



The Whiting Society of Ringers

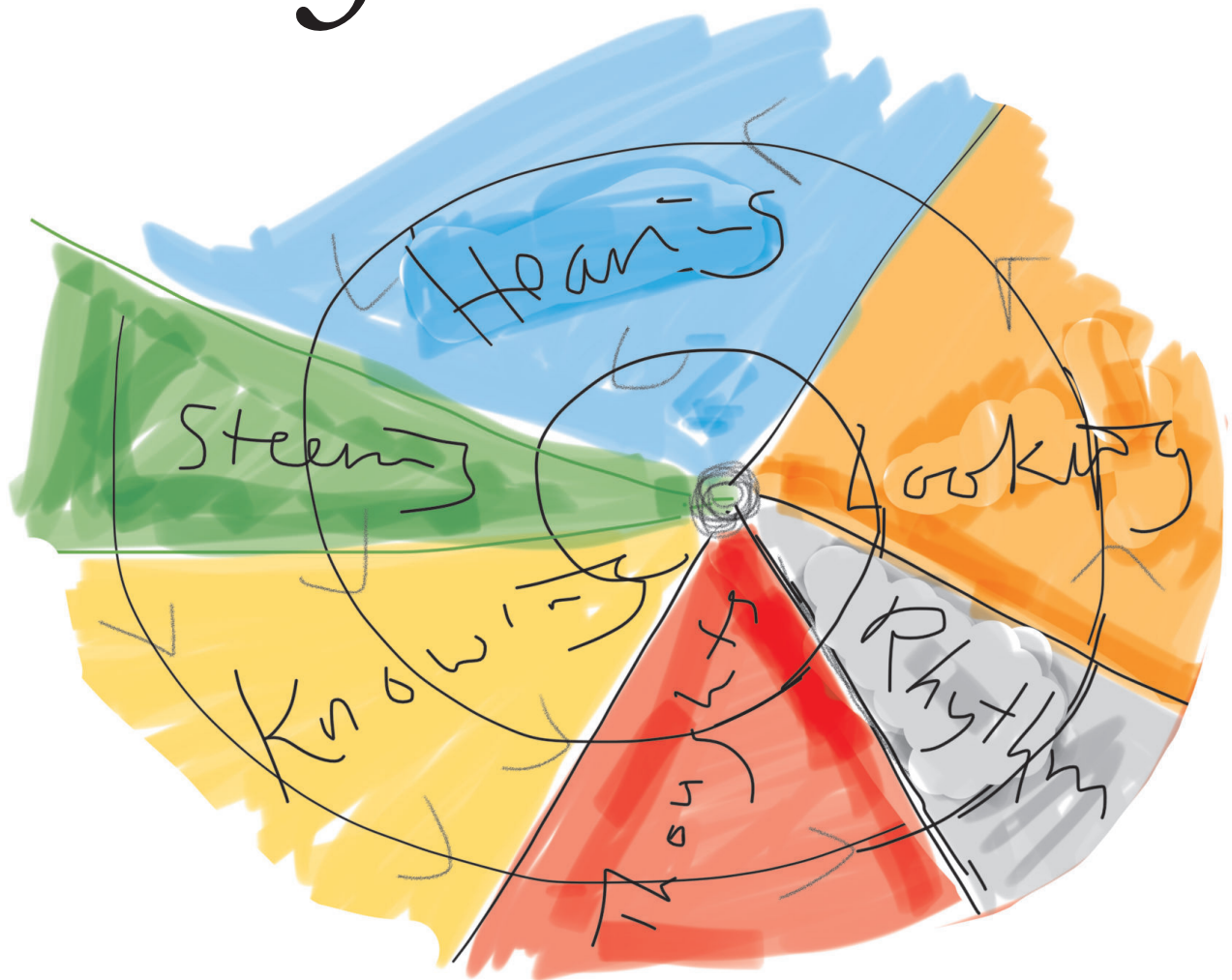
Course Notes

Making Your Plain Hunt Sound Better

by Linda M. Pelc

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Making Your Plain Hunt Sound Better



Six parts to ringing

You need to get all these things right in order to ring well.

Steering: No point in knowing everything about plain hunt if you can't make your bell do what you want it to.

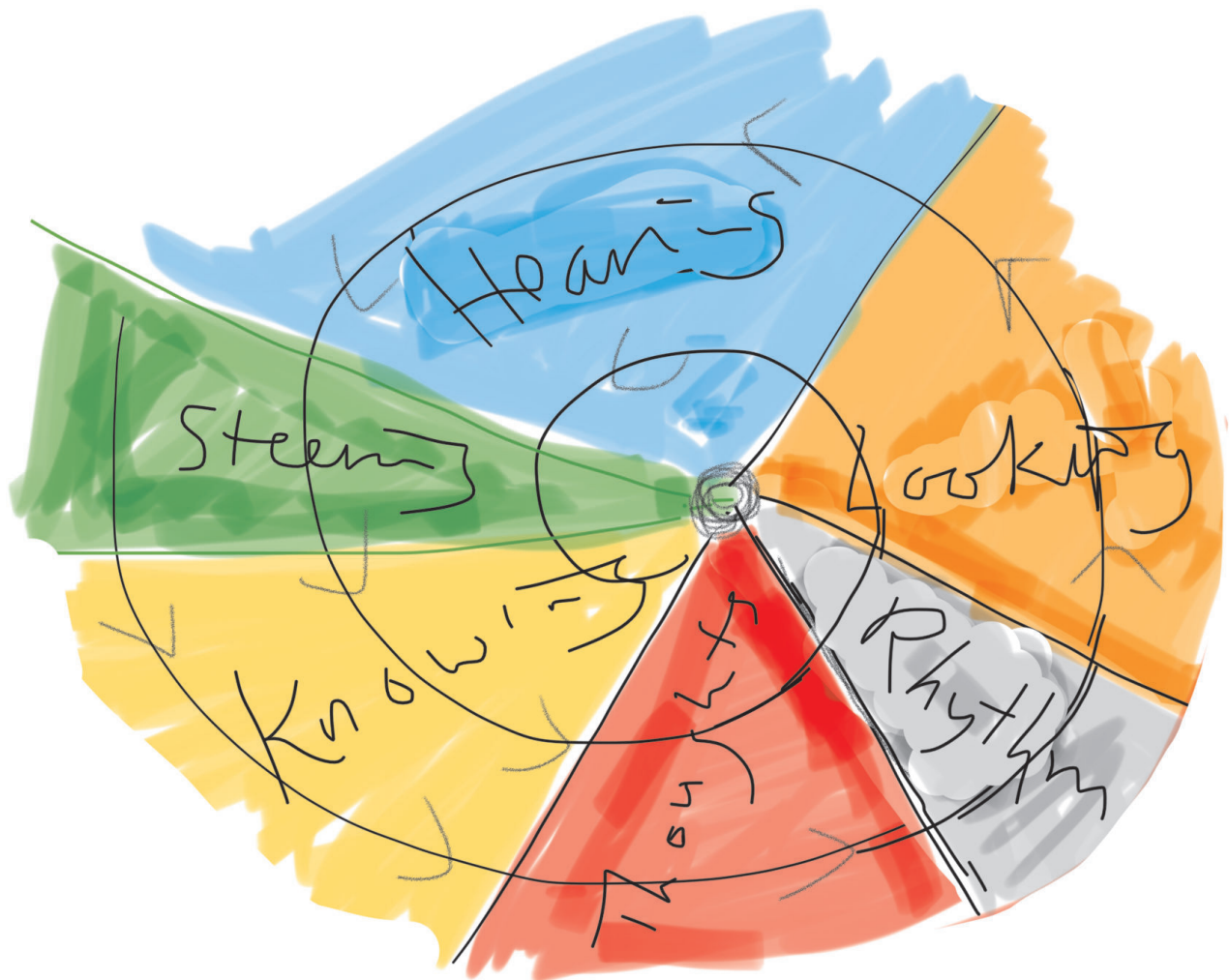
Hearing: The sound the bells make is what it's all about but learning what sounds you are aiming at, and diagnosing how to alter it is quite a skill.

Looking: If you can see what ropes to follow it will help you ring more smoothly. It can be like having a stair rail to hold on to. It helps you get right again if you have gone wrong. Eventually it is a skill that will enable you to put other people right.

Knowing: You can't drive a car anywhere without knowing where you are going and how to get there. It helps to know the landmarks on the way and even which lane to be in. It is just so with ringing.

Rhythm: The bells need to sound like one instrument. We all need to ring in the same rhythm to make the ringing flow nicely. There are different rhythms to learn.

Thoughts: While you are ringing you need to learn how relax and let the ringing flow, yet to be alert to instructions. To learn, you need to be tenacious and positive and keep trying and practising.



To improve your ringing you need to work on all of these things. You can't do one of them successfully without any of the others. Good ringers are continually improving on all of these things. They travel around the spiral in the illustration, improving on each of the skills, in order to improve on the next.

This course will give you some pointers to what you are aiming for and will tell you about some of the resources available to you to help you.

*We are going to give you some dishes to taste and tell you where the recipes are.
It is up to you to go home and try to cook them.*

Thoughts

Commanding your thoughts are important in all performing arts and sport.

In sport you would have a personal trainer who would look at your performance but also your state of mind.

In bell ringing unless you are very lucky you must do this for yourself.

There are many things to consider and many things crop up along the way that you can't predict.

These are some of the things to think about:

Keep positive / rare praise / takes time

Am I breathing ?

Be open to suggestions

Goals / own goals

We often have to compromise:

Good ringing vs trying something new

Taking a rope vs watching

Going out of tower vs confidence

Working out what went wrong vs don't dwell on the mistake

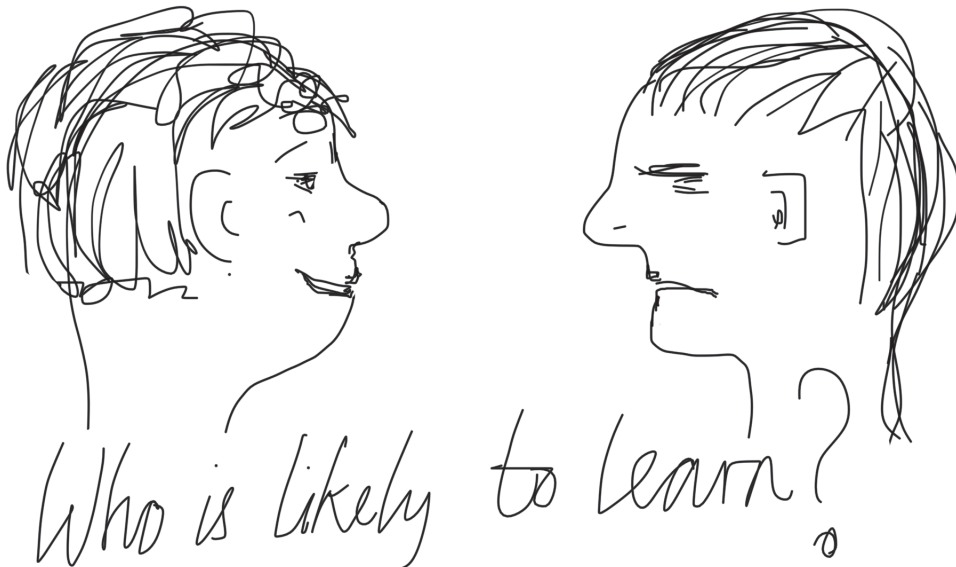
Who do you listen to and take notice of?

Sticking to your way vs trying another way

Today you will be introduced to lots of new things and new terms.

Don't worry if you don't retain it all or if you don't understand everything....

Next time you hear the words they won't seem so unfamiliar and gradually all will come clear.



Steering

These are some of the things to look out for:

In rounds Rope travelling vertically
Hands go down low and midline to the body
Hands always close together
Hands move quickly from sally to tail-end and tail-end to sally.
Arms upwards at a comfortable stretch.

Grip on Sally with thumb horizontal
Bending arms for straight pull
Good transfer to tail end
Rising hands match speed of rope (no loose rope)
Reaching up for top of backstroke
Never let bell far over the balance.

For hunting Strong pulls and gentle pulls
Moving hands up and down the tail-end
Catching sally higher and lower
Pulling when rope is rising - checking
Pulling when the rope is falling - pulling

Ability to balance the bell at will, or hold below the balance at will:

- at handstroke only
- at backstroke only
- at both
- at neither



Armchair Ringing

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

You need squared paper and a pencil with a rubber on the end.

Writing down the bells - It's never too soon
It's there to help you in the tower

Rounds

1 Imagine you are in a six bell tower and ringing rounds. Write down the number of the bells as they would ring in order. Start with 1 in the first square.

You should have a list like this : 1 2 3 4 5 6

2 Continue the list. Who then follows the six in rounds?

Keep writing the list until you are at the edge of the paper.

You should end up with a long list like at the top of this page.

Which bell always follows 3? Which bell always follows 6?

3 Now suppose they are ringing 'back-rounds'. Write down the line. Don't stop, fill the whole line.

Which bell always follows 3? Which bell always follows 6?

4 Do the same for queens.

Which bell always follows 3? Which bell always follows 6?

5 Draw the long line again for rounds only this time make 2 and 3 swap places each time they ring.

6 What do these lines show and what do they not show?

They do show: The order of the bells

They don't show: Handstroke or backstroke

Individual rows

The handstroke gap

How one bell moves (like in 5 above- it is difficult to see how bell 3 for example is moving and is bell 4 really not doing anything?)

7 On the lines you have drawn underline the bells at handstroke.

Which bell follows 6 - what is different?



Mind the Gap

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

- 1 Write out a long line for rounds on 6 leaving one square blank before the treble's handstroke.
- 2 Choose a bell, say 2 -
How many squares from 2's handstroke to it's next backstroke?
How many squares from 2's backstroke to its next handstroke?
- 3 Do this with another bell.
- 4 Be sure to count for the treble also
It is not just the treble that makes that gap. All the bells do. It is the rhythm in all ringing (unless you are ringing Devon call changes). The paper is telling us about how to handle the bell. Imagine holding up that handstroke every handstroke blow.
Sometimes the handstroke gap does not take as much time as a whole bell strike so perhaps we should only count a half for each of those blank spaces.
5 Now count hand to back, and back to hand for two or three different bells and convince yourself that they are all doing the same rhythm.
- 6 Leading - underline the handstroke. Look at the first bell after the tenor. It is leading. The leading bell is on the opposite stroke, it is ringing the same rhythm as the other bells but in starting the row it is setting the rhythm. It is harder to follow on a different stroke and for a little bell to follow a big bell. There are tricks of the trade to get you started. Pencil and paper might give you a clue to why the tricks are needed.

This long line is a representation of how the bells should sound with them all spaced evenly. It is not the complete story as visually in the tower it can be different; especially when the treble is ringing after the tenor or the tenor after the treble. That is for a different study.

For further interest :

Do the same exercise for 8 bells; making a long line of the bell numbers in rounds and leaving a gap before the treble's handstroke. Then for 10 bells. And for four bells.

Fill in the table :	No of bells	hand to back	back to hand	ratio
	4	4	5	4/5 or 0.8
	6			
	8			
	10			

What do you notice about the proportion difference? There is no need to do the exact maths unless you are interested to. Is the proportion greater or less with more bells?

What does that mean for the listening?



Rules for Bell Ringing

There are loads of hidden rules that you may come across but there are only three about how the bells must be rung in methods.

A bell can only stay in the same position in the row or move one place earlier or one place later.

Each bell must strike once in each row.

Bells should be evenly spaced by sound.

What does this mean I can't do?

No more long lines

We usually write bell numbers in rows. Rounds would look like this:

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

1 Here is a long row:

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

I have shown the handstroke gap.

Two bells are swapping each row. Which ones?

2 Here is a list of rows:

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

Now which two bells are swapping?

3 In which representation is the swapping easiest to see?

4 What does the long row show that the list of rows does not?

5 Which bell is the treble leading from?

Convention

When a list of rows is shown, the first row is always the backstroke ie the last blow of the treble's lead in a method. That way you can work out which blows are handstrokes and which are backstrokes by counting the rows.



Hunting on Paper

Each bell in plain hunt works their way to the back of the row and then to the front of the row - one place at a time - continuously until told to stop. Some bells necessarily start by going into the front. No bell stays in the same place for more than one blow except at the front of the row (the lead) or at the back of the row (lie).

Write out rounds on 6 bells.

The treble is plain hunting, from the statement above put it in position for the next row. Its first blow.

The treble has moved to position 2, but who can lead?

Bells can only move one place in the row. What must happen? Put in bell 2 for that row.

Bell 3 needs to start its path to hunt. It can't go in because the treble is there.

What position does it move to? Put it in on that row.

Now there is a gap in 3rds position. Which is the only bell that can go there?

The next bell is 5. Where must it go? Put in bell 5. Bell 6 must fill the last space.

Now you have two completed rows. The next row bell 2 must lead again or it would be doing a clever move called "point lead". Equally, bell 5 has reached the back of the row so stays in that position.

Put in bell 5. All the other bells change position. Put them in.

Continue writing the rows until you have got back to rounds.

Underline or circle the treble in each row. Notice its path. Imagine being on the treble bell and count its places to the back.

Put an H or a B at the beginning of the rows to show which is a handstroke row and which is a backstroke row. (Rows start with a backstroke)

You should have :

B	1	2	3	4	5	6
H	2	1	4	3	6	5
B	2	4	1	6	3	5
H	4	2	6	1	5	3
B	4	6	2	5	1	3
H	6	4	5	2	3	1
B	6	5	4	3	2	1
H	5	6	3	4	1	2
B	5	3	6	1	4	2
H	3	5	1	6	2	4
B	3	1	5	2	6	4
H	1	3	2	5	4	6
B	1	2	3	4	5	6



What can this set of rows tell you?

- 1 There is one distinctive row that crops up in every plain hunt. Can you guess which it is?
- 2 Following : Who is bell 1 following when it is in 4ths place?
Who does bell 3 pass in 2nds place before the lead?

This will tell you who to follow - but learning every bell to follow for every method is impossible and unnecessary. Indeed, following every bell in the sequence is a recipe for disaster, unless you are in a band where everyone else is perfect. Even then you will not be learning how to be right when other people go wrong. The next page will tell you how to avoid learning every bell.

- 3 Leading : Looking at bell 2's handstroke lead. Who are they leading from?
Looking at bell 2's backstroke lead. Who are they leading from now?

Fill out the table:

Bell number	Handstroke lead from	Backstroke lead from
2	6	5
3	2	
4		
5		
6		

We do not want you to learn all this but to see that on even numbers you are not necessarily leading from the same bell. What does this tell you about your leading? Either :

You must learn each bell to lead from for each bell you might ring from. (Too hard! And there are better things to learn)

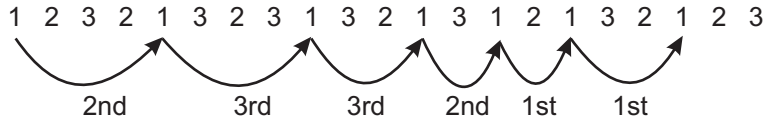
Learn to look for the last bell and then lead from it. If you can cover in bob doubles you should be able to do this. It is the same but you must follow on the opposite stroke and remember the gap at handstroke. This is a way of starting to get the rhythm.

Get used to the sound and rhythm and do it by knowing. This is the way to aim for.

Plain Hunt Speed.

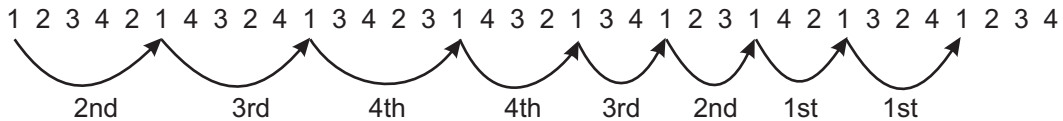
Slowly up - Quickly down.

- 1 Write out plain hunt on three.
- 2 Now write it as a long line.
- 3 Now put an arrow from each of the 1's to the next.
- 4 On the arrow mark the place 1 will be going to.



You can see how much slower and quicker the bell has to strike.

- 5 Do the same with 4 bells. You should get something like this :



On the way up you go slowly and on the way down you go quickly.

- 6 Do the same thing with plain hunt on 5 and 6 and convince yourself that it is always true.

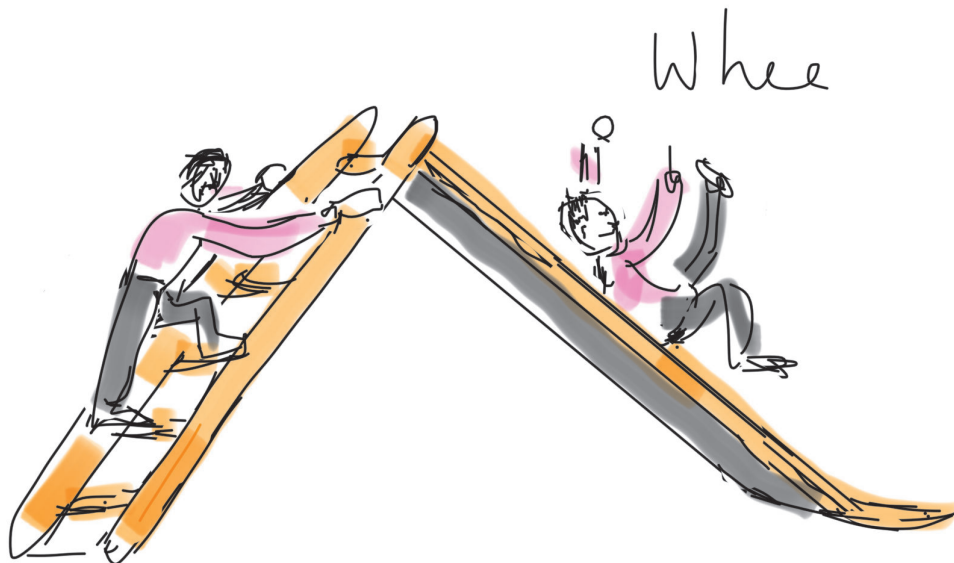
If you count your places you will know you are to be slow when counting up and quick when counting down. The speed of the bell is altered on the previous stroke. If you don't count your place you don't know where you are going and will not be able to handle your bell properly.

Count your place. Its not hard. It is just counting each blow you ring.

- 7 How you count your place will make a difference to your ringing. If you practice counting your places with a regulat rhythm (the same speed up as down) then you will tend to ring it like that.

This is how to practice counting for plain hunt on four :

lead		two		three		four
four	three	two	lead			
lead		two		three		four
four	three	two	lead			



Knowing

Wouldn't it be nice to know whether to go fast or slow, or who to follow after you lead, whichever bell you take and without having to learn all the bell numbers. Learning all the bell numbers only gets you started. As soon as a bob is called everything changes.... but not quite everything. There are still pointers.



Course Bells - The banisters that keep you on the right step.

1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
2 1 4 3 6 5	2 1 4 3 6 5 8 7	2 1 4 3 6 5 8 7 0 9
2 4 1 6 3 5	2 4 1 6 3 8 5 7	2 4 1 6 3 8 5 0 7 9
4 2 6 1 5 3	4 2 6 1 8 3 7 5	4 2 6 1 8 3 0 5 9 7
4 6 2 5 1 3	4 6 2 8 1 7 3 5	4 6 2 8 1 0 3 9 5 7
6 4 5 2 3 1	6 4 8 2 7 1 5 3	6 4 8 2 0 1 9 3 7 5
6 5 4 3 2 1	6 8 4 7 2 5 1 3	6 8 4 0 2 9 1 7 3 5
5 6 3 4 1 2	8 6 7 4 5 2 3 1	8 6 0 4 9 2 7 1 5 3
5 3 6 1 4 2	8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	8 0 6 9 4 7 2 5 1 3
3 5 1 6 2 4	7 8 5 6 3 4 1 2	0 8 9 6 7 4 5 2 3 1
3 1 5 2 6 4	7 5 8 3 6 1 4 2	0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
1 3 2 5 4 6	5 7 3 8 1 6 2 4	9 0 7 8 5 6 3 4 1 2
1 2 3 4 5 6	5 3 7 1 8 2 6 4	9 7 0 5 8 3 6 1 4 2
	3 5 1 7 2 8 4 6	7 9 5 0 3 8 1 6 2 4
	3 1 5 2 7 4 8 6	7 5 9 3 0 1 8 2 6 4
	1 3 2 5 4 7 6 8	5 7 3 9 1 0 2 8 4 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	5 3 7 1 9 2 0 4 8 6
		3 5 1 7 2 9 4 0 6 8
		3 1 5 2 7 4 9 6 0 8
		1 3 2 5 4 7 6 9 8 0
		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



Above is plain hunt written out for hunting on 6, 8 and 10 bells. Look at bell 4.

- 1 Hunting on 6. Which bell does 4 pass in seconds place on the way into the lead?
Then in seconds place after the lead?
Which bell does it pass as it reaches the end of the row?
Then which bell as it starts to hunt down?
- 2 Hunting on 8. Answer the same questions for bell 4 again.
- 3 Hunting on 10. Answer the same questions for bell 4 again.

Bells 2 and 6 are the **course bells** of 4. They are the bells that bell 4 passes at the beginnings and the ends of the rows. Throughout plain hunt bell 4 will pass them at the front going in and out of the lead and at the back.

- 4 Follow steps 1,2 and 3 above for bells 2 and 3. Which are *their* course bells?
- 5 For other bells that start nearer the end of the row their course bells are still there but change according to how many bells are hunting. There is a way of recognising your course bells before you start ringing.

How does this help your ringing?

One of the hardest parts of plain hunt is seeing which bell to hold up over after you have led. Now you will *know* who to pass. That will make your ringing smoother and you will have less to worry about. When you get to the end of the row you will see the other course bell and *know* you have reached the end.

In plain hunt you pass all the bells on one side of you and then on the other. The only way you can change from one side to the other is when you are following adjacent bells or your course bells. If you look at plain hunt on 10 that is shown most clearly.

Course Bells - Which ones are they?

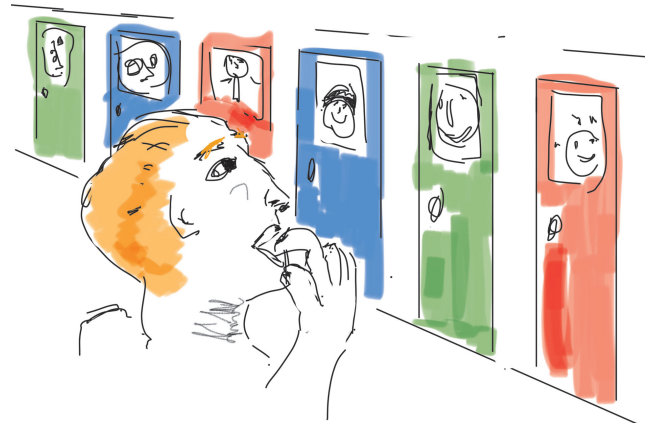
When you take a rope it is possible to immediately know where your course bells are.

There is your before bell and your after bell. The before bell leads before you and the after bell leads after you - it takes you off the lead. You will also find you ring over them at the back in the same order. That's all very well when you are already ringing but it helps to know which they are before you start.

Middle Bells - Finding the course bells for any of the middle bells is easiest.

- 1 Look at plain hunt on 10. (0 stands for 10). Write it out in your book. You can check your numbers from 'Knowing'. You have already found the course bells for 4. Now find them for 3,5,6,7 and 8. Fill in the table below :-

Before Bell.	Bell Number	After Bell
	3	
2	4	6
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	



- 2 From the list you have made, make up a rule for finding your course bells. I have deliberately put our bell in the middle so you can see where to look.

They are your 'next door but one' bells. 1 2 3 ④ 5 6 7 8 9 0

Penultimate Bells (end-but-one bells) - Finding course bells for bells nearer the end of the row isn't so straight forward.

- 3 Look at bell 2. It's next door but one in one direction is 4, but in the other direction it's past the end of the row. Which is it's other course bell?

You should have found it is 1. 1 ② 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

2 must takes its next door bell for its course bell in that direction.

- 4 Consider bell 9. It will have one course bell 7 but which is its other course bell? Looking at its other side there only is 0. Following the same system as for 2 that should be its other course bell. Look at the lines for plain hunt on 10. Is 0 9's course bell?

End Bells - The very end bells have a rule of their own for finding their course bells.

- 5 Look at the treble. It is difficult to see which are its course bells because we have written out the lines starting in the middle of the treble's lead. You have to look at the beginning and the end of the rows or carry on the rows for a few more changes to see them.

One of its course bells is two away from it i.e. the 3. Which is the other one? It is the 2.

① 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

It hasn't got an adjacent bell the other side of it so it takes the only adjacent bell it has.

- 6 Using the same system for the 0. Calculate which are its course bells. Check you are right on the list of rows.

Course Bells flowing along

If you try ringing plain hunt on 8, 10 or 12 and get a little lost, the conductor might say follow your course bell. Look at the rows and see how course bells follow each other hunting up and hunting down. That is why they have their name. On 5 and 6 bells the rows are so short that it is not so noticeable but it is still so. If you are lost, look for your before bell and follow them into the lead or look for your after bell and follow them to the back. That way you might get back into place before you reach the end of the row.

Handstroke / Backstroke - It matters.

Plain Hunt on Five, Plain Hunt on Six...

..its just one more bell, but there is something very different about it. Five is an odd number but six isn't and it makes a big difference for the ringing rhythm. Some bands would never ring 'odd bell methods'. Were they just boring or did they have good reason?

- 1 Write out plain hunt on five and next to it plain hunt on six and beside the rows put H or B according to whether they are handstroke or backstroke.
- 2 Look at the bells when they lie at the back. Do they lie at hand then back or back then hand? You should see that it is different for hunting on five or six.

Hunting on an odd number of bells means you get to the back at a backstroke and must lie for a handstroke but 'mind the gap'. The handstroke will be slower. At the back on an even bell method the second blow is a backstroke and will come in more quickly. This is only one place where there is a difference. We can use the dotted paper to compare the two lines.

Here is rounds written in a long line but including the handstroke gap.

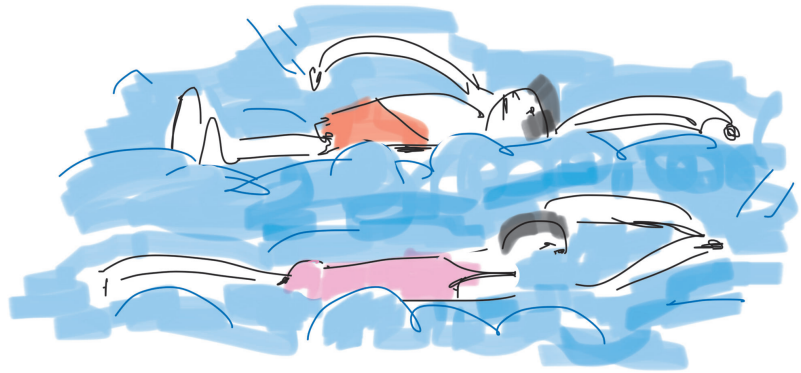
1 2 3 4 5 6 _ 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 _ 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 _ 1 2 3

Writing it in rows it might look like this:

B	1 2 3 4 5 6
H	_ 1 2 3 4 5 6
B	1 2 3 4 5 6
H	_ 1 2 3 4 5 6

That is if we consider the gap before the handstroke. We could just as easily consider it after the backstroke like this:

B	1 2 3 4 5 6 -
H	1 2 3 4 5 6
B	1 2 3 4 5 6 -
H	1 2 3 4 5 6



In both cases it makes the lines unequal length. Maybe it is better to consider the gap half at the end of the backstroke and half before the handstroke so the lines are the same length.

B	1 2 3 4 5 6-
H	-1 2 3 4 5 6
B	1 2 3 4 5 6-
H	-1 2 3 4 5 6

The dotted paper provided with this course material is written using half gaps at the end and the beginning of the rows. It is numbered so that you can go up to hunting on 10. You may find it easier to put a line down through all the sevens if you want to use it for hunting on six and a line down all the sixes for hunting on five.

- 3 Imagine the treble progressing to the back in plain hunt on six. Start at the backstroke. Using the dotted paper mark the treble going to the back counting its places, then it lies and comes to the front.
- 4 Do the same as above but for hunting on five.
- 5 Compare the two pictures. Their shape is quite different. Hunting on five is different from hunting on six.
- 6 Coming down from the back. This is the main place where the ringing is different. Is there a bigger difference on the first blow when you come down from the back from 6 to 5 or from 5 to 4? Why?

For Further Interest

You can read more about this in a paper called "Remember the Handstroke Gap" by Linda Pelc on the Whiting Society website. There are several graphs showing the differences in hunting on odd and even bells and on bigger numbers. It demonstrates why beginners manage down dodges in plain bob better than up dodges. You will also see how different the dodges are for dodging in 3/4 rather than 4/5.

