

## Call changes – starting to call

Calling changes re-arranges the bells into different positions, often with a particular order in mind so that they sound particularly musical. Although there are plenty of named call changes (such as *Queens* or *Tittums*), part of the fun of call changes is the conductor composing their own patterns, making up calls as they go along and returning the bells to rounds at the end.

When starting to call changes, keep it simple, perhaps calling two bells to swap, then calling them back to their original positions.

### How and when to call

When calling anything in the tower, it's important to speak clearly and above the sound of the bells, without shouting so loudly that you deafen the other ringers.

Calls should be made just as the leading bell is pulling off at hand stroke. If a call is too late, some of the bells might have already pulled their backstroke, so may not be prepared to make the change at the next handstroke.

### First steps

To start with, try calling changes whilst you are not ringing yourself. Stand outside the circle, and have a plan of which bells you are going to swap. Make one call, observe how it takes effect, how it sounds once it has settled, then when you're ready, call the bells back to their original position.

Repeat this, changing a few more bells, then reversing the changes. When you are completely confident with calling simple changes, progress to calling changes whilst ringing a bell yourself.

To start with, you may wish to call other bells to change so that you aren't affected yourself.

As with all skills in ringing, the most successful callers are those who spent time practising. Even if you stick to very straightforward changes, these will be ideal for most service ringing or weddings.

### Planning ahead

If you're aiming for a particular named call change, it may help to do some homework in advance by writing out the calls you will make to achieve the desired effect. Memorise a few calls to get the bells into their final order, then back to rounds.

Practise calling them out loud before you get to the tower, and if it helps, try calling when you're standing out and not ringing before you take part yourself.

If aiming for <b>Queens</b> , you could plan it as follows:	Bell position at call	123456
<i>Call '2 to 3' if calling up, (or '3 to 1' if calling down)</i>	Bell position after call	132456
<i>Call '4 to 5' if calling up, (or '5 to 2' if calling down)</i>	Bell position after call	132546
<i>Call '2 to 5' if calling up, (or '4 to 2' if calling down)</i>	Bell position after call (Queens)	135246
To return the order to <b>Rounds</b> , simply work backwards	Bell position at call	135246
<i>Call '5 to 2' if calling up, (or '4 to 5' if calling down)</i>	Bell position after call	132546
<i>Call '5 to 4' if calling up (or '4 to 2' if calling down)</i>	Bell position after call	132456
<i>Call '3 to 2' if calling up (or '2 to 1' if calling down)</i>	Bell position after call (Rounds)	123456

Allow the band to ring rounds for a little while before calling 'stand', again just after the treble has led at handstroke, so that everyone has time to prepare for this to take effect at the following handstroke.

As you progress, you should develop more awareness of the position of each bell and be able to start making up changes as you go along, then returning the bells to rounds. Many callers enjoy creating musical rows of ringing.

## You're in charge

Even if you are quite new to calling, if you're the designated conductor, you have the responsibility to stop the ringing if people get lost or the striking becomes too choppy.

As you gain experience with calling, you may be able to offer helpful advice if ringers make mistakes, but if things become too muddled and you're not sure how to help, calling 'rounds please' and starting again is a perfectly acceptable option.