of paramount importance. Prolonged bouts of choppy ringing are often tolerated in the tower; they don't usually last long on handbells, because if the ringing is uneven, so many mistakes occur that the touch will fire out.

One of the best ways to improve your sense of rhythm is to ring lots of rounds. This is a stage often neglected by beginners when they start; they are always anxious to get on to the more interesting stuff. Practise on six bells, starting by ringing five and six. Make sure your bells sound in perfect rhythm with the two experienced ringers; get the beat

One, two, three, four, *five, six,*

One, two, three, four, *five, six,*

running through your head all the time you are ringing. It sometimes helps to have all the band counting aloud when you try this!

After about five minutes on the tenors, change to three and four and practise on these. Finally, try one and two. You must ensure that there is a handstroke gap at lead and the backstroke is tucked in. Build up the speed of the rounds till you can comfortably ring between three and four whole pulls every ten seconds.

You need to devote this sort of time to practising rounds. It may seem inordinately long, but it will be worth it, for it will also help to develop your concentration.

Finally, before moving onto the next stage, spend some time ringing rounds when something distracting is taking place. For instance, leave the radio or television on, or let the children run around! If you can concentrate on simple rounds ringing whilst this is happening, you'll be *ready* for the next stage!

So, to summarise stage two, set the room so you are comfortably seated in an upright chair, and able to see all the other bells without moving your head. Practise rounds on six, first ringing the tenors, then the 3-4 and finally the 1-2, using this session to develop your sense of rhythm and your concentration.

Stage Three

If you have properly applied yourself to these two earlier stages, you should now be able to ring very good rounds, the bells sounding positively and accurately at each stroke. We can now begin to consider method ringing.

The most vital fact to absorb now is that, to ring handbells at all competently, you must think of the paths of the two bells that you are ringing as a single entity, and not as two separate blue lines. Wherever one bell is, the other always has a definite relationship to it. For instance, if one is at lead, the other can only be in seconds, thirds, fourths, fifths or sixths! It is this relationship that you need to learn.

I'm sure that this sounds incredibly complicated, but in reality there are only three different positions in Minor into which two "hunting bells" can fall. These are:

The 1-2 position - also known as the 5-6, or coursing position.

The 2-3 position - sometimes also called the 4-5 position.

The 3-4 position - also known as the symmetrical position.

Whatever Minor method you ring, from Plain Bob to London Surprise, your two bells must fall into one of these three coursing positions. However, the more difficult the method, the more rapidly you will switch from one position to another.

You need to memorise each of these patterns, and be able to recreate it in your mind's eye without having to think consciously about it. One way of adding emphasis to this is to colour the shaded portion between the two bells. I would advise you to do this in green for the 1-2 position, blue for the 3-4 position and red for the 2-3 position. These colours were selected following a short survey in which ten people suggested that green indicated something simple and red something, difficult!

We will start by looking at the easiest of these positions - the green one! Figure 4 shows the 1-2 position, or the coursing pair. You will see that the the bells cross in 1-2 and 5-6, hunting up to the back and down to lead with one bell striking between them.

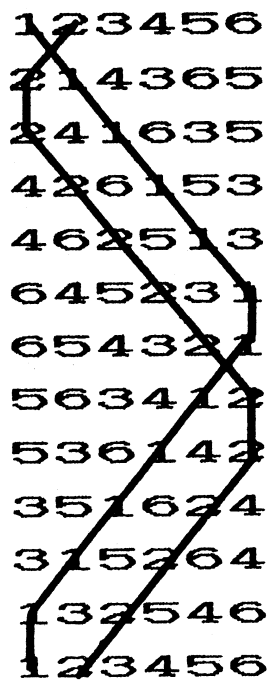


Figure 4

Shut your eyes and try to visualise this pattern. Practise this whenever you have a spare moment: on the bus or train, at your desk in the office, whilst you are doing the washing up, or even last thing at night before you go to sleep. If you do, the next time you come to ring it will appear to be much easier!

Let us now take each of these twelve changes in turn and see what you have to do.

First change: Ring your bells in the opposite order to rounds - your left hand will ring its bell before the right! This may sound very simple, but it is surprising how difficult this can be! Remember to keep the handstroke gap: it is easy to ignore it altogether because you are so nervous!

Second change: You must now complete the lead with the two - the bell in your left hand. Your other bell has to move up one place into-thirds, so you must allow *one* other bell to ring before you strike the bell in your right hand.

Third change: The two (left hand) moves to second's place, so you allow *one* bell to ring before it. The treble (right hand) is in fourth's place, so after the two has rung you allow *one* other bell to strike before you ring it.

Fourth change: *Two* bells must now strike before you ring the two as it is now in third's place. Once again, you have to let *one* bell come between your two bells striking, and the treble will ring in fifth's place.

Fifth change: The two in your left hand now moves to fourth's place, so you must let *three* bells strike before you. The treble is still *one* bell away, and will strike in sixth's place.

Sixth change: This is halfway through the lead, and your two bells will come together in 5-6, the two in your left hand ringing before the treble in your right. You will have to let *all* the other bells ring before striking the two.

Seventh change: You now have to reverse your bells and start hunting the treble down to lead. Let *all* the four other bells ring, and then bring your right hand down before your left.

Eighth change: The treble now drops to fourth's place, so the bell in your *right* hand will strike after *three* others. The two's finishing its whole pull behind, so *one* bell must ring between it and the treble.

Ninth change: At this handstroke blow the treble is in third's place, that is after *two* bells have struck. The two is in fifth's place, so you must allow *one* bell to strike between your two.

Tenth change: The treble descends one more place into seconds, so only *one* bell will ring before it. The two is still trailing along as though tied by an invisible chord, and rings in fourth's place, still *one* blow away from the treble.

Eleventh change: The treble now leads at handstroke, and, after a gap of *one* bell, the two rings in third's place.

Twelfth change: The treble leads at backstroke, and the two arrives back in second's place. Rounds result - I hope.

This has been a very long-winded explanation. Let us see if we can summarise it more succinctly. Whilst you are ringing, say to yourself each change:

Cross over
One and three
Two and four
Three and five
Four and six
Come together in 5-6
Cross over
Four and six
Three and five
Two and four
One and three
Come together in 1-2

Don't forget that whatever place you are in, you follow that number of bells less one. For instance, if you are striking in third's place, you must let two bells - or three minus one ring before you. I know this sounds frightfully obvious, but it is surprising how long it sometimes takes to realise it!

Now for a few other hints.

DO watch all the other bells. If you set your chairs out as suggested in stage two you should have no problems. Keep your eyes on them whilst counting "Two and four, three and five," etc., and allow one and then two bells to strike before you.

DO keep the beat running through your mind

DO remember that, as in hunting on tower bells, you will ring more slowly when hunting up than when hunting down.

DON'T forget the open handstroke lead.

DON'T forget that when hunting up the second will ring first in each change; when hunting down the treble rings first.

Finally, **DON'T** alter your mind! If you have struck either of your bells in the wrong place, forget that change and place your bells correctly in the next one. If you try to ring one bell twice in the same change the rhythm is sure to suffer....!

Summarising stage three and the coursing position, always know where the bell nearest the lead is, and after crossing over in 1-2 and 5-6, keep the other bell one bell away from it.

Stage Four

Stage three was a long one: this is very short. You should now be able to plain hunt on 1-2 - perhaps rather hesitantly! You now need to consolidate this by ringing plain hunt on 5-6. This is the same pattern, but you obviously start in a different place! Look back to the list of changes given earlier. Rounds is the sixth change, “Come together in 5-6”, so you will begin at the seventh, “Cross over” and work down the list, passing from twelve to one and finishing back at the sixth change again.

When you were practising rounds on 5-6 you may have noticed that the larger bells seemed to be slower in striking, and you needed to move them more briskly to keep the rounds accurate. Remember this when you start plain hunting, especially when bringing both bells down to lead.

So, summarising stage four, practise the 5-6 position, bearing in mind that you’ll need to position your bells with more care to ensure good striking.

Stage Five

You should now be able to ring the 1-2 and 5-6 positions fairly competently. Before we move on to the 3-4 position you ought to give yourself a test to check if you have really learnt it, or whether you are just ringing it by the music! (There is, by the way, nothing wrong with doing this; it is an excellent way to start.) However, if we want to progress we must be able to ring it ‘properly’, that is, by the places. Here is how we can prove to ourselves that we can.

Place all six bells on the floor and shut your eyes. Let another member of the band shuffle the bells, and then take any two. The one in your right hand is the treble, and the one in your left is the second. Your colleagues pick up the remaining four bells in similar fashion.

Now ring some rounds. The bells may be in any order, perhaps 6,1,4,5,2,3, so it can sound very strange. If, however, you can still plain hunt you will **know** that you are ready for stage six.

Stage Six

We are now going to look at the second of our three positions, that of 3-4 in a plain hunting course. Another name for this is “opposites”, or “the symmetrical position”, and a brief glance at Figure 5 - now coloured blue, of course! - will explain why it is frequently called this.

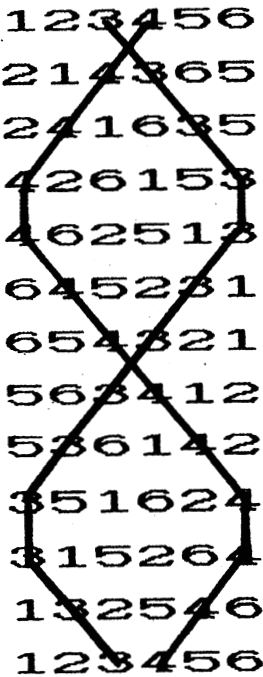


Figure 5

Let us now examine this in detail:

First change: Cross over, or ring your bells in the opposite order to rounds, both bells still striking in 3-4.

Second change: The four - the bell in your left hand - goes down into second's place, i.e. *one* bell has to strike before it. Your other bell (the three) has to move up one place into fifths, so you must allow *two* other bells to ring before you strike the bell in your right hand.

Third change: The four (left hand) moves to lead (remember to keep the handstroke gap!) whilst the three (right hand) moves into sixth's place. *All* the other bells will ring between your pair.

Fourth change: Repeat this change at backstroke.

Fifth change: The four in your left hand has completed its lead and now moves into second's place so you must let *one* bell ring before it. The three starts on its way down and moves to fifth's place, *two* bells striking between them.

Sixth change: This is halfway through the lead, and your two bells will come together in 3-4, the four in your left hand ringing before the three in your right. *Two* bells will ring before striking the four.

Seventh change: Cross over in 3-4, i.e. bring your right hand down before your left. Once again, *two* bells will strike before you.

Eighth change: As change two, only substituting right hand for left (three for four) and vice versa.

Ninth change: As stage three, only substituting right hand for left (three for four) and vice versa.

Tenth change: As change four, only substituting right hand for left (three for four) and vice versa.

Eleventh change: As change five, only substituting right hand for left (three for four) and vice versa.

Twelfth change: As change six, only substituting right hand for left (three for four) and vice versa. This should have brought you back to rounds again.

As with the 1-2 position, you can say to yourself whilst ringing:

Come together in 3-4

Cross over

Two and five

One and six *

One and six

Two and five

Come together in 3-4

Cross over

Two and five

One and six *

One and six

Two and five

Come together in 3-4

The most difficult part of the 3-4 position comes at the points marked with an asterisk above. At the first the four leads at handstroke whilst the three lies in sixth's place. **The very next bell to ring** is the four leading at backstroke. Thus your bells follow each other, but at different strokes! Practise these two changes on your own, with or without handbells, starting at handstroke and counting like this:

One two three four five *six*, *one* two three four five *six*

You'll be surprised how quickly your hands have to follow each other! When you can do it moving your left hand before your right try it the other way round, i.e. the position marked by the second asterisk.

So to summarise stage six, practise the 3-4 position, ensuring that after crossing in 3-4 you allow two, four, four and two bells to ring between your bells. Watch out particularly when one bell leads and the other one lies; they ring consecutively at opposite strokes. You'll also find that when in this position the bells will seem to separate and come together very quickly!

Stage Seven

As in stage five, practise the 3-4 position with the bells in any order to give you confidence that you *know* what you are doing. When your colleagues assure you that you do, it is time to move on.

Stage Eight

We now come to the last of our three positions. To many people the 2-3 looks much harder but if you have successfully followed the previous stages, then you will not find it too difficult. Look at Figure 6:



Figure 6

One of the questions often asked by beginners when they start on this position is ‘When do we ever ring the two and three?’ Well, normally you won’t, of course, but all methods have some pairs of bells frequently ringing in that position. For instance, look at a plain course of Plain Bob Minor and examine the third lead head. You will see that the five has made second’s place, and the six dodges 3-4 up. That means that at the start of the third lead they are in the 2-3 position.

Let us look in detail at what this position entails:

First change: The bell in your right hand leads at hand; remember to keep the handstroke gap! You allow *two* other bells to ring before the bell in your left hand strikes in fourth’s place.

Second change: You must now complete the lead with the bell in your right hand. Your other bell has to move up another place into fifth's, so you must allow *three* bells to ring before you strike the bell in your left hand.

Third change: Your right hand bell moves to second's place, so you allow *one* bell to ring before it. Your other bell has arrived in sixth's place, so you must allow *three* bells to strike before you ring it.

Fourth change: *Two* bells must now strike before you ring the bell in your right as it is now in third's place. *Two* bells will then ring before you strike your other bell which is finishing its second blow behind.

Fifth change: Your two bells meet in 4-5, so you must let *three* bells strike before you. Your right hand is still ringing before your left.

Sixth change: This is halfway through the lead, and your two bells will cross over in 4-5, your left hand bell now ringing before the one in your right. Once again, you will have to let *three* of the other bells ring before you.

Seventh change: The bell in your left now moves down to third's place, *two* bells ringing before it. Your other bell has reached the back, so you allow *two* bells to ring between yours.

Eighth change: Your left hand bell arrives in second's place, *one* bell having rung before it. Your other bell is completing its whole pull behind, so you allow *three* bells to ring before it.

Ninth change: At this handstroke blow the bell in you left will lead, and after *three* bells have struck the bell in your right should ring in fifth's place.

Tenth change: Complete the lead, and after *two* bells strike your other one in fourth's place.

Eleventh change: Allow *one* bell to lead and bring your pair together in 2~3, ringing the left before the right.

Twelfth change: Your two bells cross over in 2-3, your left hand bell now ringing first, and you should be back into rounds!

Whilst ringing, say to yourself:

One and four
One and five
Two and six
Three and six
Come together in 4-5
Cross over
Three and six
Two and six
One and five
One and four
Come together in 2-3
Cross over

Some people find it difficult to ring this initially as your two bells part immediately, and you do not have to cross them at the start as you did in the other positions. However, this should not worry you if you ring a number of courses successively.

I advocate practising this by moving the bells round the circle so you can ring 2-3, your colleagues ringing 4-5 and 1-6. Other writers suggest retaining the pair you normally ring and starting from a change with your two bells in the 2-3 position, for example: 156234 or 134256. I think it is better to retain the music of the plain hunting course for your first few efforts: the more help you can get the better!

One other hint: in the 2-3 position in Minor, if your bells are not together in 2-3 or 4-5, then either one of them must be leading or one must be doing a whole pull behind. (They can't lead and lie simultaneously, of course, because if they did they would be in the 3-4, or opposites position).

So summarising stage eight and the last of our three positions, we must learn to plain hunt our two bells with three bells coursing in between them. After we have crossed over in 2-3 or 4-5 we will have two, three, three and two bells between our pair before we meet again in 4-5 or 2-3 respectively.

Stage Nine

As we have done after the previous stages, practise the 2-3 position with the bells in any order so you can be certain that you **know** what you are doing. When you've completed this stage, we can think about moving on to ringing Plain Bob Minor!

Stage Ten

We are now going to look at a plain course of Plain Bob Minor from each of the three pairs in turn. I prefer my beginners to start with five and six, for these are the easiest pair to ring. Some instructors give the learner the treble and the second, for although they are more difficult initially they do ring all the positions, and having more experienced ringers on the heavier bells will keep the rhythm going.

Look at Figure 7. The five and six are in the coursing position for the first lead - the 1-2 position. When the treble leads at backstroke, (and you must **listen** for this) both bells dodge back a place - the five into thirds, and the six into fifths - and then carry on coursing in the 1-2 position. Figure 8 will make this clear.

PLAIN BOB MINOR ON 5-6

123456
214356
241635
426153
462513
645231
654321
363412
636142
351624
315264
132546
135264

1-2 position
till treble
leads: stay
in 1-2 position

135264
312546
321456
234165
243516
426351
462531
645213
654123
361432
516342
143624
156342

1-2 position
till treble
leads: change
to 2-3 position

156342
613624
631264
352146
325416
234561
243651
426316
462136
641263
614523
165432
164523

2-3 position
till treble
leads: change
to 1-2 position

164523
615432
651342
353124
635214
352541
325461
234516
243156
421365
412635
146293
142635

1-2 position
till treble
leads: stay
in 1-2 position

142635
415263
461623
645132
654312
663421
536241
352614
325164
231546
213456
124365
123456

1-2 position
till treble
leads: stay
in 1-2 position

Figure 7

3	5	1	6	2	4
3	1	5	2	6	4
1	3	2	5	4	6
1	3	5	2	6	4
3	1	2	5	4	6
3	2	1	4	5	6

Figure 8

The second lead is also rung in the cōursing position. When the treble leads at backstroke this time the five makes second's place, and the tenor dodges 3-4 up. This places the bells into the 2-3 position (Figure 9).

5	6	1	4	3	2
5	1	6	3	4	2
1	5	3	6	2	4
1	5	6	3	4	2
5	1	3	6	2	4
5	3	1	2	6	4

Figure 9

You now have to course in the 2-3 position until the treble returns to lead, crossing your bells in 4-5. When the treble leads at handstroke your bells will meet in 2-3, the six striking before the five. The six then completes second's place, whilst the five dodges back into fourth's place to finish its 3-4 down dodge (Figure 10). They are now back in the 1-2 position.

6	4	1	2	5	3
6	1	4	5	2	3
1	6	5	4	3	2
1	6	4	5	2	3
6	1	5	4	3	2
6	5	1	3	4	2

Figure 10

After coursing in the 1-2 position for a lead, i.e. till the treble leads again at backstroke, the bells will dodge in parallel in 3-4 and 5-6 thus:



Figure 11

For the last lead of the course the bells continue in the 1-2 position till the treble leads at backstroke, when they will dodge together in 5-6 (Figure 12).



Figure 12

Stage Eleven

Now let us look at the work of the one and two in a plain course of Plain Bob Minor. If you have successfully rung a number of plain courses on five and six you don't have a great deal of new work to do. Look at Figure 13. The treble and second are in the coursing position for the first lead. You will know when the treble leads at backstroke; when it does you must dodge with the two in 3-4 down, thereby putting your two bells into the 2-3 position. See Figure 14.

PLAIN BOB MINOR ON 1-2

1 23456 2 14365 3 41635 4 26153 5 34615 6 45321 1 35264 2 43651 3 51432 4 6253 5 34615 6 45321	1 56342 5 13624 5 31264 3 52146 3 25416 2 34561 2 43651 4 26315 4 62135 6 45213 6 54123 5 61432 5 76342 1 65432 1 56342	1 64523 6 15432 6 51342 5 63124 5 36214 3 52641 3 25461 2 34516 2 43156 4 21365 4 12635 1 46253 1 42635	1 42635 4 16253 4 61523 6 45132 6 54312 5 63421 5 36141 3 52614 3 25164 2 3456 2 13456 1 24365 1 23456	1-2 position till treble leads: change to 2-3 position	2-3 position till treble leads: change to 3-4 position	3-4 position till treble leads: change to 2-3 position	2-3 position till treble leads: change to 1-2 position	1-2 position till treble leads: stay in 1-2 position
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Figure 13

3	5	1	6	2	4
3	1	5	2	6	4
1	3	1	5	4	6
1	3	5	2	6	4
3	1	2	5	4	6
3	2	1	4	5	6

Figure 14

Your two bells will cross over in 2-3 after the treble has led, and you hunt in the 2-3 position - crossing over in 4-5 - till the treble leads at backstroke. The two dodges in 5-6 down, and you pass into the 3-4 position (Figure 15).

5	6	1	4	3	2
5	1	6	3	4	2
1	5	3	6	2	4
1	5	6	3	4	2
5	1	3	6	2	4
5	3	1	2	6	4

Figure 15

You now have to course your two bells in the symmetrical, or opposites position until the treble returns to lead, your bells crossing twice in 3-4. When the treble leads at backstroke the two will dodge 5-6 up, and you return to the 2-3 position. See Figure 16.

6	4	1	2	5	3
6	1	4	5	2	3
1	6	5	4	3	2
1	6	4	5	2	3
6	1	5	4	3	2
6	5	1	3	4	2

Figure 16

This really is the reverse of the second lead! Your bells will cross first in 4-5 - when the treble is going up to the back and then again in 2-3 when the treble is approaching the lead. As the treble leads at back the two dodges 3-4 up, and the bells go into the 1-2 position (Figure 17).

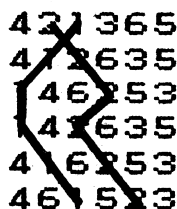


Figure 17

For the last lead of the course the bells hunt in the 1-2 position till the treble leads at backstroke, when the two makes second's place (Figure 18).

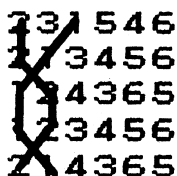


Figure 18

Stage Twelve

We now come to the last of our three pairs in a plain course of Plain Bob Minor - the work of three and four. If you have worked through this book progressively there is not much new work. Look at Figure 19. Your two bells are in the symmetrical, or opposites position for the first lead. When the treble leads at backstroke the three will make second's place whilst the four dodges 5-6 down; this will put them into the 2-3 position. (See Figure 20).

PLAIN BOB MINOR ON 3-4

123456 213465 241635 426153 162513 645231 651321 563412 536142 351624 315264 132546 342156 234165 243615 426351 162531 645213 654123 561432 351624 315264 132546 135264	156342 513624 531264 352146 325416 234561 243651 426315 621345 641253 614523 165432 164523	164523 615432 651342 564123 536214 352641 325461 234516 243156 421365 412635 146253 142665	142635 416253 461523 645132 654312 563421 536241 652614 325164 231546 213456 124365 123456	<p>3-4 position till treble leads: change to 2-3 position</p> <p>2-3 position till treble leads: stay in 2-3 position</p> <p>2-3 position till treble leads: change to 3-4 position</p> <p>3-4 position till treble leads: stay in 3-4 position</p>
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Figure 19

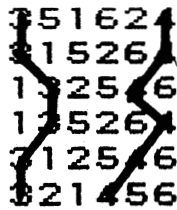


Figure 20

Your two bells will cross over in 2-3 first, and you continue to hunt in the 2-3 position, crossing over again in 4-5 till the treble leads at backstroke. The three will dodge 3-4 down, whilst the four dodges 5-6 up. This is known as a scissors dodge, having crossed over first. You stay in the 2-3 Position (Figure 21).



Figure 21

Your bells part in 4-5, and you cross over next in 2-3. You are now about to do another scissors dodge, but this time you don't cross in 4-5 before it! The three will dodge 5-6 down and the four 3-4 up when the treble leads at backstroke (See Figure 22).



Figure 22

This lead is also rung in the 2-3 position! Your bells will cross in 4-5 after the dodge, and then again in 2-3 as the treble is approaching the lead. At the backstroke lead of the treble the three dodges 5-6 up, and the four makes second's place. The bells now return to the 3-4 position (Figure 23).

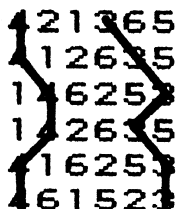


Figure 23

For the last lead of the course the bells hunt in the symmetrical position till the treble leads at backstroke, when they both dodge in 3-4 (Figure 24).

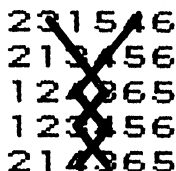


Figure 24

Stage Thirteen

If you have worked your way steadily through each stage in this book then bobs and singles should present you with no problems. Don't be terrified by singles; they really are much simpler than bobs! Let us look at how calls at the various leads of the plain course affect 5-6.

1st lead: At a bob here the six is unaffected, whilst the five makes the bob. This puts the bells into the 2-3 position. A single will have the same result, for both bells will do exactly the same work.

2nd lead: A bob makes the five run out, whilst the six makes the bob. This puts them into the 3-4 position. A single allows the five to make second's place, i.e. unaffected, whilst the six still makes the bob. The bells remain in the 1-2 position, but of course the other way round!

3rd lead: The five runs in at a bob whilst the six runs out. They remain in the 2-3 position. At a single the six is unaffected and continues to make second's place whilst the five hunts down and makes third's place over him. They remain in the 2-3 position, but course the other way round.

4th lead: A bob at this point makes the six run in, whilst the five is unaffected and dodges a 5-6 down. The bells will change from the 1-2 to the 2-3 position. A single will make the six makes third's place, and again change them to the 2-3 position.

5th lead: A bob or a single in this position keeps the 5-6 unaffected; they are dodging together in 5-6.

We could prepare a table like this for the 1-2 and 3-4 positions - and it might be a useful exercise for **you** to do. However, it is not really of much use **practically**. There are fifteen different positions in which your two bells may be at a call - assuming you are ringing any of the three pairs - and it would take you far too long to run through these mentally to determine how the call affected you. If you have mastered the rudiments of Plain Bob as I've set them out you'll find - as I mentioned earlier - that calls will not present you with any problems!

So, summarising stage thirteen and calls, remember that a call only affects one change. Recognise, or try to recognise the new position; if you cannot, continue to hunt in the right direction until you do recognise it.

120 OF PLAIN BOB MINOR ON 5-6

~~123450~~ ~~132564~~ ~~126345~~ ~~164253~~ ~~145632~~ ~~153426~~ ~~135264~~ ~~126342~~ ~~164523~~ ~~142635~~
~~214361~~ ~~315241~~ ~~213654~~ ~~612435~~ ~~417123~~ ~~514362~~ ~~312145~~ ~~513524~~ ~~615432~~ ~~416233~~
~~241631~~ ~~351426~~ ~~231564~~ ~~621345~~ ~~451233~~ ~~541632~~ ~~321456~~ ~~631264~~ ~~521342~~ ~~451623~~
~~426193~~ ~~534162~~ ~~325145~~ ~~253154~~ ~~642135~~ ~~455123~~ ~~234165~~ ~~352145~~ ~~533124~~ ~~645132~~
~~452513~~ ~~543612~~ ~~352416~~ ~~235514~~ ~~624311~~ ~~455213~~ ~~243615~~ ~~325416~~ ~~535214~~ ~~64312~~
~~645231~~ ~~456321~~ ~~534261~~ ~~325541~~ ~~253451~~ ~~642531~~ ~~426351~~ ~~234561~~ ~~352541~~ ~~643421~~
~~54321~~ ~~455231~~ ~~643621~~ ~~352451~~ ~~235541~~ ~~624351~~ ~~452531~~ ~~243551~~ ~~325451~~ ~~535241~~
~~53412~~ ~~642513~~ ~~456312~~ ~~534215~~ ~~325514~~ ~~253415~~ ~~645213~~ ~~425315~~ ~~234515~~ ~~352514~~
~~536142~~ ~~64153~~ ~~456132~~ ~~543125~~ ~~352154~~ ~~235145~~ ~~544123~~ ~~452135~~ ~~243154~~ ~~325154~~
~~351624~~ ~~251435~~ ~~641523~~ ~~451352~~ ~~531245~~ ~~321554~~ ~~551432~~ ~~641253~~ ~~421355~~ ~~231545~~
~~531524~~ ~~215345~~ ~~641425~~ ~~415332~~ ~~513425~~ ~~531254~~ ~~516342~~ ~~641523~~ ~~412535~~ ~~213455~~
~~132554~~ ~~123554~~ ~~152435~~ ~~14623~~ ~~154362~~ ~~135245~~ ~~153624~~ ~~155432~~ ~~146253~~ ~~124365~~
~~132564~~ ~~126345~~ ~~145632~~ ~~145632~~ ~~153426~~ ~~135264~~ ~~156342~~ ~~156342~~ ~~142635~~ ~~123456~~

Figure 25

Stage Fourteen

Finally, let us look at a specific touch, one that can easily be extended to a 720. Study the changes given in Figure 25, especially the portion where the tenors are parted. When you are thoroughly familiar with it, practise it a number of times until you can ring it competently. When you can, you should ask your instructor to try one of the extents based on the touch.

Conclusions

I hope by the time you reach this point that you will have achieved what we set out to do - be able to ring a method on two handbells. Once you can ring Plain Bob Minor it is but a short step to Plain Bob Major, and Kent Treble Bob Minor is not an impossible leap! It will all seem much easier; for instance when you try Plain Bob Major you will find that the 2-3 position - which seemed so hard in Minor - is reduced to plain hunting with three bells in between! The essential ingredients for good handbell ringing are good concentration and a sense of rhythm. An ability to hear the treble clearly and note when it leads as also very useful.

A publication you will now find helpful is “*Change Ringing on Handbells*” by C W Woolley. This will take you on to ringing on higher numbers, more advanced methods and to peal ringing. After that, the sky’s the limit! Good luck!

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

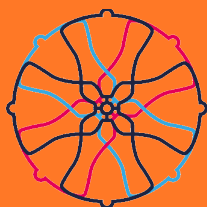
Bill Butler was a member of this Committee from 1969 to 1986 and its Chairman from 1975.

He has been a ringer for over forty years and active for a long period in the administration and management of the Oxford Diocesan Guild.

Bill has written a number of books, including one on the history of the Oxford Diocesan Guild, and this is his third book to have been published for this Committee.

Many ringers have been guided through their initial stages by him, both on tower and handbells. As part of his teaching, Bill has promoted widely the recognition of the importance of skilled management techniques for successful tower captaincy.

*Robert Cater
Chairman 1986
C.C. Education Committee*



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