

Moving from Call Changes to Plain Hunt

If a ringer can ring rounds and call changes, what skills should they already have?

- Ring at a constant speed
- Follow one bell
- Lead
- Hear their bell
- Strike correctly over bells of different sizes and odd-struckness
- Move one place up or down at handstroke

To test their skills when ringing Call Changes -

- Ask them which place they are in
- Can they identify the bell in front of the bell they are following?
- Can they identify which bell is following them?
- Check that they do not turn their whole body to follow a different bell, but stay facing the middle of the circle

What extra skills are required to ring Plain Hunt?

- Ring quicker and slower – move up or down one place consecutively
- Move place at backstroke
- Count their places
- Know which place they are in
- Identify which bell to follow
- Move place without instructions at each change

Exercises to help gain the extra skills required

- Ring rounds facing outwards from the circle
- Call Changes calling by place instead of bell number
- Follow a bell ringing quickly and slowly
- Kaleidoscope ringing
- Kaleidoscope Mexican Wave

Conventional ways of learning Plain Hunt

- Learn the bell number order to follow
- Learn and count their places
- Stand behind someone ringing Plain Hunt
- Ring Plain Hunt with someone standing behind

Other ways of learning Plain Hunt

- Whole-pull Plain Hunt
- Plain Hunt on 2 then increase the number of bells
- Plain Hunt on 5 after calling the 5th down to 3rd place (makes coursing order 12345)
- Plain Hunt after calling the bells into a (slightly) different order
- Use methods and exercises such as Bastow and Cloister (Stedman Quick Six)

Ringling by numbers

Advantages

- Quick start to Plain Hunt
- Familiarisation with change of speed
- Can be used with counting places
- May help to develop ropesight

Disadvantages

- Rely on memorising number sequence
- Rely on the rest of the bend to keep right
- Different bell - different sequence
- Numbers change in methods
- Need to stop ringing by number to progress

When someone can Plain Hunt by numbers it means that they can physically put their bell in the right place. At this stage it is advisable to stop them continuing to rely on numbers, and to encourage ringing by counting places and ropesight -

- Change the order of the bells before starting Plain Hunt
- Start on a different bell
- Ring a simple method or exercise (e.g. Penultimus)

Ringling speed

- To ring slower, catch the sally lower down, let a little rope out and pull slightly harder.
- To ring quicker, catch the sally higher, take a little rope in and pull slightly less.

Ropesight

- Hunting out, the next bell to follow is following you (easier to spot).
- Hunting in, the next bell to follow is 3 blows in front (harder to spot).

Listening skills

To challenge listening skills in Rounds, Call Changes, Kaleidoscope or Plain Hunt -

- Use a simulator alone
- Ring facing outwards from the circle – one ringer up to all ringers!

Standing behind

When standing behind, point to the bell to follow (or use the ringer's name) and say the ringing speed and place, e.g., 'Slower into 4ths place', 'Quicker 2nds place', 'Lead steady'. Then ask them to count their places out loud.

It is normal to stand behind a learner but it is sometimes worthwhile to stand where you can see their face. Their facial expressions can tell you a lot, e.g. -

- Whether they lead looking at the last bell or the floor!
- If they flinch when they clip another bell, it means that they are listening to their bell
- If they are looking all over for a bell to follow they may need the bells pointing out until their ropesight has improved
- If they keep going wrong at a particular point the cause can be more easily diagnosed if it is known where they were looking
- They can look at you when they require help, which can be given visually by pointing and other gestures

Different ways of learning

Everyone is different, so explaining Plain Hunt in different ways may help -

- Turn the 'blue' line on its side with lead at the bottom of the page.
- Explain how you go up stairs slower (out to the back) and come down stairs quicker (in to the front) – also try Plain Hunt on steps.
- Describe Plain Hunt on 3 as being the same as plaiting hair.

Features and advantages of Kaleidoscope ringing

- Step between Call Changes and Plain Hunt
- Introduction to the 'blue' line
- Move place without instructions at each change
- Need to count blows
- Encourages counting 2 blows as a whole pull
- Can move place at backstroke
- Introduction to 'wrong' places
- Introduction to dodging
- Introduction to work in other methods, e.g. Yorkshire Places, Stedman backwork
- Only 2 bells need be involved at any one time
- Can involve more than one pair of bells
- Accommodates different skill levels
- Fewer instructions to call than Call Changes
- Musical alternative to Call Changes
- Suitable for service ringing

Fun exercises without tower bells

- 'Bodies' Plain Hunt
People numbered in order (e.g. 1 to 6) stand in a row and say their numbers in rounds. Swap places in pairs as in the first change of Plain Hunt and say their numbers in the new order, then the person leading stands still while the other pairs swap. Continue until it comes back into rounds.
'Bodies' can be rung with handbells, with one bell per person.
- Plain Hunt on steps
Do 'bodies' on steps, each step is a place and the bottom step is lead.
One person can practise Plain Hunt on the stairs at home, counting their places on each step.
- Handbell 'lapping'
Lay handbells on a table in order with 2 bells per person. Ring rounds and as the bells are replaced (carefully) on the table they are swapped over as in Plain Hunt. Each person rings the 2 bells placed in front of them in order. Continue until it comes back into rounds.
(If you don't have handbells try this with numbered cards, saying the numbers out loud).
- Quizzes, worksheets and theory questions
See material on CCCBR Ringing Practice Toolkit or make your own.
- Method makers
Boards with pins and coloured thread for weaving methods.
Also excellent for keeping younger ringers occupied.

Further information from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

Ringling Practice Toolkit - <http://cccbr.org.uk/edc/rpt.php>

Network for Ringling Training (NRT) - <http://www.cccbr.org.uk/edc/nrt/leaflet.php>

Publication – *Kaleidoscope Ringling – a Change Ringer's Alternative to Called Changes* - £1.50

And many other publications!