

Cambridge Surprise Minor

An introduction to the method

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13th March 2021

Some basic stuff

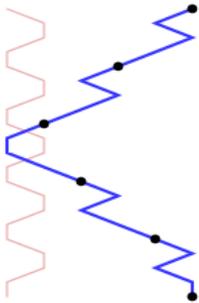
There are many methods with the word “Cambridge” in the title. However, I’ve never been asked to ring Cambridge only to discover the requester did not mean Cambridge Surprise. Take it as read that when Cambridge is talked about at ringing events, it is always surprise which is being referred to.

Being able to ring Cambridge is often seen as a Holy Grail in ringing whereas in fact it’s more of a gateway to a whole new branch of ringing. There is also much confusion between treble bob methods, delight methods and surprise methods with some ringers thinking that surprise methods are the hardest ones to learn and ring but this is not the case. I have no idea why but in general ringing parlance, apart from Kent and Oxford one doesn’t get to hear about other treble bob methods and as for delight methods these never ever get mentioned at all. This is a bit of an oddity in ringing as there are just as many equally difficult treble bob and delight methods out there but performances of which tend to be the preserve of quarter and peal ringers.

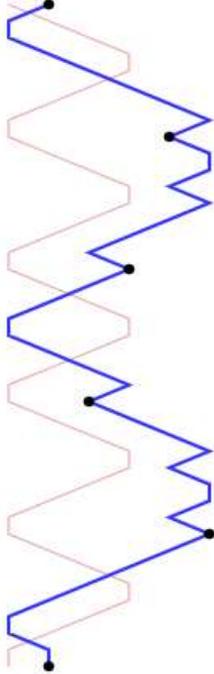
Learning Cambridge isn’t something you should move on to simply because you can already ring a specific list of methods, especially if these methods are rung by just knowing the Blue line and very little else. There is a need to understand basic method structure and have an ability to be able to ring some methods via knowledge of an already known method. Being able to ring touches of spliced would also be useful .

Here's a few examples of methods to ring before trying Cambridge.

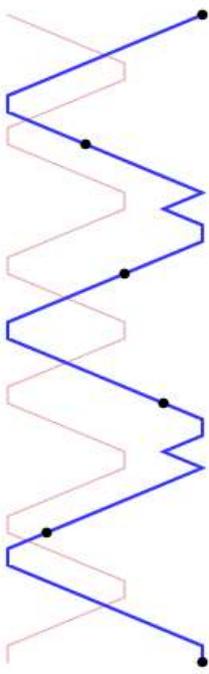
Bastow



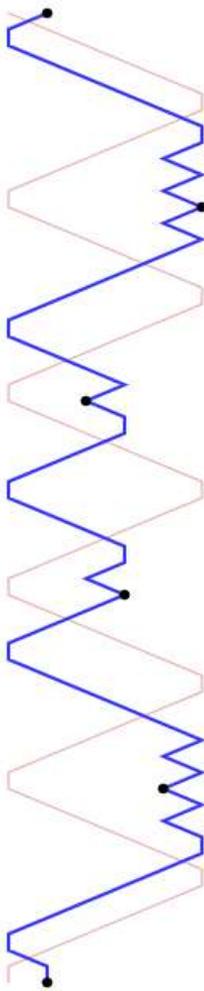
Little bob



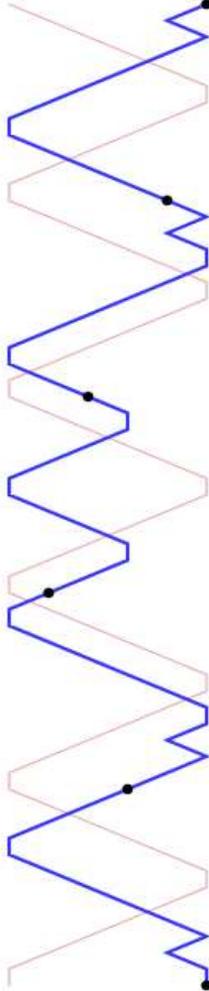
*Crayford



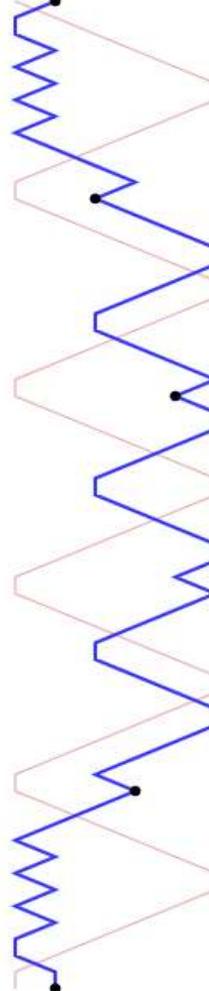
Single Oxford



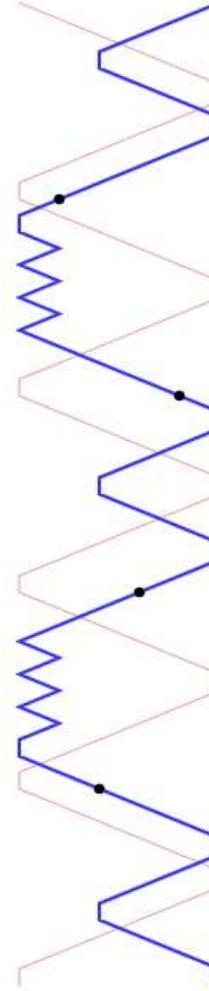
*Single Court



St Clement's



*College bob

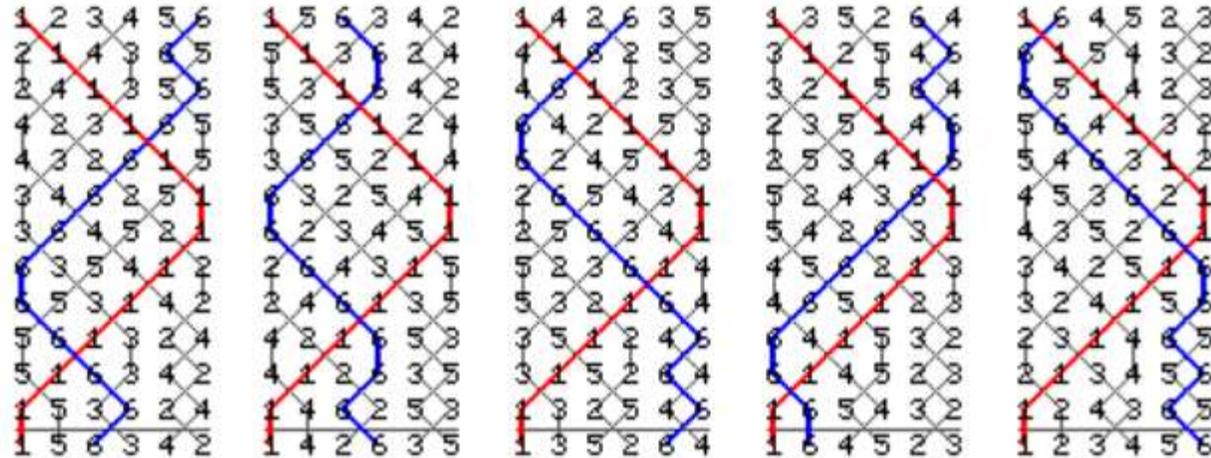


Note: Methods marked with * are the 6th place version of the method to their left – try ringing them without referring to the Blue line

A bit of general theory

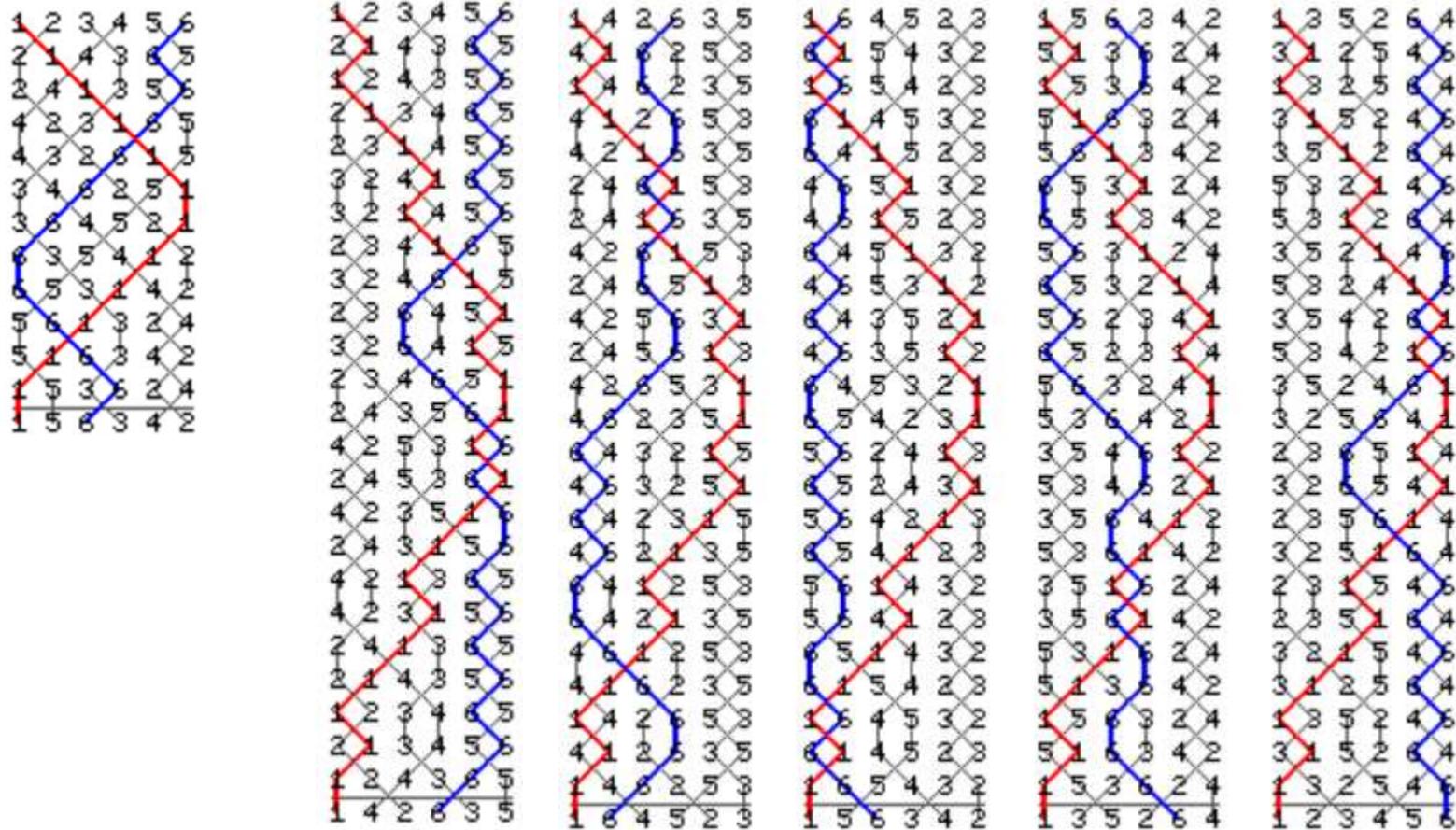
How many rows in a lead of plain minor?

How many leads in a plain course of plain minor?



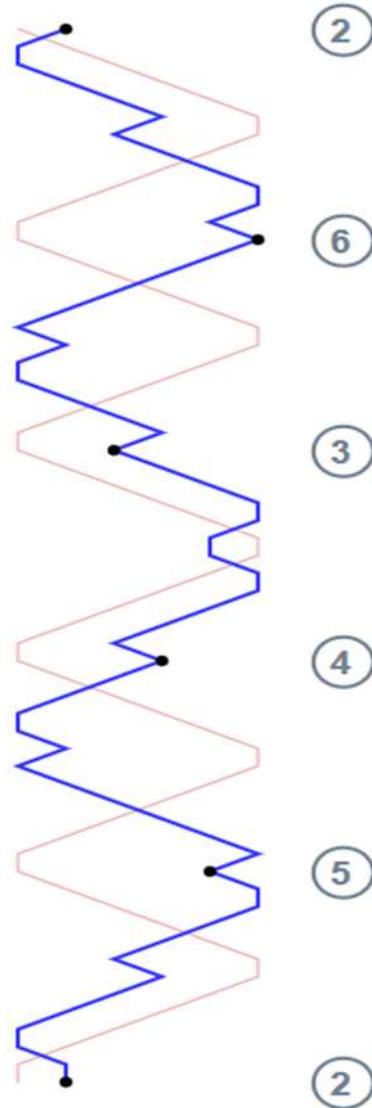
A bit of general theory – part 2

How many rows in a lead of treble bob minor? How many leads in a plain course of surprise minor?



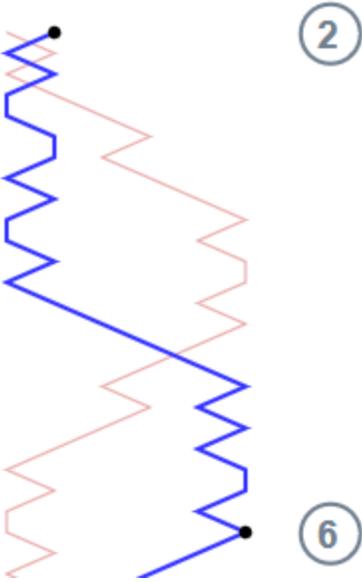
A bit of general theory – part 3

Double Bob

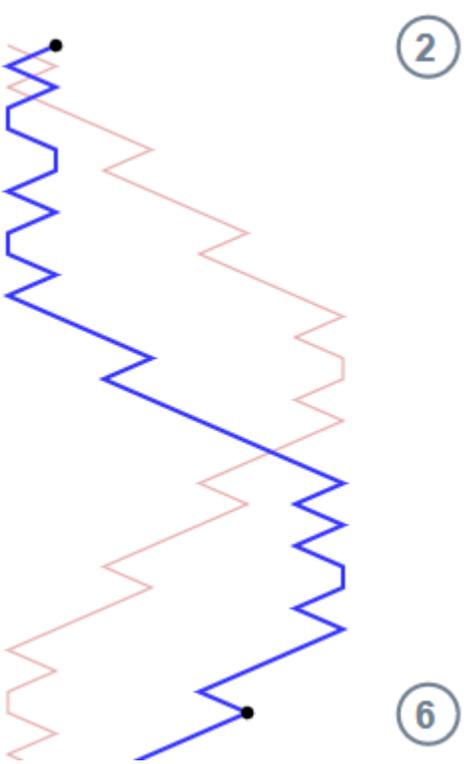


Cambridge - 2nds place bell

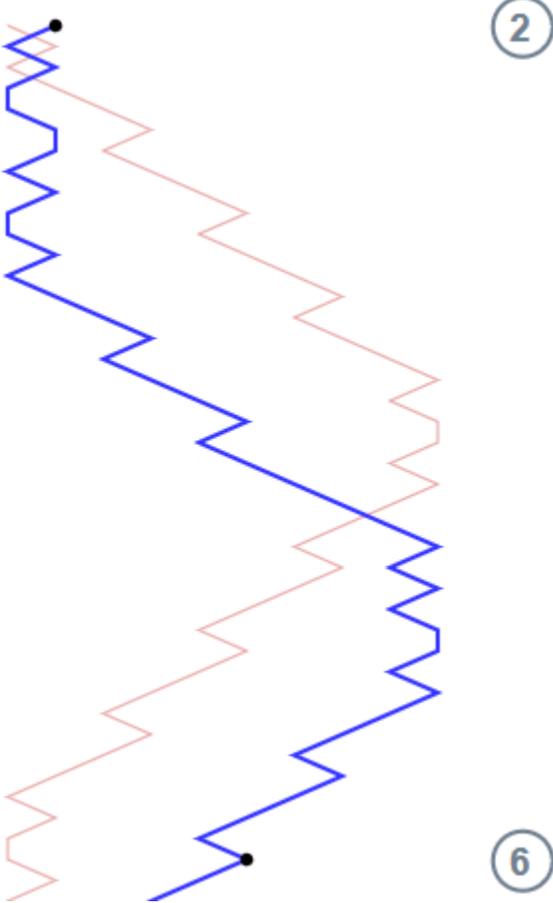
Minor



Major

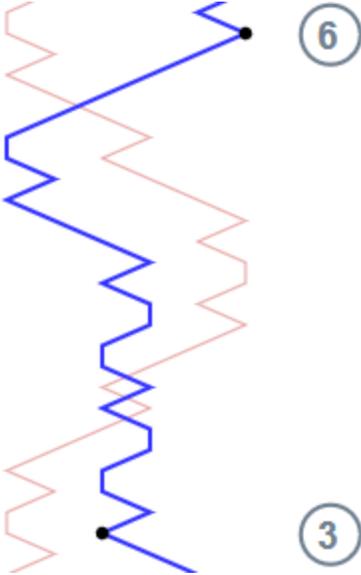


Royal

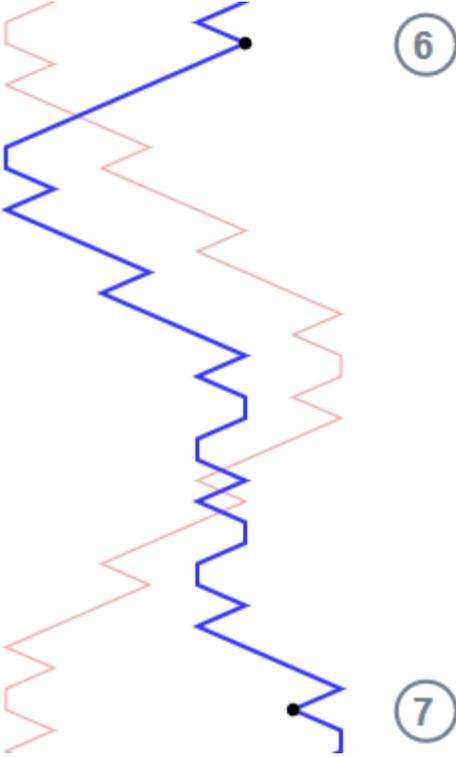


Cambridge - 6ths place bell

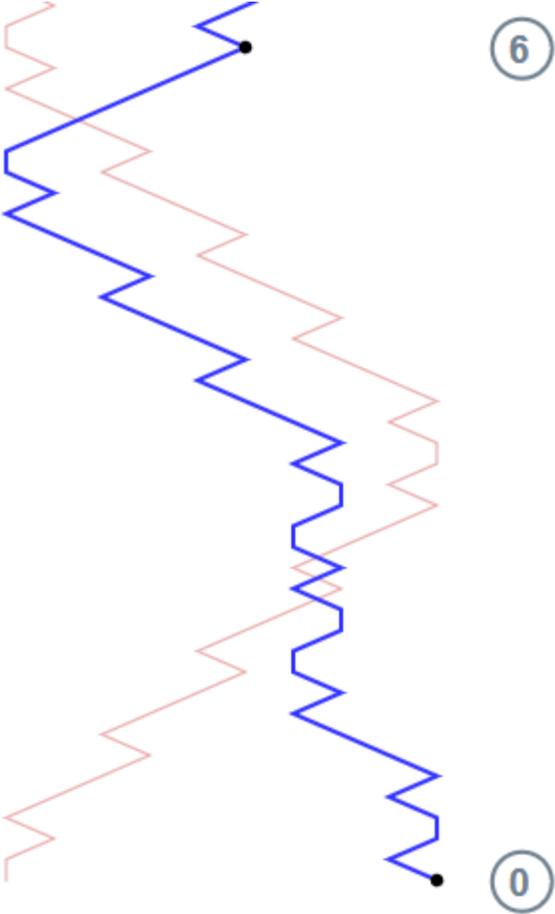
Minor



Major

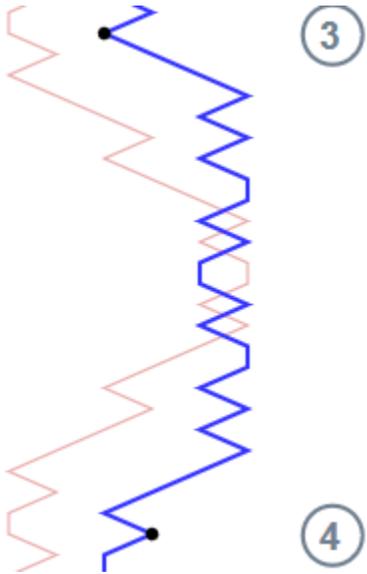


Royal

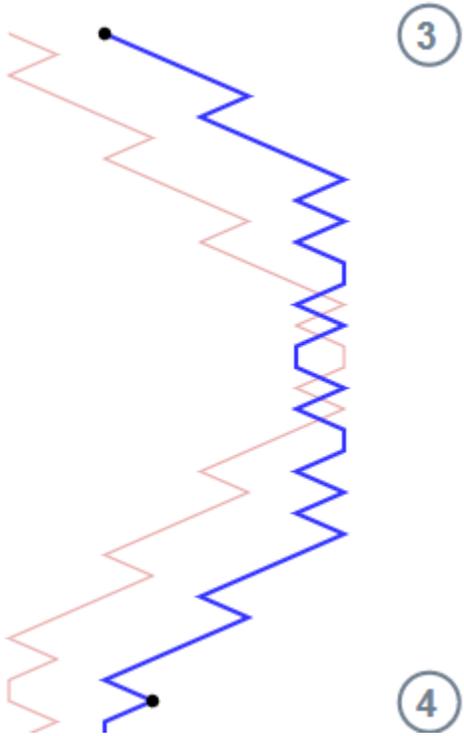


Cambridge - 3rds place bell

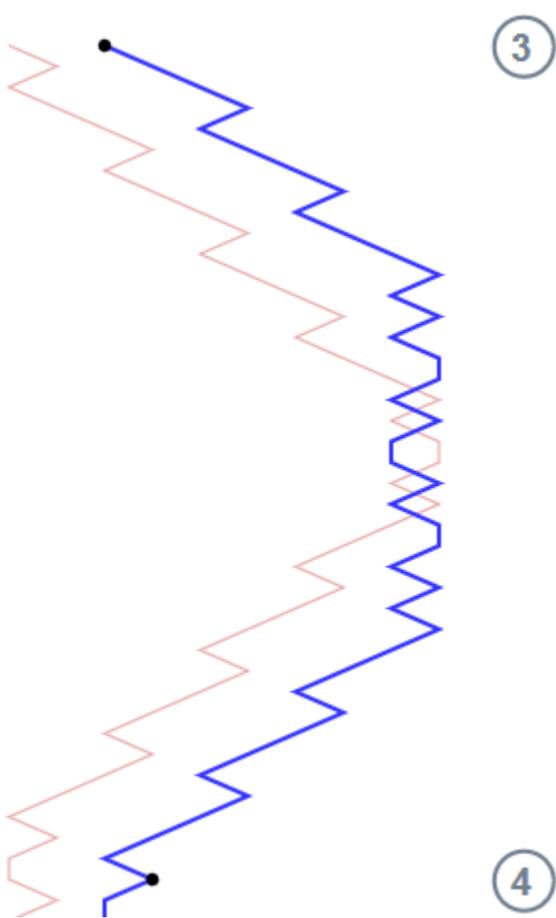
Minor



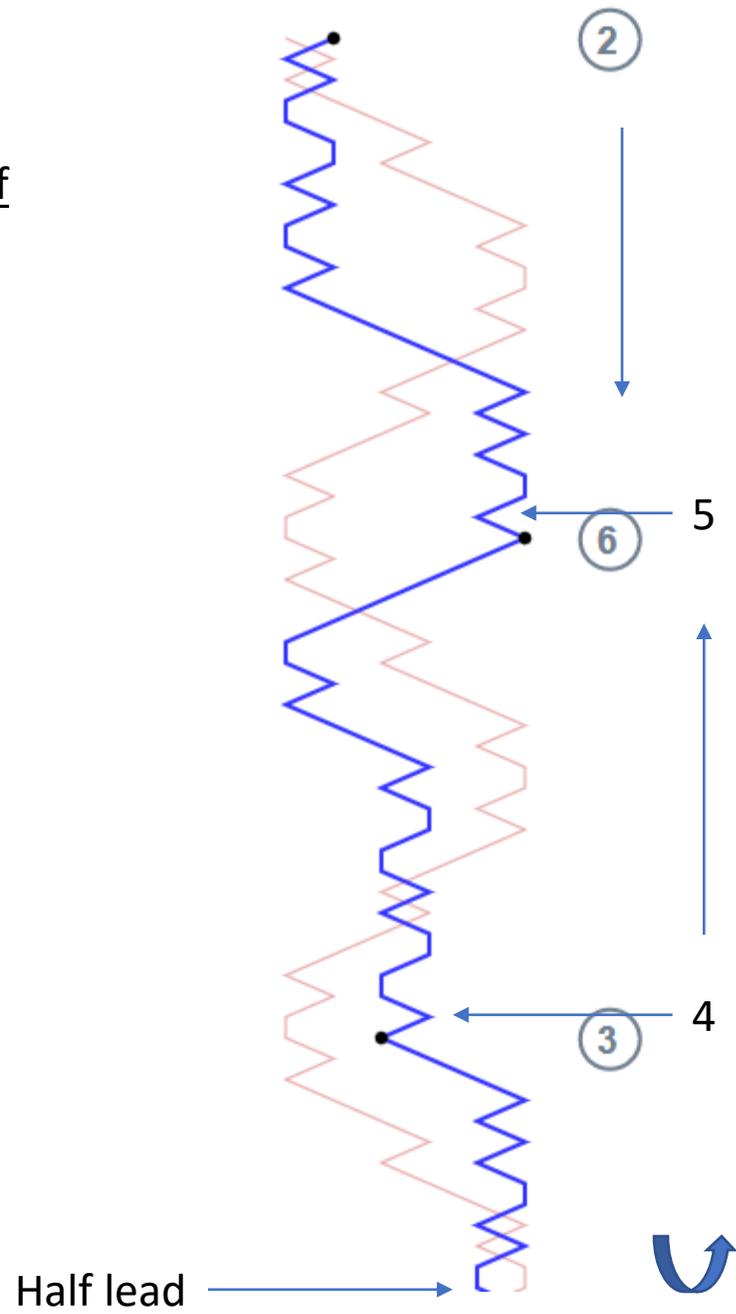
Major



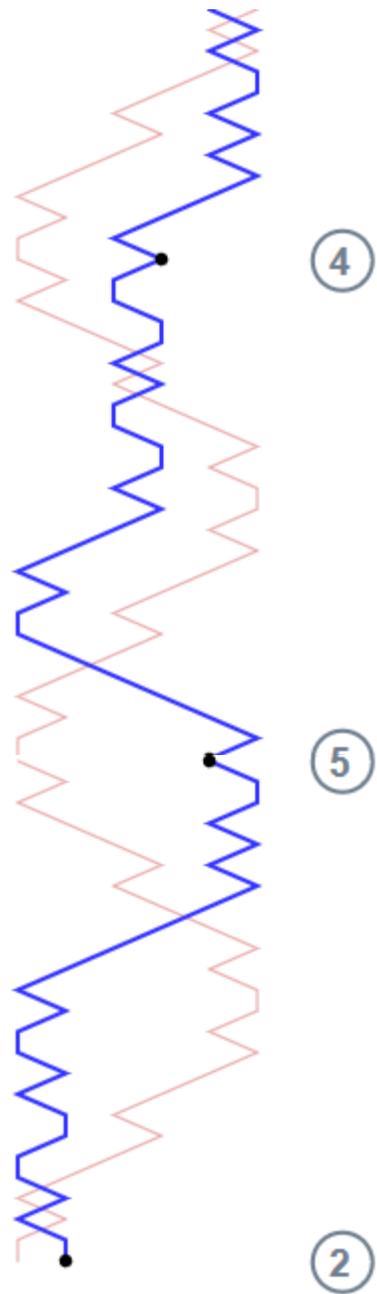
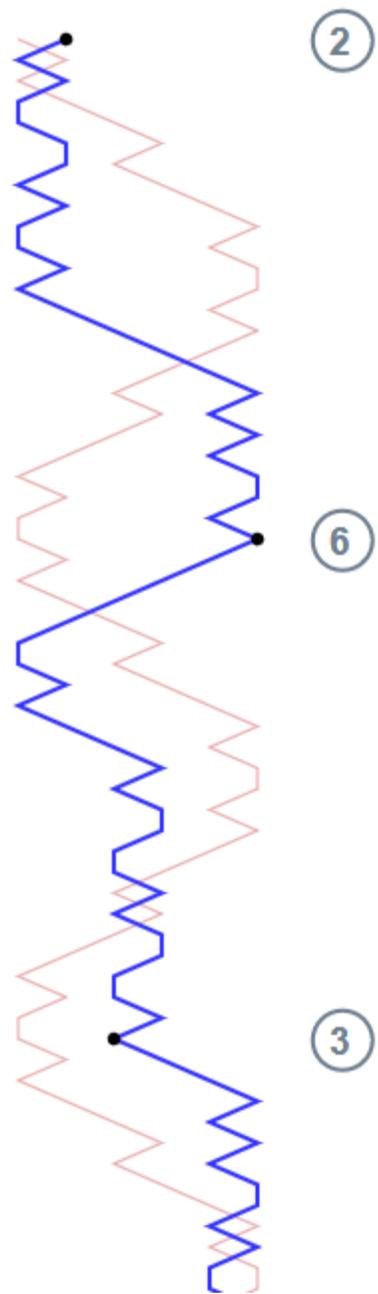
Royal



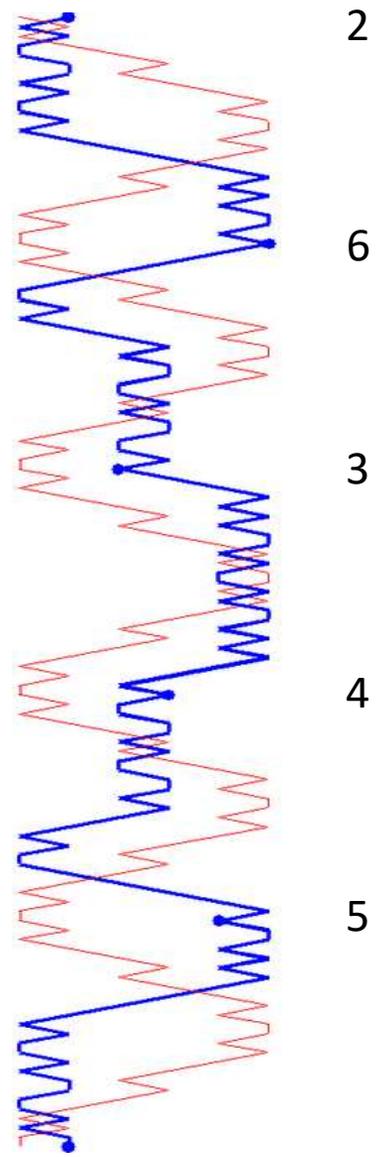
The whole thing, - well, sort of



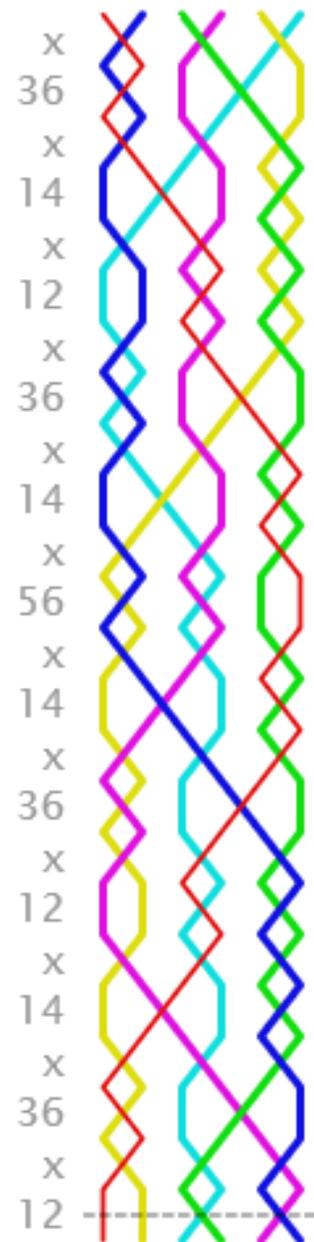
The whole thing



.....or if you prefer

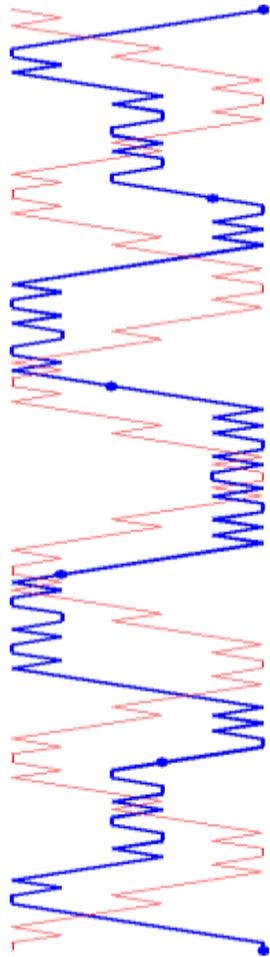


The grid

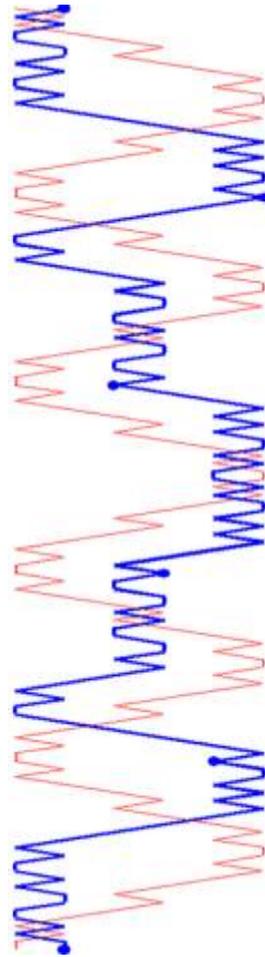


Other Cambridge related methods

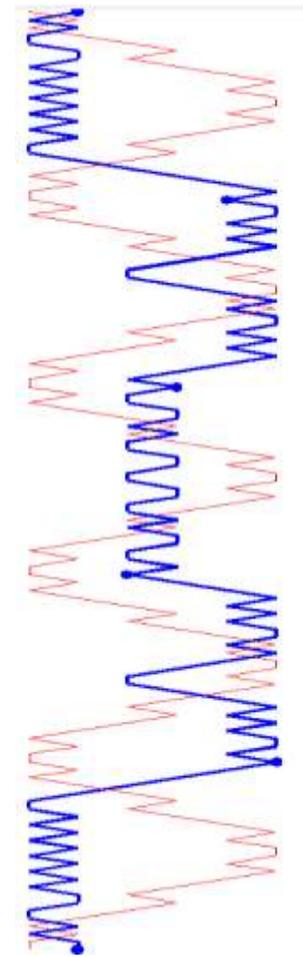
Primrose



Cambridge

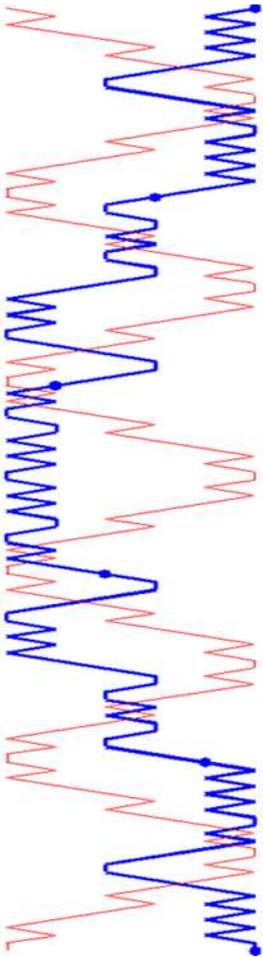


Bourne

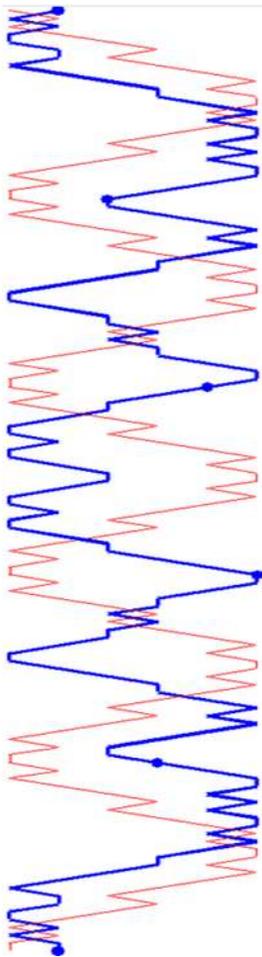


Two unrelated methods

Norwich



London



Summary

Before tackling Cambridge “head on” here’s a few suggestions to consider;

1. How well do you know the methods you can already ring? Learn all you can about them.
2. Are you comfortable ringing touches of them?
3. Can you manage at least three methods in spliced?
4. If you need to broaden your repertoire arrange your own focussed practices with just enough helpers.
5. When you feel confident enough to learn Cambridge, be sure to learn the line by place bells, know where half lead and lead end dodges are and where the dodges with the treble are.
6. If a whole course is a bit daunting, learn just three leads (a plain course is easily brought rounds at this point). Adding the additional two leads later on should not then be too difficult.

Finally, if after having done everything possible Cambridge is still proving to be a bit of a struggle, there’s absolutely no shame in putting it to one side with a view to possibly returning to it another time. By having got this far you will have become a better ringer since first setting out on this quest, so your efforts will not have been a waste of time.