
Conducting Grandsire – practice night touches

For those who don't do much conducting, being asked to call Grandsire and potentially keep other ringers straight may seem quite daunting. There are plenty of conducting books around to help learn the intricacies of calling Grandsire, but here are a few handy tips that might be helpful on a practice night.

Calling another bell half hunt

In Grandsire Doubles, the 3 or 5 can be called to do the half hunt (observation) work. This bell will only ever dodge 4-5 up or make thirds.

- To call the 3 as the half hunt bell, call BPBPBP
- To call the 5 as the half hunt bell, call PBPBPB

To keep the bell in the half hunt right, remember that at every plain lead (P), they will be making thirds, and at every Bob (B), they will be double dodging 4-5 up.

Knowing which order the bells should go into the hunt also helps to keep the touch right if there are any trips.

- If calling the 5 half hunt, 2 starts in the hunt (plain course). At the first call the 3 goes into the hunt, followed by the 4 at the next call. Remember: 2, 3, 4.
- If calling the 3 half hunt, 2 starts in the hunt (plain course). At the first call, the 4 goes into the hunt, followed by the 5 at the next call. Remember: 2, 4, 5.

The conductor can check that each bell goes into the hunt in this order and even prompt if there is some confusion.

Spotting the hunt bell

Two easy ways to spot which bell is in the hunt:

- When ringing Grandsire on a working bell, the hunt bell is always the next bell passed after the treble, whether you are hunting up or down.
- The ringer of the half hunt bell will always make thirds over the treble and the hunt bell.

One of the most common trips in Grandsire is the bells dodging in 4-5 swap over, the ringers having colluded in dodging the wrong way.

As a conductor, the first indication you have that this might have happened is noticing that the same bell has become the hunt bell more than once.

Keeping track of who has been the hunt bell already in each touch is therefore very useful, if only to alert you that the touch is not likely to come round as planned and may need repairing.

Bringing Grandsire round easily after bells getting swapped

Here's a quick way to recover a touch of Grandsire which has got into a muddle, without necessarily being an expert conductor or knowing how all the calls affect all the bells.

- Call a bob to put the 4 in the hunt. You may have to put a call in, then allow a course to go by before you spot which bell is in the hunt. If it's not the 4, try again. As there are only three options (it can't be the half hunt bell), the 4 should turn up as the hunt bell.
- Wait until you see the 4 (as hunt bell) at the back with the 5 and call a bob. The 4 will double dodge 4-5 down with the 5 and come out of the hunt with the 2 and 3 below them.
- If the 2 is coming down to lead first followed by the 3, call a bob.
- If the 3 is first with the 2 behind it, call a single.
- The 2 should make seconds, the three should make thirds to bring it round.

Quick, easy touches for a practice night

If you just want to call touches that give people plenty of opportunities to practise the calls, this will work. Do bear in mind some of them may be false, some may end with rounds at handstroke, and some might come round when you're not expecting it – these are purely for fun and can be called from any bell.

- Any touch with two singles, one bob and a plain in any order will come round, as long as you repeat this in the same order three times.
- For example, you could call SSBP x 3, SBSP x 3, PBSS x 3

Calling from the treble

This is probably the easiest way of conducting Grandsire. It is ideal for anyone learning to call who wishes to simply concentrate on putting the calls in the right place without worrying about ringing the method.

Start by choosing a short touch and call a bob every other time the treble is approaching the lead, remember to say 'that's all' as the touch comes round.

This can be expanded to calling touches of 120, again with a call every alternate lead as the treble is approaching the lead. Any of the following calling patterns will work for a true 120:

- Bob, Bob, Single, Bob, Bob, Single
- Bob, Single, Bob, Bob, Single, Bob
- Single, Bob, Bob, Single, Bob, Bob

By calling from the treble, it'll be easy to spot the hunt bell (as it's the bell that the treble turns at both the front and the back) and identify the half hunt bell (as they will never take the treble from lead). Starting to observe this, and the order in which each bell becomes the hunt bell is a step towards being able to keep a band straight.

Calling from the Half Hunt bell

This is probably the second easiest way to conduct as the work the conductor does will be repetitive which also makes it possible to concentrate on putting the calls in and observing what other ringers are doing.

Whilst you are ringing the half hunt work, try to spot which order the other bells are going into the hunt, concentrate on putting calls in at exactly the right time, and notice how the calls affect the other bells.

Please see the resource in this toolbox on *Calling simple touches of Grandsire* for more information on calling from the half hunt bell.