
Plain Hunt Workshop – Teacher’s Notes

This toolbox contains ideas and resources for teachers who wish to run a workshop on Plain Hunt. The amount that can be included depends on how much time has been made available, whether you are running a single workshop for half a day, a weekend, or you are planning a Plain Hunt course with a series of sessions building skills.

Not all the resources listed in this toolbox will be needed for every group of ringers, so teachers can pick and mix those which seem most suitable to the needs of the participants.

Target participants

Ringers who have completed Learning the Ropes Level 2 – who are competent with all the foundation skills listed in the LtR Level 2 curriculum, with sufficient bell control to be able to ring at various speeds and adjust at handstroke and backstroke.

Helpers

- A minimum of six competent helpers are required.
- They should be able to reliably plain hunt, and ring basic minimus and doubles methods fluently on any bell.
- Helpers should be adaptable so they can ring the supporting exercises and stepping stone methods.
- Don’t forget to invite a really reliable tenor ringer as this will help considerably with rhythm and striking.

Download and circulate crib sheets for any preparatory exercises beforehand:

- [Big Change, Little Change](#)
- [Bastow Minimus](#)
- [Bistow Doubles](#)
- [Cloister Doubles with a Plain Bob Start](#)
- [Cloister Doubles with a Grandsire Start](#)
- [Ashford Little Bob Doubles](#)
- [Whitefield Places](#)
- [Penultimus Doubles](#)
- [Flying Dutchman](#)

Practical targets

- To ring Plain Hunt Doubles by place, starting on any bell.

Theory targets

- To understand the concepts of ringing by place.
- To understand that bells have different starts.
- To understand the concept of ringing at three different speeds.
- To understand the concept of course and after bells.

Teaching Resources

- Whiteboard, flipchart or equivalent.
- Marker pens.
- Workshop Presentation (*Plain Hunt Toolbox*).
- Notes for theory sessions (*Plain Hunt Toolbox*).
- Laptop and projector.
- Crib sheets for teaching sessions (*Plain Hunt Toolbox*).
- A ball (optional).
- A set of handbells (optional).

Learning Resources

Before the workshop, circulate the following. Reassure ringers that they do not need to memorise all or any of this, it's just for information:

- [Ringing at three different speeds](#),
- [Counting your place](#),
- [Plain Hunt jargon buster](#)
- [Plain Hunt chart](#).

Print out and laminate some of the theory games such as [Plain Hunt Dominoes](#), [Plain Hunt quiz](#) and the [Plain Hunt jargon quiz](#). These can be used by ringers who are sitting out or played as part of a theory session.

Introduction

Each event should start with a short introductory session of 10 minutes or so when the teacher introduces themselves, explains the outline of the course/workshop and its' objectives. During this session the teacher should allow time for the participants to introduce themselves and state what they hope to get out of it.

Practical sessions

Placing the band

Place your band to give the ringer the best learning experience and chance of success. If possible, assign someone to stand behind the student, who will also debrief them afterwards.

- Students should be put into touches individually.
- They should be the only ringer who is not proficient at the ringing activity.
- If there is more than one ringer not striking correctly or not ringing the method correctly, the participant may well not be able to hear their own bell and will not learn as effectively from the practice session.
- Another participant may be able to ring the tenor.

Where to start

If you are running the session(s) for your own tower, you'll have a fairly good idea of the level of skill of each of the students. However, if this event is being run as part of wider training programme, you may need to start the workshop by checking each student's level of skill – they might be fairly competent at ringing Plain Hunt and just need a bit of fine-tuning or they might need to consolidate basic skills. The workshop is flexible enough to accommodate ringers of different abilities.

Preparatory exercises

Activity: [Bastow Minimus](#) or [Bistow Doubles](#)

These are both ideal for ringers who are developing ropesight. The treble ringer will need to make places in 1-2, over a different bell each time. In Bastow Minimus they will only have three bells to choose from, in Bistow Doubles there are four. As the order of bells will quickly become apparent after two or three cycles, you may wish to call the inside bells into changes and start from a different order, providing a different ropesight challenge for the treble ringer, and keeping your helpers on their toes too. Bear in mind, this will not come into rounds at the end.

Although the treble line might be very simple, this is plain hunt on two bells and a good way to introduce the concept of ringing by place over different bells. Use the diagram to show different bells coming into the lead each time and relate it to what the ringer has just experienced. This may be the first time they have rung something written in a notated method diagram.

Activity: [Big Change, Little Change](#)

This introduces the skills of changing place, ringing by place and counting blows. Bells 2, 3, 4 and 5 are ringing whole pull plain hunt on three bells.

If it becomes apparent that ringers have not previously moved their bell at backstroke, this may feel strange. If any workshop participants seem to be struggling with moving at backstroke, you could always pause BCLC and ring some kaleidoscope exercises such as making places at backstroke to consolidate the skill.

Once ringers seem to be mastering BCLC, everyone should move round and ring it starting on different bells so that they can gain confidence ringing by place instead of following particular bell numbers.

Use the diagram for Big Change, Little Change, to show how the path of each bell is written out in the diagram. Show the role of the treble and tenor in the method too and explain how they count their blows and what they would see the bells around them doing. By explaining how the role of each bell is notated, you begin socialising new ringers with the concept of a method diagram.

Optional activity: [Slow Course Methods](#)

If you are running this course over several sessions and have time or are looking for something short and simple to include at the end of a session so that ringers finish with a positive achievement, they may enjoy further stepping stone methods which involve ringing a line from a diagram. Check out the entry level methods in the [Slow Course Methods toolbox](#). These are not specifically about plain hunt but aid skill development, ringing by place, accurate striking and ropesight.

Introducing plain hunt on three bells

Activity: **Cloister Doubles**

In the Plain Hunt toolbox, there are two diagrams for Cloister Doubles, one with a [Plain Bob start](#) and one with a [Grandsire start](#). These provide a good introduction to plain hunt on three bells. Once ringers can manage plain hunt on one of the hunt bells, ask them to move to a different bell for their next turn, or ring Cloisters with a different start so that the order of bells does not too quickly become predictable.

Show a diagram of Plain Hunt on three bells, then compare it with the diagrams for Cloister Doubles. Explain that even though the bells are ringing in different orders, they are all varieties of plain hunt on three because the line shows the bells ringing by place.

Activity: Ashford Little Bob

Ashford Little Bob is a simple doubles method where the treble plain hunts to thirds place. Unlike Cloister Doubles, this doesn't have the security of a second hunt bell to follow, and the treble ringer will need to ring by place and look around for the bells they should be ringing over.

Again, show the treble bell ringing by place, not necessarily knowing the order of the bells. To emphasise this, you can show the diagram of Ashford Little Bob Triples, or another doubles method such as Greenford Little Bob or [Hambledon Bob](#). Emphasise that in methods, the order that the ringer passes other bells will constantly change and this requires the ringer to ring by place rather than following specific bells.

Introducing plain hunt on four bells

Activity: Plain Hunt on four bells

Ring Plain Hunt on four bells with a helper standing behind to advise if necessary. Ask ringers to move round and start on different bells each time they ring. Make the ringing less physically demanding by including two cover bells.

Explain that in Plain Hunt, the odd numbered bells start by hunting up towards the back and even numbered bells start by hunting down towards the front. Use the [Plain Hunt jargon sheet](#) to introduce these terms and the concept of ringing at different speeds.

Activity: Ringing at different speeds

Some ringers have difficulty ringing at different speeds, particularly when turning round at the front or back. This can be particularly evident in minimus as the changes of speed are quite physical. If a ringer is struggling, you can try some shadowing. Only try this exercise if the bells cannot be heard outside the tower.

Try to ring two bells together as a chord, with a ringer and teacher striking simultaneously. Ask the ringer to copy the rhythm set by the teacher. Ring three slow blows, one steady, then three quicker blows, one steady and repeat. This exercise will allow the teacher to easily spot any handling issues, and it helps the ringer to appreciate the different speeds required when they are not being distracted by having to look around to find which bell to ring after. The ringer can concentrate on keeping pace with the teacher and perfecting the physical skill of changing speed.

Activity: [Whitefield Places](#)

This is a simple, short method where two ringers can ring Plain Hunt Minimus whilst two others make places. This is an opportunity for workshop participants to start ringing together at the same time and the order of bells will be different. The ringers making the places will still gain an opportunity to practise accurate striking.

Activity: [Minimus methods](#)

Ring some simple minimus methods with workshop participants on the treble, they will need to be ringing by place and if your band can vary the methods each time, they won't learn the order of bells they are ringing over. Use two cover bells to slow the ringing speed down.

Activity: [Little Bob Minor](#)

If it is within the capabilities of your band of helpers, consider ringing Little Bob Minor with a workshop participant on the treble, hunting to fourth place.

Introducing Plain Hunt on 5 bells

Activity: [Walking through Plain Hunt](#)

This helps ringers to understand the concept of plain hunting without having to handle a bell.

Activity: [Using a single handbell](#)

If you have a set of handbells, you can introduce the concept of ringing Plain Hunt on six with ringers using handbells.

Activity: [Plain Hunt](#)

Ring Plain Hunt on five bells with a helper standing behind to advise if necessary. Ask ringers to move round and start on different bells each time it is their turn. Try to encourage ringers to ring by place rather than attempt to memorise the order of the bells.

Theory: Course and after bells

Explain the theory of [course and after bells](#), and [try this game](#) with a ball to illustrate how this works in Plain Hunt.

Activity: [Plain Hunt Doubles](#)

Ring Plain Hunt on 5 bells and ask the ringer to try to pick out their course and after bells. Have several goes, with ringers moving around and starting on different bells, each time looking out to see if they can spot their course and after bells. Ringers can also do this whilst not ringing.

Call the bells into a different order using call changes (leaving your ringer's bell in its usual place) and ask them to spot their new course and after bells with the changed order. They will need to be ringing by place and looking around to see which bell turns them from the lead and off the back.

Activity: [Flying Dutchman](#)

This is a variation of plain hunt which encourages place counting and can be useful if any ringers have started to learn Plain Hunt by following particular bells.

Activity: [Grandsire Doubles](#)

Once ringers have all had a chance to ring plain hunt from every bell including the treble, ring a plain course of [Grandsire Doubles](#) with a workshop participant on the treble. This has the advantage of the 2 always turning the treble from lead so provides a reference point. Once this has been mastered and ringers feel confident, ask your helpers to ring a different doubles method such as Plain Bob Doubles, or St Martin's Doubles where the treble ringer will be ringing by place and spotting the bells they are ringing over using ropesight.

Activity: variable hunt Plain Bob Doubles

So that ringers don't get stuck on just the treble, ring variable hunt Plain Bob Doubles with the student's bell designated as the hunt bell. They will be ringing plain hunt purely by place with a changing order of bells just as they would from the treble, but gaining a different perspective. A ringer becoming increasingly confident ringing Plain Hunt Doubles could also ring the 2 to a plain course of Grandsire, plain hunting on five.

Activity: Plain Hunt Minor

Once Plain Hunt Doubles has been mastered and ringers are able to ring it without a cover bell, they may wish to next progress to [Plain Hunt Minor](#). This requires them to leaving the back at handstroke (which can feel a bit different). As there is no tenor covering, this will help to develop the skill of leading without the reference of a tenor bell.

After the workshop

- The participants will benefit from follow up sessions.
 - If they are sufficiently advanced, a goal of ringing a quarter peal can be set.
 - If the participant has not yet completed their Learning the Ropes Level 3, this course can be used as an aid to progression towards the completion of this level.
 - Perhaps they might also enjoy the fun challenge of ringing [Penultimus Doubles](#) or even [Original Doubles](#), where bobs are introduced into Plain Hunt.
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