

CALL CHANGES

Now you can follow a bell fairly reliably in rounds, it is time to learn to become a change ringer. The first step is to ring call changes. Instead of following the same bell all the time, the *conductor* will change the order in which the bells ring. He will *call* a bell to follow a different one.

The idea is to produce musical-sounding changes. Some of these have well-known, traditional names, for example:

On six bells	On eight bells	Name
132546	13254768	Kings
135246	13572468	Queens
531246	17532468	Whittingtons
142536	15263748	Tittums
543216	76543218	Back rounds

Notice that the tenor usually rings last (covering) as this gives a better rhythm, although in some towers, especially with fewer than six bells, the tenor may be called in to give more variety.

How calls are made

There are slightly different ways of making the calls, but the one commonly used in the Leatherhead District is to call bells forward in the change.

Suppose we want to change from Rounds to Queens:

12345678 Rounds
13572468 Queens

A bell can only move one place in the order, so it isn't possible to get to Queens in one call (see if you can get the band to try it on a practice night). Instead, a series of calls will be needed, for example:

	Call
12345678	
13245678	Three to one
13254678	Five to two
13524678	Five to three
13524768	Seven to four
13527468	Seven to two
13572468	Seven to five (Queens)

In this example, the first call is
'Three to one.'

This is an instruction for bell no. 3 to follow bell no. 1, which gives the change:
13245678.

Notice that this call has affected *three* bells:

- Bell 3 is now following bell 1 (as instructed).
- Bell 2 was originally following bell 1, but its place has been taken by bell 3, so now it must follow bell 3. This is the first rule: *If a bell is called in front of you, then follow that bell.*
- Bell 4 has not moved: it is still the fourth bell to ring, but it is now following a different bell, in this case the 2.

Bell 4 knows that he has to follow a different bell, because the bell he was following was called away by the call 'three to one.' It isn't quite so easy to see which is the new bell to follow, but the rule is:

- *If the bell you were following is called away, follow the bell that it was following.*

So, to ring call changes accurately, you should watch the bell you are following, and also observe which bell that one is following. The conductor always makes the call at handstroke, and the change is made at the *next* handstroke. This gives the band a whole-pull warning of the change.

To get a different bell to lead, for example, in Whittingtons, the conductor calls 'Five lead'.

Try to work out on paper, or with counters, the calls needed to arrive at other changes, say Whittingtons (which is the change that Dick Whittington heard on Highgate Hill, and called him back to become Lord Mayor of London). Remember that *you can only call bells forward* (to follow the bell next but one in front of them). Then get them back to rounds!

Combination Calls

Although no bell can move more than one place at a call, this does *not* mean to say that only one bell can *move* at a call.

It is quite common to call straight from Kings to Rounds:

13254768 Kings

12345678 Rounds

In Kings, the middle pairs of bells are swapped with each other, so each bell only has to move one place to return to rounds.

We can use this to get Queens on six bells in only two calls:

123456 Rounds

132546 Kings

135246 Queens

This won't work on eight bells, unless we invent another change, let's call it *Princes (just for fun—it's not done anywhere that I know)*:

13527468

Then we can get from Rounds to Queens in three calls:

12345678 Rounds

13254768 Kings

13527468 Princes

13572468 Queens

Calling up or back

Some towers prefer to call bells up or towards the back of the change, so the calls for getting to Queens could be:

12345678	Call
13245678	Two after three
13254678	Four after five
13524678	Two after five
13524768	Six after seven
13527468	Four after seven
13572468	Two after seven (Queens)

When bringing a bell to lead using this system, it is usually mentioned. For example from rounds, the call could be '*Treble to two lead*'.

Ropesight

The ability to see who is following whom is called *Ropesight*. It is the key to successful change ringing. You should try to cultivate this whilst you are sitting out by trying to see who is following whom. Perhaps you can persuade one of the other ringers to let you stand behind them and practise identifying the order of the bells.

When you can do this in call changes, you can try it with the tenor *covering* to triples. You can ask to stand behind the tenor, if you don't want to try to ring it! When covering, the tenor always rings last, providing a beat to which the other bells ring. The old books simply advise the ringer to watch all the other ropes move and to follow the last, but this is hard to see at first, especially if the other bells aren't ringing accurately. However, if the rhythm is good, the tenor can ring at a steady speed and will automatically strike last. Even will top-class ringing, the speed varies naturally, and the tenor must respond to this, so it is still essential to listen.

Roger Tompsett