

# **CONDUCTING COURSE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Responsibilities of the Conductor**

As a Conductor you must:

- Ring your own bell correctly
- Make the calls in the correct place
- Make the calls distinctly
- Check the bells are ringing the correct changes
- Ensure the ringing is of an acceptable standard

You may also correct mistakes or trips should they occur.

This course aims to give you guidance on how to master these duties; there are a number of good books on theory and these notes are designed only as an aide-memoir.

## **COURSE CONTENT:**

**Writing out touches**

**Calling from a non-observation bell**

**Choosing touches**

**Learning touches**

**Calling Bobs and Singles – Where to make the call**

**Checking the bells are right**

**Effects of bobs and singles**

**Spot checks**

**Coursing order**

**Ringling your own bell correctly**

**Appendix**

**Notation**

**A touch analysed**

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## Writing out touches

There are several ways in which touches may be written out.  
(e.g. see Ringing World Diary)

We could write down every row of every lead that is to be rung.  
It soon becomes obvious that we only need to write down the rows where the treble is leading at backstroke. Thus a plain course of Plain Bob Doubles becomes:

**2345**  
**3524**  
**5432**  
**4253**  
**2345**

Note that in this shorthand version we have removed the treble since it is always leading. This is very much quicker than writing out all forty rows.

Consider the following 120 of Plain Bob Doubles:

- **2345**  
**2354**  
**3425**  
**4532**  
**5243**  
- **5234**  
**2453**  
**4325**  
**3542**  
- **3524**  
**5432**  
**4253**  
**2345**

The ' - ' at the side of a row indicates indicates a Bob.

What can we deduce from the first, bobbed lead?  
Two has run in, Three has run out and Five has made the bob.  
Four is doing the four blows behind and is unaffected.

If you examine this touch, you will see that the Four is unaffected at each bob.  
It is the only bell which does the same work each time a Bob is called and is known as the **Observation Bell**. Any bell can be called to do the work of Observation Bell.

## Calling from a Non-Observation Bell

Note, from our touch of Plain Bob Doubles, what the Two is doing at each of the Bobs.

It is: **Run In, Run Out, Make the Bob**

Remember this order, it occurs many times in touches in many different methods.  
A way to remember is to say to yourself '**Isle Of Man**' !

We can start calling from anywhere in this cyclical sequence.  
Thus it could be:

**Run Out, Make the Bob, Run In**

**Make the Bob, Run In, Run Out**

Look at the work of bells Three and Five in the touch to confirm this for yourself.  
Also, try writing touches (120's) of Plain Bob Doubles with each of the bells called as Observation Bell and note the callings for the Working Bells.

Developing our shorthand way of writing touches a stage further, our touch now becomes:

	<b><u>2345</u></b>	
-	<b>2354</b>	<b>1</b>
-	<b>5234</b>	<b>4</b>
-	<b>3254</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>2345</b>	<b>3</b>

**P = Plain Lead**

Here the Bob symbol is placed on the left of the rows and the figures on the right indicate the leads between them. The bob symbol may be omitted altogether indicating that all the rows are bobbed rows.

## Choosing Touches

What is the purpose of any touch that you may be asked to call?

- If for a learner or a novice band, it should be simple.
- If for a service, perhaps it should be musical and, of course, always within the capability of the band.
- It should not stretch your ability as a conductor too far.

Remember, keep it simple to begin with.

You will progress to more complex touches with practice.

A simple guide to the length of touches is to allow **4 to 5 minutes per 120 changes**.

## Learning touches

There are several ways to remember where the calls are made in touches, for short touches it is possible simply to learn the order of the calls.

e.g. 108 Plain Bob Minor: **bob, bob, plain called three times.**

However for longer touches it is general to learn the position of a particular bell (often the tenor) where the calls are made; for example a 120 of Plain Bob Minor may be memorised as “Wrong, Home, Wrong, Home”.

Calling positions for the Tenor in Minor		
5-6 Down	Home	(Right)
5-6 Up	Wrong	
Run In	In	
Run Out	Before	(Out)
Make the Bob	Fourths	(Make)

Many touches require calls only when the tenor is unaffected (i.e. Wrong and Home). Touches can be called using the same positions from any working bell.

The bell from which the touch is learnt is referred to as the “**Observation Bell**”.

The touch must be learnt by heart, but the coursing order (see later) is of great assistance in helping to remember touches.

### Note on calling positions for Major, Royal, Maximus.

The dodges referred to by name for calling positions are as follows:

	Minor	Major	Royal	Maximus
Home	5-6 Down	7-8 Down	9-10 Down	11-12 Down
Wrong	5-6 Up	7-8 Up	9-10 Up	11-12 Up
Before	Run Out	Run Out		
Middle		5-6 Down	7-8 Down	9-10 Down

These positions are used because they keep the back bells coursing in the same way in the new course.

# CALLING BOBS AND SINGLES

## Where to make the call

Bobs and Singles are called one whole pull before they take effect, for most methods this occurs on the treble's backstroke in second's place before the full lead. When ringing an inside bell you should learn where your bell will be at each possible calling position; for Plain Bob Minor the five possible positions are:

<b>Run Out</b>	<b>Call bob on your backstroke lead</b>
<b>Run In</b>	<b>Call bob on your first backstroke in 4th's</b>
<b>Make the Bob</b>	<b>Call bob on your backstroke in 3rd's</b>
<b>5-6 Up</b>	<b>Call bob on backstroke 5th's before dodge</b>
<b>5-6 Down</b>	<b>Call bob on backstroke 6th's before dodge</b>

Notice that when you are at the back your backstroke comes later than the bells on the front and the call may have to be made slightly before your backstroke; this is especially true on higher numbers of bells.

There are some methods where the call does not take effect at the treble's backstroke lead (e.g., Grandsire).

Three examples of where to make the call:

Plain Bob Minor:	Cambridge Surprise Minor:	Grandsire Doubles:
351624	361524	45312
"Bob" 315264	316542	"Bob" 54132
132546	135624	51423
Bob> 123564	"Bob" 315264	Bob> 15432
	132546	14523
	Bob> 123564	

# CHECKING THE BELLS ARE RIGHT

## Effect of Bobs and Singles

A Single swaps two bells over and a Bob shifts three bells, this allows us to move out of one course into another. This is illustrated using Plain Bob Minor; in these examples we “prick” out the lead ends.

The plain course of Plain Bob Minor has the following lead ends:

**23456**  
**35264**  
**56342**  
**64523**  
**42635**  
**23456**

A Bob called on the first lead would change that lead to 23564 this would give the following (new) course:

**23564**  
**36245**  
**64352**  
**45623**  
**52436**

The course has been changed from one that finishes with 23456 to one that finishes with 52436. The three bells affected by the Bob (2,3 and 5) are the ones in new positions at the course end.

A Single instead of a Bob at the first lead would give the new course:

**32564**  
**26345**  
**64253**  
**45632**  
**53426**

The new course finishes with 53426 (only 2 and 5 are affected by the Single). Having made one call and moving from the plain course to the new course another call made later will move us to yet another course, and so on.

## Spot Checks

Part of the conductor's duty is to check that the bells are ringing the correct changes, to do this you must know what the changes should be. Obviously you cannot learn all the changes of a touch by heart, but you can learn some of them at certain places throughout the touch. For example, in the above touch the changes at the Singles are 132456 and 123456. Often touches are divided into parts (the above is a two part) and this assists in remembering the check points. The following 720 is a three part:

<u>W</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>23456</u>	<u>42356</u>	<u>34256</u>
-		52436	54326	53246
S		32456	24356	43256
-		53426	52346	54236
<u>S</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>42356</u>	<u>34255</u>	<u>23456</u>

Spot checks give us information about whether the changes are correct at intervals throughout the touch, but they are not helpful for checking the order of the bells in between the check points. The Coursing Order tells the conductor what is going on continuously throughout the touch.

## Coursing Order

In the plain course of Plain Bob Minor the bells come to the front and back in the order 24653 and the treble comes in between the bells in different places according to which lead is being rung. This is the coursing order and it is the same for all methods; it may be used to check the order the bells are ringing in, although it is not as easy to follow in some methods as in others. It is general to keep the tenor at the end in the coursing order, thus usually we say the coursing order for the plain course is 53246.

If a Bob (or Single) is called then three (or two) bells are moved in the coursing order. A Bob on the first lead of Plain Bob Minor changes the lead end from 35264 to 23564: the 3rd occupies the 5th's position, the 2nd occupies the 3rd's position and the 5th occupies the 2nd's position. This can be seen from the course ends on page 6. The new coursing order is thus 32546, and the conductor can watch the bells arriving at the front and the back in that order, or you can watch the bells pass your bell in that order.

The conductor must transpose the coursing order in his head as the touch proceeds, the rules are as follows:

<b>Tenor position</b>	<b>Bob</b>	<b>Single</b>
<b>Wrong (5-6 Up)</b>	<u>abcd</u> 6> <u>bcad</u> 6	<u>abcd</u> 6> <u>cbad</u> 6
<b>Home (5-6 Down)</b>	<u>abcd</u> 6> <u>acdb</u> 6	<u>abcd</u> 6> <u>adcb</u> 6

The Coursing Order also tells you what is going on when the call takes effect, notice that in both cases the effect is:

<b>Bob</b>	<b>a b c goes to b c a</b>
	<b>a makes 4th's</b>
	<b>b runs out</b>
	<b>c runs in</b>
<b>Single</b>	<b>a b c goes to c b a</b>
	<b>a makes 4th's</b>
	<b>c makes 3rd's</b>
	<b>(b is unaffected and is making 2nd's)</b>

For completeness the table below gives us the new coursing order for all the tenor positions when called from the plain course:

<b>Calling position</b>	<b>Bob</b>	<b>Single</b>
<b>Wrong</b>	<b><u>3254</u>6</b>	<b><u>2354</u>6</b>
<b>4th's</b>	<b><u>2453</u>6</b>	<b><u>2435</u>6</b>
<b>Before</b>	<b><u>5432</u>6</b>	<b><u>4325</u>6</b>
<b>In</b>	<b><u>2534</u>6</b>	<b><u>4253</u>6 (S 3<sup>rd</sup>'s)</b>
<b>Home</b>	<b><u>5243</u>6</b>	<b><u>5423</u>6</b>

The positions generally used for Major are W B M H and bells 7 and 8 remain fixed for these calls.

The conductor must be able to transpose the coursing order quickly, and this only comes with practice, with a little experience it is not difficult to work out the course ends and the lead ends from the coursing order.



The 720 of Plain Bob Minor given on page 7 may be written out as follows to help you learn how to follow it:

Coursing order		Course end	
W	H	23456	
-32546		52436	5th makes bob, 2nd runs in, 3rd runs out
s52346		32456	5th makes 3rd's, 3rd makes 4th's
-23546		53426	5th makes 4th's, 3rd runs in, 2nd runs out
s53246	-52436	42356	5th makes 3rd's, 3rd makes 4th's (back to plain course); then 2nd runs out, 4th runs in and 3rd makes 4th's
etc.			

## RING YOUR OWN BELL CORRECTLY

This is very important as a conductor who frequently goes wrong may often miscall touches. It also disheartens the rest of the band and leads to a lack of confidence in the conductor. In order to ring your own bell correctly you should learn as much about the method as possible.

- **Learn the method by breaking it down into leads**
- **Learn it several ways**
- **Observe what part of the work other bells are doing when you pass them**
- **Learn where you meet the treble all the way through**
- **Learn where you meet your course and after bells**
- **Learn each lead separately and make sure you know the lead end order**
- **Study the structure of the method (draw the grid)**

This information will also be very useful for watching other bells and correcting any mistakes that may occur.

## APPENDIX

### Notation

The following 240 of Plain Bob Minor is written in three different ways

a)	<u>23456</u>		<u>32456</u>	b)	<u>W</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>23456</u>
-	23564	-	32564	-	-	-	45236
	36245		26345	-	S		32456
	64352		64253			Repeated	
	45623		45632				
-	45236	-	45326	c)		<u>23456</u>	
-	45362	-	45263	1		23564	
	56423		56432	4		45236	
	62534		63524	1		45362	
	23645		32645	4S		<u>32456</u>	
S	<u>32456</u>	S	23456			2 Part	

### The above touch analysed:

The touch above is written below showing the new courses that we move into

		Coursing order	Course end			Coursing order	Course end
-	<u>23456</u>	53246	23456	-	<u>32456</u>	52346	32456
	23564	32546	52436	-	32564	23546	53426
	36245				26345		
	64352				64253		
	45623				45632		
-	<u>45236</u>	35426	45236	-	<u>45326</u>	25436	45326
-	45362	54326	34256	-	45263	54236	24356
	56423				56432		
	62534				63524		
	23645				32645		
S	<u>32456</u>	52346	32456	S	<u>23456</u>	53246	23456

## HINTS AND TIPS

Learn the method thoroughly

Practice calling touches and transposing coursing orders in your head

Follow the coursing order when ringing in someone else's touches (but don't go wrong)

Don't be over ambitious when learning; a simple well struck touch is better than a complicated fire-up!

Only try to put someone right if you are absolutely certain of what they should be doing

Don't try to sort out hopeless messes, it is better to stop and try again than bash on in the hope that it will come right

Be well prepared before calling a touch, i.e. know the method and the touch thoroughly, learn all this using a pencil and paper before you get to the tower

## USEFUL BOOKS

Doubles and Minor for Beginners	CCCB
Triples and Major for Beginners	CCCB
Change Ringing	Wilfred G Wilson (Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 21)
Will you call a touch please, Bob	Peter T Hurcombe
Standard Methods	Robert B Smith
Conducting and Coursing Order	John N Longridge
The Tower Handbook	John A Harrison
Learning Methods	Michael J de C Henshaw
The Ringing World Diary	(Good for touches)
Composition Collections (various)	CCCB
Standard 70	John N Longridge
Quarter 300	John N Longridge
Composition 500, 501, 502	John N Longridge