



Change Ringing on Handbells.

Two-handed change ringing on handbells, while using the same “methods” as tower bells, is a different concept which relies a lot on “counting places”.

In change ringing, numbers are used in two ways; each bell has its own number, its “identity”, e.g. “3” or “the 3rd”, which never changes. It also has a “place” in each row of ringing which mostly changes each time the bell strikes. In rounds, each bell is in its own place, e.g. 3 is “in thirds place”, but when ringing changes it might be in any of the other places.

In handbell ringing you need to know the **places** you strike in. Mentally count all the places as you ring; on six bells this is 1-2-3-4-5-6 as the bells sound, emphasising the **places** your bells are in. If you are ringing 1 and 2 in rounds, think

1-2-3-4-5-6

(You are ringing bells 1 and 2 in places 1 and 2.)

When you go into changes and you “cross” the bells by ringing them as 2-1, **you still count the places as 1 and 2** because 2 is now at lead (or in “first” place) and 1 is “in seconds place”.

NEVER CROSS THE PLACES WHEN YOU ARE COUNTING.

ALWAYS COUNT 1-2-3-4-5-6 AS THE BELLS STRIKE, REGARDLESS OF WHAT ORDER THEY ARE SOUNDING.

Make sure that you understand this if handbell ringing is going to make sense.

When you can strike your bells in rounds the next step is to ring Plain Hunt on four bells.



In handbell ringing the “up” movement is handstroke, the “down” movement is backstroke.

It is usual to ring round twice then go into changes. Try to memorise this sequence of places:

PLAIN HUNT ON 4, RINGING 1 AND 2.

(Counting your places as you ring.)

	PLACES:	What you are ringing:
	1 & 2	1 2 3 4
	1 & 2 (Go!)	1 2 3 4
(Cross)	1 & 2	2 1 * *
	1 & 3	2 * 1 *
	2 & 4	* 2 * 1
	3 & 4	* * 2 1
(Cross)	3 & 4	* * 1 2
	2 & 4	* 1 * 2
	1 & 3	1 * 2 *
	1 & 2	1 2 * *

1 and 2 are a “Coursing pair”

(“Cross” means to reverse the order that you sound the bells, not that you physically cross them!)

For personal practice, use your thumbs as the bells; count 1-2-3-4 repeatedly, move your thumbs up and down counting your places as shown above. Five or ten minutes each day will prepare you for the real thing. (Just don't do it in public!)



PLAIN HUNT ON 4, RINGING 3 AND 4.

3 & 4 are also a “Coursing pair”. They have the same pattern as the 1-2 pair, starting in a different pair of places.

	Count places:	What you ring
	3 & 4	1 2 3 4
	3 & 4 (Go!)	1 2 3 4
(Cross)	3 & 4	* * 4 3
	2 & 4	* 4 * 3
	1 & 3	4 * 3 *
	1 & 2	4 3 * *
(Cross)	1 & 2	3 4 * *
	1 & 3	3 * 4 *
	2 & 4	* 3 * 4
	3 & 4	* * 3 4

Practice ringing bells 1-2 and 3-4 to plain hunt.



PLAIN HUNT ON 6, RINGING 1 AND 2.

For plain hunt on 6 bells, 1 & 2 have a similar pattern, a coursing pair:

	Count places:	What you ring:
	1 & 2	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 & 2 (Go!)	1 2 3 4 5 6
(Cross)	1 & 2	2 1 * * * *
	1 & 3	2 * 1 * * *
	2 & 4	* 2 * 1 * *
	3 & 5	* * 2 * 1 *
	4 & 6	* * * 2 * 1
	5 & 6	* * * * 2 1
(Cross)	5 & 6	* * * * 1 2
	4 & 6	* * * 1 * 2
	3 & 5	* * 1 * 2 *
	2 & 4	* 1 * 2 * *
	1 & 3	1 * 2 * * *
	1 & 2	1 2 * * * *

Memorise the sequence of places. Note that a coursing pair has one other bell sounding between them except in places 1-2 and 5-6.

Still use the "thumbs" for practice, now counting 1-2-3-4-5-6, in all the following exercises.



PLAIN HUNT ON 6, RINGING 5 AND 6.

5 and 6 are also a coursing pair and so follow the same pattern as a 1-2 pair:

	Counting Places:	What you ring:
	5 & 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	5 & 6 (Go!)	1 2 3 4 5 6
(Cross)	5 & 6	* * * * 6 5
	4 & 6	* * * 6 * 5
	3 & 5	* * 6 * 5 *
	2 & 4	* 6 * 5 * *
	1 & 3	6 * 5 * * *
	1 & 2	6 5 * * * *
(Cross)	1 & 2	5 6 * * * *
	1 & 3	5 * 6 * * *
	2 & 4	* 5 * 6 * *
	3 & 5	* * 5 * 6 *
	4 & 6	* * * 5 * 6
	5 & 6	* * * * 5 6



PLAIN HUNT ON 6, RINGING 3 AND 4.

In plain hunting 3 and 4 follow a different sequence, the “3 -4 pair” or “Scissors”;

	Counting Places:	What you ring:
	3 & 4	1 2 3 4 5 6
	3 & 4 (Go!)	1 2 3 4 5 6
(Cross)	3 & 4	* * 4 3 * *
	2 & 5	* 4 * * 3 *
	1 & 6	4 * * * * 3
	1 & 6	4 * * * * 3
	2 & 5	* 4 * * 3 *
	3 & 4	* * 4 3 * *
(Cross)	3 & 4	* * 3 4 * *
	2 & 5	* 3 * * 4 *
	1 & 6	3 * * * * 4
	1 & 6	3 * * * * 4
	2 & 5	* 3 * * 4 *
	3 & 4	* * 3 4 * *

You will see that the places sequence repeats itself halfway through.

Also, as one bell leads the other lays and they always cross in 3-4.

Using these sequences, 1-2 and 3-4, you can ring plain hunt on 6 on any pair, but for Plain Bob there is one more sequence to learn:



PLAIN HUNT ON 6, RINGING OFFSET.

The 2-3 or "Offset" sequence. Bells 2 and 3 are not usually rung as a pair, but in methods your bells may come into places 2 and 3 at a lead end (when treble leads at backstroke).

	Counting places:	What you ring:
	2 & 3	* 2 3 * * *
	1 & 4	2 * * 3 * *
	1 & 5	2 * * * 3 *
	2 & 6	* 2 * * * 3
	3 & 6	* * 2 * * 3
	4 & 5	* * * 2 3 *
(Cross)	4 & 5	* * * 3 2 *
	3 & 6	* * 3 * * 2
	2 & 6	* 3 * * * 2
	1 & 5	3 * * * 2 *
	1 & 4	3 * * 2 * *
	2 & 3	* 3 2 * * *
(Cross)	2 & 3	* 2 3 * * *

Points to note:

The bells always cross in 2-3 and in 4-5. As a bell leaves the lead the other goes into 6th place – and vice-versa.



After Plain Hunt comes

Plain Bob Minor.

The important first lesson now is that each time treble leads your pair of bells might adopt a different sequence. Start by ringing 1 and 2; you start as for Plain Hunt:

	1 & 2	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 & 2	1 2 3 4 5 6
(Cross)	1 & 2	2 1 * * * *
	1 & 3	2 * 1 * * *
	2 & 4	* 2 * 1 * *
	3 & 5	* * 2 * 1 *
	4 & 6	* * * 2 * 1
	5 & 6	* * * * 2 1
(Cross)	5 & 6	* * * * 1 2
	4 & 6	* * * 1 * 2
	3 & 5	* * 1 * 2 *
	2 & 4	* 1 * 2 * *
	1 & 3	1 * 2 * * *
	1 & 4	1 * * 2 * *

As treble leads, 2 “dodges” from place 3 to place 4. (A dodge is a step back in the hunting path. This is a “3-4 down” dodge)

This puts the bells into the “Offset” sequence, so now you ring the 2-3 pattern, treble hunts up, 2 hunts down, so they start by crossing in 2-3 - - - .



From:

		1 * * 2 * *
	2 & 3	* 1 2 * * *
(Cross)	2 & 3	* 2 1 * * *
	1 & 4	2 * * 1 * *
	1 & 5	2 * * * 1 *
	2 & 6	* 2 * * * 1
	3 & 6	* * 2 * * 1
	4 & 5	* * * 2 1 *
(Cross)	4 & 5	* * * 1 2 *
	3 & 6	* * 1 * * 2
	2 & 6	* 1 * * * 2
	1 & 5	1 * * * 2 *
	1 & 6	1 * * * * 2

As treble leads, 2 dodges into 6th place (“5-6 down”) and the bells are now in the 3-4 sequence. They will now cross in 3-4 and as one leads the other lays:



So, from

		1 * * * * 2
	2 & 5	* 1 * * 2 *
	3 & 4	* * 1 2 * *
(Cross)	3 & 4	* * 2 1 * *
	2 & 5	* 2 * * 1 *
	1 & 6	2 * * * * 1
	1 & 6	2 * * * * 1
	2 & 5	* 2 * * 1 *
	3 & 4	* * 2 1 * *
(Cross)	3 & 4	* * 1 2 * *
	2 & 5	* 1 * * 2 *
	1 & 6	1 * * * * 2
	1 & 5	1 * * * 2 *

Another dodge (“5-6 up”) puts the bells into the 2 -3 sequence again.
 Treble will hunt up, 2 will lay in 6th place.



From

		1 * * * 2 *
	2 & 6	* 1 * * * 2
	3 & 6	* * 1 * * 2
	4 & 5	* * * 1 2 *
(Cross)	4 & 5	* * * 2 1 *
	3 & 6	* * 2 * * 1
	2 & 6	* 2 * * * 1
	1 & 5	2 * * * 1 *
	1 & 4	2 * * 1 * *
	2 & 3	* 2 1 * * *
(Cross)	2 & 3	* 1 2 * * *
	1 & 4	1 * * 2 * *
	1 & 3	1 * 2 * * *

A “3-4 up” dodge puts the bells into the 1-2 sequence for the last lead:



		1 * 2 * * *
From	2 & 4	* 1 * 2 * *
	3 & 5	* * 1 * 2 *
	4 & 6	* * * 1 * 2
	5 & 6	* * * * 1 2
(Cross)	5 & 6	* * * * 2 1
	4 & 6	* * * 2 * 1
	3 & 5	* * 2 * 1 *
	2 & 4	* 2 * 1 * *
	1 & 3	2 * 1 * * *
	1 & 2	2 1 * * * *
(Cross)	1 & 2	1 2 * * * *
	1 & 2	1 2 3 4 5 6

The basic rule of all Plain Bob: “If treble takes you from lead strike twice after treble and lead again” – unless “That’s all” is called.

To proceed from here you must be sure of the order of the work in Plain Bob minor. After making seconds place you will see that this is:

Dodge 3-4 down
 Dodge 5-6 down
 Dodge 5-6 up
 Dodge 3-4 up.

Each of these happens as treble leads. A dodge is a step back in the hunting path, then carry on hunting as before.

(To be continued for the other bells.)