

Handbell Ringing Glossary

Handstroke

The first stroke of a 'whole pull'. The bell moves from pointing forward to pointing up. It is important that the bell is turned enough so the clapper rests on the side closest to you to prevent double hitting on the backstroke.

Backstroke

The second stroke of a 'whole pull'. The bell moves from pointing up to pointing forwards. After the backstroke rest your hands on your knees but don't make contact with the bell itself or you will stop the hum of the bell.

Changes

Rows of music where each bell sounds exactly once in each change.

Hunting

The movement of one bell back and forth. The bell stays in 1st and last place for two blows e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 6th, 5th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st, 1st, 2nd, etc.

Lead

Ring first in the change, most often for two blows. A single blow at lead is usually called a 'point lead'.

Open handstroke lead

When a single beat rest is left between the last backstroke of the last stroke and the first handstroke of the next change.

Lie

Being last in the change, most often for two blows.

Backchange

Another name for back-rounds or reverse rounds; the change where the bells ring in order from heaviest to lightest e.g. on six bells 654321.

That's All

The command that signals the end of the ringing when the change comes back to rounds. Some handbell bands will say 'that's all' and stop ringing after rounds has been struck but other bands keep ringing rounds until the conductor says 'stand' or 'set' which is the command to stop ringing completely.

In/Out

As the bells change positions IN would describe a bell moving towards the front of the change and OUT a bell moving towards the back. In numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) 'in' is a decrease in the number of your position and 'out' would be an increase in number.

Front/Back

The bell at the front of the change is the bell that is leading and the bell at the back is the bell which is lying.

Treble/Tenor

The treble is the highest pitched bell being used. The treble is rung 1st in rounds. The tenor is the lowest pitched bell being used and is rung last in rounds. The note of the tenor tells you what musical key the bells are in; the bells in front of the tenor make a major scale in the tenor's key.

Quick /Slow

A bell moving from a higher position to a lower position (in) will have to ring more quickly to move in front of other bells and a bell moving from a lower to higher position (out) will ring slowly to allow other bells to pass it.

'Up, down and in'

Some handbell groups ring rounds over and over until the conductor says 'Go' and then the name of the method you are going to ring, e.g. 'Go Plain Hunt on 6'. The conductor should give this command when the treble rings a handstroke and it takes effect on the next handstroke. However, other handbell groups don't bother with lots of rounds and ring rounds on the handstroke, rounds on the backstroke and then start the next handstroke; this is called 'up, down and in'.

Coursing position

A pattern made by two bells where there is a gap of one between the two bells. The two bells meet and cross over in 1st and 2nd place and at the back (e.g. 5th and 6th in minor)

Opposites Position

A pattern made by two bells where they make a mirror image. When one bell is leading the other bell is in last place. The bells meet and cross over in the middle (3rd and 4th place in minor). There is never an opposites position on an odd number of bells.

2/3 Position

A pattern made by two bells where there is either a gap of two or three between the two bells. The bells meet and cross in 2nd and 3rd place and one place off the back (e.g. 4th and 5th in minor)

Minimus/Minor/Major/Royal/Maximus

The names given to ringing on an even number of bells (4, 6, 8,10,12 etc.)

Singles/Doubles/Triples/Caters/Cinques

The names given to ringing on an odd number of bells (3, 5, 7,9,11 etc.) The names refer to the maximum number of pairs of bells which can swap at a time. In singles there are 3 bells, one bell must

stay still and one pair can swap, hence singles; in doubles one bell must stay in the same position and up to 2 pairs can swap, hence doubles.

Plain Course

A piece of ringing of one method or principle which starts and finishes in rounds and where there are no calls.

Method/ Principle

A pattern where the bells weave around each other. In a method there is one or more hunt bell; the hunt bell(s) ring a different, simpler pattern to the other bells. In a principle all of the bells ring the same pattern.

Extent

Where every possible change is rung. On 6 bells there are 720 possible changes and the extent takes around 15-25 minutes to ring on handbells.

A Lead

In a method a lead is the number of changes from when the hunt bell (usually the treble) leaves the front until it return there.

Blue line

When the changes of a method are written out and the place of one bell is traced out to show the shape of the method. A popular book of diagrams traced the places with a blue line and the name has stuck to mean the shape of the path of a bell within a method.

Order of work

A sequence of instruction which define the blue line of a method. E.g. for Plane Bob Minor it would be 2nds, 3/4 down, 5/6 down, 5/6 up, 3/4 up.

Lead End

The backstroke of the two blows in lead of the hunt bell (usually the treble). What place you strike your bell at that backstroke tells you what place bell you are for the next lead.

Half lead

The backstroke of the two blows in last place of the hunt bell (usually the treble). The lead is symmetrical about this point.

Dodge

When two bells have crossed over a dodge is them crossing back again.

Place

When a bell stays in the same place for a number of blows, usually 2 blows. A 'right' place is a handstroke and backstroke in the same place; a 'wrong' place is a backstroke and a handstroke in the same place. When learning a method it is helpful to learn whether the places are right or wrong.

Quarter peal

A touch consisting of 1260 or more changes (1250 or more on 8 or more bells).

Peal

A touch consisting of 5040 or more changes (5000 or more on 8 or more bells).

Treble bob hunting

When bells hunt back and forth dodging in 1/2, 3/4 5/6 etc. The bell alternates between dodging and hunting for each whole pull (for each pair of handstrokes and backstrokes).

Grid

The grid shows the blue line for all of the bells for one lead. The grid is useful to see the underlying structure of the method.

Place notation

A way of writing out the method by stating where places are made between each change. If no bells make a place between two changes then it is denoted with an 'x' indicating that all the bells have changed. The place notation is unique to each method and is used to define each method. Some ringers learn the place notation to ring the method.

Bob/Single

A command which instructs the ringers to change round in a slightly different way to extend the length of the ringing. Bobs and singles are most often made when the hunt bell is leading. Bobs usually affect the order of 3 bells and singles 2.

Wrong, Home, Make the Bob, In & Out

The names given to certain positions achieved after a bob or single. The names are used to record the composition of a touch. The names are given by the piece of work done by the tenor. In Plain Bob Minor a wrong is the 5/6 up dodge, it is unaffected by a bob or single; a home is the 5/6 down dodge it is unaffected by a bob or single; making the bob (also called fourths) is when two blows are made in 4th place instead of dodging 3/4 up due to a bob or single being called; In is when the bell hunts down to the lead instead of dodging 3/4 down due to a bob being called; Out is when the bell hunts up away from the lead instead of making 2nds due to a bob or single being called.

Touch

A piece of ringing in which bobs and/or singles are called.

Place bells

The place you ring in at the lead end defines your place bell. The place bell is the lead which that bell would start ringing from rounds. If you learn a method in place bells, or at least know where the lead

ends are in a method the conductor has more chance of putting you back into place if you go wrong during ringing. Place bells are also important when splicing different methods together. Knowing the place bell order is exceptionally useful to keep yourself on the blue line whilst ringing.

Coursing order

The order you pass the other bells as you move through the method is the coursing order. The working bells lead and lie in this order. The coursing order rotates but does not change until a bob or single is called. You can learn the way in which the coursing order changes by bobs and singles called in different places so you can keep track of the coursing order throughout a piece of ringing. If somebody makes a mistake the coursing order tells you what they should be doing to correct them.

Transposition

Is how you can work out how the coursing order changes due to bobs and singles being called.

Middle

Another name for a position to call a bob or single. Middle only exists for 7 or more bells and is the lead end where the tenor becomes 6ths place bell in major , 8ths in Maximus.

Before

Another name for the place where you would call a bob to achieve an 'out'.