



# BLUE LINES FOR BEGINNERS (1)

A 'Blue Line' in ringing can be likened to a child's 'Dot-to-dot' puzzle picture book and it works in much the same way to produce a picture of what we ring. Only now we are joining figures, not dots. If you understand a blue line you can learn a method from it, without need for a lot of words.

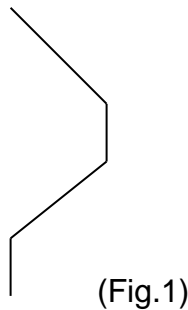
While reading these notes it will help to have pen and squared paper to hand, squared paper to keep the figures (and lines) straight on the page. Also, later on, it can help to have the Standard Methods 'Diagrams' book or the RW Diary handy, though there is no substitute for writing things out for yourself during study. To start, write out a Plain Hunt on four bells.

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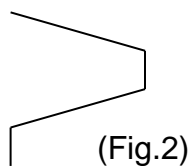
1 2 3 4
2 1 4 3
2 4 1 3
4 2 3 1
4 3 2 1
3 4 1 2
3 1 4 2
1 3 2 4
1 2 3 4

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If we now draw a continuous line through all the 1's we get something like this:



Very often, to save space, when working with the line alone, ringers will squeeze it up a bit so that it looks more like this:



To interpret this:

Reading down the page, a line in this direction indicates hunting up.

A line in this direction indicates hunting down.

A line in this direction indicates staying in the same place, in this case either leading or laying.

## Disconnected Jottings by an Itinerant Bellringer

Written by Peter D Wenham

Available from [www.pdg.co.uk](http://www.pdg.co.uk)



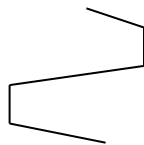
So the instructions given by Fig. 1 (or Fig.2) is that, ringing the treble and starting from lead, you will:

Hunt up  
Lay  
Hunt down  
Lead

(In other words, the instructions for Plain Hunt.)

If we repeated the diagram in a continual line we would have continual plain hunting. A better idea is to visualise Fig.2 as an endless loop, the finishing point joined up to the starting point. Now we have continual Plain Hunt, like the treble in Bob doubles.

In Plain Hunt all the bells follow a similar path, but they start at different points on the line. Line in all the 3's and you will get:



(Fig.3)

Visualise Fig.2 as an endless loop and you will see that Fig.3 is the same pattern, starting at a different place. It tells us that 3 starts by hunting up. Line in 2 and 4 – you will see they are similar patterns, telling you the start and path of 2 and of 4. Thus, 2 starts by leading, 4 starts by hunting down.

In many methods the treble plain hunts throughout and this is shown in the 'Diagrams' book as a RED line – look at Plain Bob (on any number of bells) to see this. (In the RW Diary the treble's path is traced with a thin black line.) We haven't got to the BLUE line yet, the path of a 'working' bell. That comes next. It's always been known as a blue line from the 'Diagrams' book first published by Jasper Whitfield Snowdon in the late 1800's and which must have simplified change ringing for countless ringers since then. Ringers now always refer to it as a blue line, regardless of what colour pen they use to draw it !

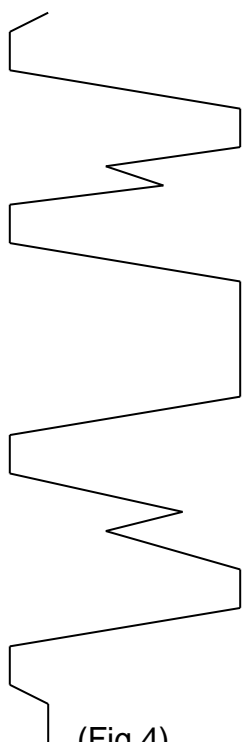
P.D.W.



## **‘BLUE LINES’ FOR BEGINNERS (2)**

Moving on to ‘working’ or ‘inside’ bells, the blue line in the Diagrams book, representing a working bell, has to show the ‘work’ as well as the hunting.. Write a course of Plain Bob doubles and join up all the 2’s or, take the easy way out and look at the Plain Bob doubles diagram in the ‘Diagrams’ book. The line, squeezed up a bit, looks like Fig.4.

The little zig-zags are dodges, each one a step back in the plain hunt path. This blue line is telling us to:



(Fig.4)

Lead  
Hunt up  
Lay

Hunt down, dodging in places 3-4  
Lead  
Hunt up

Make Long Fifths  
(Four pulls in fifths place)  
Hunt down  
Lead

Hunt up, dodging in places 3-4

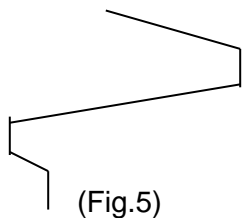
Lay  
Hunt down  
Lead  
Make seconds place  
(Which brings us back to rounds.)

Ringing Bob doubles, if you are not doing anything else you will be plain hunting, so this is not normally mentioned. The ‘instructions’ of Fig.4 thus tell us that, ringing 2nd to PB5 we will: Dodge 3-4 down, make Long Fifths, Dodge 3-4 up, Make Seconds Place, in that order. As with the plain hunt diagrams, if we joined the finishing point of Fig.4 to its starting point, we would have an endless loop – continuous Plain Bob doubles! You could actually do this by cutting your column of figures into a strip, making it into a loop and joining it bottom to top. It is important to understand this in order to follow the next stage, which is considering the other bells.

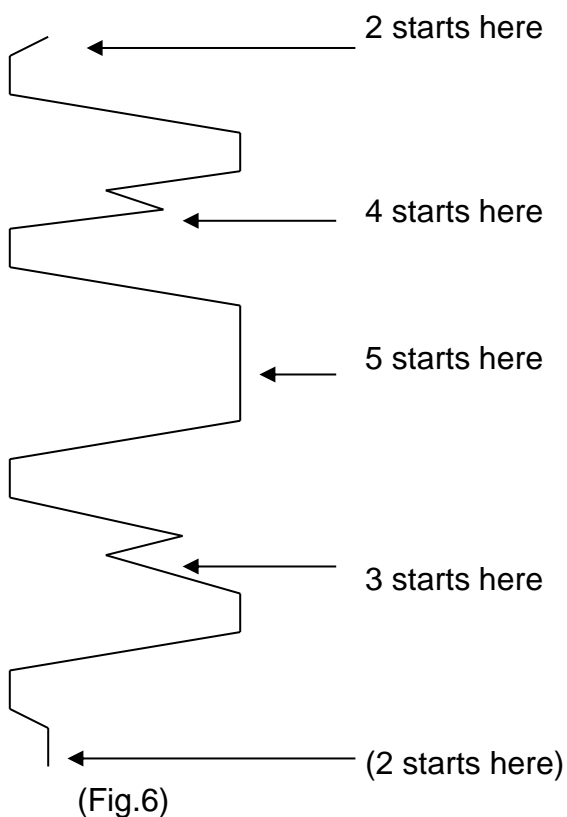
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Write the first lead of PB5 (if you haven't already done so) and draw a line through the 3's. You should get a result like Fig.5. Compare this to the end of Fig.4 and you will see that they are the same. If you continue to write PB5 and carry on lining through the 3's you will see that the line continues as the **start** of the line in Fig.4. Hence the earlier comment about the endless loop, there isn't really a start or finish. Rounds is just a convenient place to start and finish. We can plot **all** the bells on to the same blue line by marking their start points:



Each bell follows the work shown by the blue line all the way along the line, back to its start point; it has then rung the plain course. The different starts for each bell are shown in the Diagrams book and in the RW Diary by the ringed figures at the right of each treble lead. This means that you can have a quick check on how any bell starts but, eventually, you should learn the starts for **all** the bells.

Happy hunting!

P.D.W.



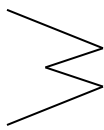
## **BLUE LINES FOR BEGINNERS (3)**

The Fancy Bits.

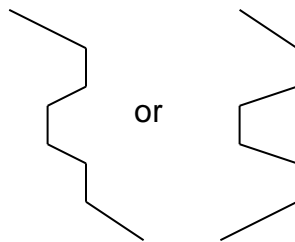
One of the fundamental facts about conventional change ringing is that, for each pull, you can only do one of three things:

- Change places with the bell following you (move up one place),
- Change places with the bell you are following (move down one place)
- Stay in the same place (although you may be following a different bell on the second pull).

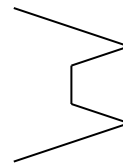
Blue lines help you memorise what to do next. This is helped further by remembering 'Blocks' of work. Many of these blocks have been given descriptive names:



'Fishtails'

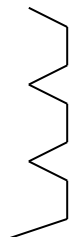


'Crankshafts'



'Cats ears'

To fit with cats ears we have:



'Coat hangers'

or

'Tram tickets'

Other blocks relate to methods, such as 'Cambridge front work' or 'Yorkshire places'. Learning these blocks (which can occur in other methods as well) is the way that many ringers remember their way through the more complex methods.

P.D.W.