# Ringing with Pens 

Helen McGregor

Helen McGregor is an ARTmember. Helen runs a number of basic ringing courses (virus regulations permitting) in Scotland and Alderney. Details can be seen at these websites:
http://tullochbells.com and http://alderneybells.com
Are you in lock-down and unable to ring with others? Fancy a challenge which will help your ringing when we can get back to it? If you enjoy this exercise there will be more fun to be had with pens in the next edition - can't wait? Jointhe Learn the Ropes Handbells scheme now:
https://smartringer.org/Itrh

## What you need:

$1 \times$ blue pen $1 \times$ red pen Squared paper An internet connection

## Method:

Write out plain hunt on 6 for the treble with the red pen and on the same diagram write out plain hunt on 6 for the 2 with the blue pen. Look at the diagram you have created - it should look like the diagram below:


Note that in the first half of the lead the 2 (blue) strikes before the treble (red) in every row and in the second half of the lead the treble (red) strikes before the 2 (blue) in every row.
Apart from when the bells are in consecutive places (front and back rows) there is a consistent gap of just one place between them. This pattern of 2 bells, both just hunting, but where the characteristic of the relationship between them is a gap of 1 , except at front and back, is called COURSING.
Now sit down and hold the red pen in your right hand (the treble) \& hold the blue pen (the 2 ) in your left hand. Imagine you are ringing rounds on 6 with 2 other ringers. For the handstroke: raise your right hand (red) and say 'first', raise your left hand (blue) and say 'second'. Pausewhile you imagine someone else say 'third', 'fourth', 'fifth' 'sixth'. Now ring the backstroke of rounds with you lowering your right hand and say 'first', lower your left hand and think 'second', imagine others saying 'third', 'fourth', 'fifth' 'sixth'. Repeat this a good few times to feel the rhythm of rounds.
Now watch the beginning and middle of the video which can be found on YouTubeat:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjA Oj1Fn-0

Now reach for the piece of paper with your diagram and put it in your lap. The convention in handbell ringing is that the ringers ring only 2 rows of rounds and then commence the method -this is often referred to as 'up, down \& away'. So with your pens, ring 2 rows of rounds (one up stroke and one downstroke) then follow the chart you have drawn on the paper:
In the table on the next page, I have emboldened the hand which strikes first out of your pair - think of it as the dominant hand - keep it correct and you will achieve BOTH hands in the right place.
$90 \%$ of your concentration must be on the hand which is going to strike first out of your pair, leave a gap and then sound the other hand. You must always know which hand is going first out of your pair. Placeyour dominant hand correctly, leave a gap of 1 and then place your shadow hand. Don't forget that the gap of 1 disappears at both ends of the change when you strike consecutively, cross over and the dominant becomes the shadow and vice versa

The table is comprehensive but sadly is unmemorable!

|  | Righthand / red / treble | Left hand / blue / 2 | Relationship |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Upstroke / handstroke | First | Second | Together (rounds) |
| Downstroke / backstroke | First | Second | Together (rounds) |
| Upstroke / handstroke | Second | First | Cross |
| Downstroke / backstroke | Third | First | Gap of 1 |
| Upstroke / handstroke | Fourth | Second | Gap of 1 |
| Downstroke / backstroke | Fifth | Third | Gap of 1 |
| Upstroke / handstroke | Sixth | Fourth | Gap of 1 |
| Downstroke / backstroke | Sixth | Fifth | Meet |
| Upstroke / handstroke | Fifth | Sixth | Cross |
| Downstroke / backstroke | Fourth | Sixth | Gap of 1 |
| Upstroke / handstroke | Third | Fifth | Gap of 1 |
| Downstroke / backstroke | Second | Fourth | Gap of 1 |
| Upstroke / handstroke | First / lead | Third | Gap of 1 |
| Downstroke / backstroke | First / lead | Second | Meet |
| Upstroke / handstroke | Second | First / lead | Cross |
| Downstroke / backstroke | Third | First / lead | Gap of 1 |
| Upstroke / handstroke | Fourth | Second | Gap of 1 |
| Downstroke / backstroke | Fifth | Third | Gap of 1 |

Now try ringing it, thinking of each row this way:

Rounds (red then blue)
Rounds (red then blue)
Cross - still 1st/2nd but blue then red
1 st (blue), gap of 1 then red
2 nd (blue), gap of 1 then red
3 rd (blue), gap of 1 then red
4th (blue), gap of 1 then red
5th (blue) no gap the red (meet)
Cross-still 5th/6th but red then blue
4th (red), gap of 1 then blue
3rd (red), gap of 1 then blue
2nd (red), gap of 1 then blue
1 st (red), gap of 1 then blue
Meet -1 st and 2 nd place - red then blue Cross - still 1 st/2nd but blue then red 1 st (blue), gap of 1 then red 2nd (blue), gap of 1 then red

Ring what's on the left a few times, reducing what you say to yourself until you can say this:

Rounds
Rounds
Cross
1st, gap, sound the other hand
2nd, gap, sound the other hand
3 rd, gap, sound the other hand
4th, gap, sound the other hand
5th no gap (or meet)
Cross
4th, gap, sound the other hand
3rd, gap, sound the other hand
2nd, gap, sound the other hand
1 st, gap, sound the other hand
Meet
Cross
1st, gap, sound the other hand
2 nd, gap, sound the other hand

Et voilà - you are ringing plain hunt on 6 on a coursing pair! To check you are correct please watch the rest of the video. Ring in time with the treble ringer on the screen \& hopefully all will be well.
Next you may wish to ring in time with the ringer on $5 / 6$ - she is ringing the same pattern as the treble ringer but is starting at what was your half-way point.
There are only 3 patterns to know about and here we have just learnt coursing. We can look at the other two patterns next time and I will explain how you can put them together to ring plain bob - or indeed any other minor method! And just with pens!

## Ringing with Pens - lesson 2

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If you read the last article you will probably have tried plain hunt on 6, holding a red pen in your right hand and a blue pen in your left hand for a coursing pair - either trebles (1-2) or tenors (5-6).
Whichever two bells you ring when plain hunting on six, there are only three possible patterns: these are 'coursing', 'opposites' and 'two/three'. Let's start by looking at the two new patterns, opposites and two/three. To explore opposites, we will think about what the 3 and 4 do in plain hunting, and for two/three we will (as the name suggests) think about ringing the two and the three.




The last article described coursing in some detail. Here are similar explanations for the two new patterns (opposites and two/three), starting in each case with a handstroke and backstroke of rounds. Handstrokes are marked H : and backstrokes are marked B:

## Opposites

H: Rounds, 3rd \& 4th, red then blue
B: Rounds, 3 rd \& 4th, red then blue At the start, 3 (red) moves out and 4 (blue) moves in, so your bells cross.
H: Cross - still 3rd/4th but blue then red
B: Move further apart - blue in 2nd, red in 5 th
H: Lead and lie - 1st (blue) and 6th (red)
B: Lead and lie - 1st (blue) and 6th (red)
H: Move closer - blue in 2nd, red in 5th
B: Meet -3 rd \& 4th, blue then red
H: Cross - still 3 rd \& 4th but red then blue
B: Move further apart - red in 2 nd, blue in 5 th
H: Lead and lie - 1st (red) and 6th (blue)
B: Lead and lie - 1st (red) and 6th (blue)
H: Move closer - red in 2nd, blue in 5th
B: Meet - 3rd \& 4th, red then blue (rounds)

## Two/three

H: Rounds, 2 nd \& 3rd, red then blue
B: Rounds, 2 nd \& 3rd, red then blue
At the start, 2 (red) moves in and
3 (blue) moves out, so your bells move apart.
H: Red leads; gap of 2, blue in 4ths
B: Red leads; gap of 3, blue in 5ths
H: Red to 2nd; still gap of 3 so blue in 6ths
B: Red to 3rd; gap closes to 2, blue still 6ths
H: Red to 4th, blue down to 5th, they meet...
B: ... and cross; still 4th/5th, but blue then red
H: Blue to 3rd; gap of 2 , red to 6 th (lie)
B: Blue to 2 nd gap of 3 , red still 6 th (lie)
H: Blue leads; gap still 3, red down to 5th
B: Blue leads; gap of 2, red down to 4th
H: Blue to 2nd, red down to 3rd, they meet...
B: ... and cross. Red then blue, rounds

Try ringing 'opposites' first. When you start, 3 (being odd) hunts out, and 4 (even) hunts in. Notice that if one hand is in first place then the other hand strikes in last place. If one hand is in 2 nd place (one away from the front) the other hand is in 5th place (one away from the back).

Once you've had a few dummy runs, go and watch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waaqv7BO8Ys Mimic the ringer in the middle, who is ringing 3-4.

Now try ringing a different pair of bells: 1 and 6 . You will find that they also follows the 'opposites' pattern, but starting at a different place, as the diagram at the right shows.

The final pattern to master is 'two/three'. You may wonder why this pattern is needed, as you don't generally ring the 2 and 3 on handbells! You need to understand that when you go beyond plain hunt your bells may have to do all sorts of things, so that you may find yourself needing this 'two/three' pattern even though you aren't ringing bells 2 and 3 . But the best way to learn this pattern is to pretend you are plain hunting on the 2 and 3 .
The essential characteristic of this relationship is a gap of 3 , but of course ringing only 6 bells a gap of 3 doesn't last very long before one of your hands reaches an end (first or last), makes a place (leads or lies) and the gap decrease to 2 then you have to meet and cross. Learn that the meeting-and-crossing points are in $2 / 3$ and $4 / 5$. These can become 'safe havens' - points where you know you are in the right place with both hands.
Justas 3-4 and 1-6 both ring the 'opposites' pattern, 2-3 and 4-5 both ring the 'two/three' pattern (starting in different places), as shown in the diagram at the right.
In fact any pair of bells will ring one of the three patterns. Pick some other pairs, such as 2-5 or 3-6 or 1-3, and see which pattern they ring. Forexample, if you ring the 2 and the 5 , the 2 starts by hunting down (being an even bell) and the 5 hunts out, so they will start by moving to 1 st and 6 th position. Look in the tables for 2-5 followed by 1-6: there it is, near the top of 'opposites'! So this pair of bells rings the 'opposites' pattern. (Here are the answers: 2-5 ring opposites, 3-6 ring two/three, and 1-3 are coursing.)
Finally, before we leave plain hunting, let's have a very quick look (below) at what happens with plain hunting on eight. Coursing and opposites (what 4-5 does) are similar to what happens on six bells, but this time there are two other patterns: two/three and three/four.


Coursing (1-2)

## 12345678 <br> 

## Two/three

12345678


Three/four
12345678


Opposites (4-5)
12345678


