

NEWS

The Quarterly Newsletter of the St Martin's Guild - issue 41

Editor's forward:

Welcome to my first edition of the Newsletter as compiler/ editor. Thanks for all the submissions. You'll see that there are some slight changes to the layout and I'd welcome any comments or suggestions - positive and negative. Please also feel free to make any submissions, at any time, for the next edition - news, stories, experiences, photos, letters, cartoons, educational stuff - whatever you think might be of interest.

Andrew - avb@btinternet.com

Contents:

Learning the ropes.....	2
Clare McArdle	
Ringing Master's Report....	3
Phil Ramsbottom	
St Alphege notice.....	4
Brumdingers.....	5
Simon Linford	
An invitation.....	6
Phil Ramsbottom	
The Birmingham School....	7
Thomas Healy	
Shirley Parish street party...	7
Richard Andrew	
The Jubilee at Harborne....	8
Clare McArdle	
St Giles, Sheldon.....	9
Margaret Burling	
Crossing the Great Void....	10
AJ Barnfield	



Guildford Cathedral

Ringing Master's Report:

It's a great pleasure to begin this newsletter by congratulating the Birmingham team on winning the National 12 Bell Striking contest held at Guildford Cathedral on 25th June. Well done for catching up after two years of lockdowns and overcoming sore hands. There were three new ringers in the team this year, of whom, Alistair Cherry and Jimmy Yeoman had only previously rung in one eliminator, and Oliver Bates had not previously rung in the competition at all (so no pressure) making the achievement all the more remarkable. I hope we can look forward to seeing team Birmingham at next year's final which will be on 24th June 2023 at Sheffield Cathedral.



Sheffield Cathedral

Learning the Ropes Advanced call Changes.

Many of you will be familiar with the Association of Ringing Teachers' Learning the Ropes Scheme, especially if you have had any involvement in the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing. The scheme offers a pathway of progression from bell handling through to method ringing in 5 levels.

At the end of May, ART launched a new parallel scheme – Learning the Ropes Advanced Call Changes. Over five incremental levels, it offers an alternative development pathway for ringers and bands, taking some of its inspiration from the “masters of call change ringing” in Devon and Cornwall. It includes a number of traditional Devon call change sequences and the final assessment is to call Sixty on Thirds and record it on BellBoard – not an easy task...

A survey of LtR ringers and teachers found that a major barrier to progress was a lack of helpers and conductors to support new ringers into method ringing. This was a particular problem in areas where new bands were learning together – the jump from call change ringing to method ringing was just too hard. I proposed to ART that much more could be done around the teaching of call changes and that a scheme focussing on call changes could be beneficial for whole band development. I felt that if the profile of call

A pilot scheme was run from August to December 2021 with 6 bands from across the country taking part. Most were focussing on Levels 2 and 3 and, by the end, some were starting to work towards some of the Level 4 exercises. The feedback from the pilot bands was very encouraging:

“A solid base to refresh skills and build on previous taught skills”

“A different approach to call changes for a band with previous experience, but it didn't feel like they were starting again.”

“The theory was new to some.”

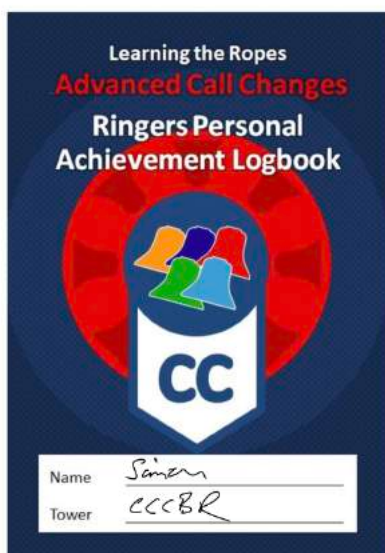
“Conducting built up confidence.”

“Incentive to improve call change ringing.”

“Elliot (10) really enjoyed the call changes scheme - the science of it and the empowerment that its accessibility to all ages brings. It's also been great for him being made to ring and call from different bells and given him a very full understanding of his place within the change - much more than I had learning the standard way. Love it!” Sally (Elliot's Mum)

changes could be raised and people were given a better understanding of them, then better ringing would follow. As a result, I was really pleased to be asked by ART to develop this new scheme.

In a little more detail, the LtR Advanced Call Changes Scheme places emphasis on versatility, aiming to turn out ringers who can ring anywhere in the circle and who can confidently call and devise call change sequences. Many of the exercises must be completed on a minimum of four different bells, to build bell handling skills and adaptability. There is equal emphasis put on learning to conduct as well as being able to ring anywhere in the circle. Each level has ringing targets, conducting targets and theory targets and achievement is measured by performance, published on BellBoard. Other less well known concepts, such as Jump Call Changes are introduced at the higher levels as well as demystifying Devon call change



sequences such as Up the Garden Path and Sixty on Thirds.

The scheme is **not** prescriptive about calling conventions or leading. It does not suggest that everybody should call their call changes "up" or that the Devon call change sequences should be rung with closed handstroke leads (or that you should start and end with the bells down). Participants are encouraged to adopt, or stick with, whatever their local conventions are.

I recognised that a number of the exercises will be new to people. So, to assist teachers of the scheme, or bands who want to work together on it, a dedicated toolbox is available on the ringingteachers.org website, under resources/method toolboxes. The website also gives access to ART's online learning portal. Just like the original LtR scheme, learners can track their progress with a logbook and these are now available to buy from the ART shop <https://shop.bellringing.org>.

Creating the scheme was really enjoyable and I had a lot of help from many

people along the way, not least some of my own students who helped to pilot the scheme. They are on the brink of getting their first certificates (Level 3) and it has been a pleasure to watch them grow in confidence as they embraced the challenges. Many of the skills they have developed will help them as they progress towards ringing methods too. I do hope that others in the Guild will see the potential for this scheme and give it a go.

Clare McArdle



Ringling Master's Report (cont'd):

Back from the 12-bell striking contest to more everyday events, the workshops. They continue to be well supported and, as always, I'm very grateful to those who support them, either as a helper or as someone simply wanting to learn something or improve in some way. Whilst I'm not going to pretend that every workshop has been a roaring success, I don't believe there's been a single occasion when at least one person hasn't ended the evening having learnt something new, which is what really matters.

By way of an example, two workshops which spring to mind are the recent rounds and call changes event at Solihull and the Bastow, Little bob, Kent workshop at St Pauls. At Solihull, despite the 'billing' no call changes at all were rung. We rang rounds on a variety of 5's, 6's, 8's, 10 and 12 (15 variations in total)

working on the all-important pull off and in a few cases tidying up some bell handling to great effect. The St. Pauls event set out to demystify Little bob and Kent (two very misunderstood and thus much avoided and/or badly rung methods). The evening started off with some fairly basic and elementary theory which benefitted the subsequent ringing.

The workshops will soon be taking a break for the summer and re-emerging in September with a revised format. There are two reasons for this. Firstly I'm keen to encourage more Guild members to arrange ringing events over and above their usual Sunday and practice night sessions, particularly as it's not a difficult thing to do. Remember the Three Events Challenge? Click [here](#) if you need reminding what it's all about. Secondly, I'd like to start a 'Grand Tour' and visit a few practice nights (quite a few in fact) around the local Guild area to get a good picture of the

general state of ringing at the grass roots end of things. In order to accommodate this there will now be just two workshops per month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. As always, I'm interested to hear other ideas or subject matter that you, our Guild members, or bands, would like workshops for. It can be about improving bell handling, striking, theory, anything at all really that will help to improve your own level of ringing in some way. Please let me know your thoughts and I'll either arrange something or help you to arrange it.

The Platinum Jubilee

The Platinum Jubilee celebrations of HM Queen Elizabeth didn't go unnoticed by Guild members, with several entries seen on Bellboard. These ranged from general ringing up to a peal of Stedman cinques. Although not all Guild performances were on Bellboard, those that were can be found at the link on page 6. Well done to everyone who managed to ring something for this incredibly special event.

Moseley

The open ringing at Moseley, St. Mary, every third Thursday continues unabated with ringing ranging from rounds and call changes up to Grandsire caters on a good day. It would be rude of me not to mention the excellent tea, coffee, and cakes, provided by Trish, and for which we are always most grateful. If anyone is interested in joining these sessions at any time, there's no need to book, just turn up, it'll be a pleasure to see you. 10.15am is when the fun starts.

In closing I'd like to thank everyone for their continued support of the Guild during the course of the year, whether at tower level or at some of the wider Guild events. Collectively you all contribute in some way to making the Guild very strong, active, and forward thinking. Wherever you are on the scale, you all deserve a huge 'thank you'.

Phil Ramsbottom

St Alphege, Solihull.

We'd like to let you know that due to work to the stonework and windows in the church, we are suspending ringing at Solihull from 12th September until mid January 2023. So, if you were thinking of joining us for a Tuesday practice, get over to us ASAP or wait till the New Year.

Unfortunately the condition of one of the windows is so poor that the stonework around the tracery is being held together by the glass. The window is considered a danger to life and so, as you can imagine, once the glass is removed for repair, the window will be in an even more fragile state.

The band will be working hard to stay together and are looking to arrange our practices at towers local to us and will be helping out on Sundays where we're needed.

Sand Cooper



Brumdingers.

The last couple of months have been very much focused on the Ringing World National Youth Contest. Practices have been moved to Harborne to get a more realistic experience and so that Max can stay at her home tower. The test piece was tactically simplified, and the band were imbued with the confidence to help each other with their striking. On 2nd July a group of ten young ringers and seven supporting adults set off for Exeter on a very early train.

All the extra effort paid off, because after a few years of propping up the table, the team stormed up the leaderboard with a joint 5th place finish out of 16 teams in the call change competition. Max at age 9 would have been one of the youngest in the entire competition, and our team was still much younger than those that were placed higher.

The team was:

1. Elizabeth Wilby
 2. Charlie Linford ©
 3. Max Earthquake
 4. Caoimhe Brophy
 5. Sara Paulson
 6. Orson Gee
- First reserve: Susan Webb

On the train home, as Charlie, Caoimhe and Orson were studying OFCOM's official list of rude words banned before the watershed, others were discussing tactics for next year, when they would move up to the method ringing competition, and how many years there were left in order to win it. With Elliot, James and George coming through the ranks the team could be well placed for a few years yet.

The trip to Exeter was not just about the competition ringing, though. All the bands were provided with individual programmes to visit other towers, ring on some mini rings, and find tea and cake shops in between. Susan had set her sights on ringing the tenor at Exeter Cathedral and achieved it, ringing the tenor off the box as one of the local ringers strapped from the floor.

So, with thanks to all the helpers, supporters, and parents, a very successful day out.

Simon Linford



Crowding the tenor box at Exeter Cathedral.



The team flying the banner.

Something a bit different. An invitation:

I've had an association with Tong in Shropshire ever since my early ringing days. The church houses a lovely 12cwt ring of 6 bells and also a 46cwt bourdon bell which, for some strange reason, is hung for full circle ringing. It's known as 'The Great Bell'. It is only officially rung on a few occasions each year, one of which is 24th August, the patronal festival of the church. I've booked the tower for that evening, a Wednesday, from 7.30pm onwards and am keen to hear from anyone who might like to come along and participate in this almost unique ringing experience. Here are just a few titbits to whet your appetite:

The Great Bell is the 11th heaviest bell hung for full circle ringing anywhere in the world and is rung from the ground floor via a double ended rope.

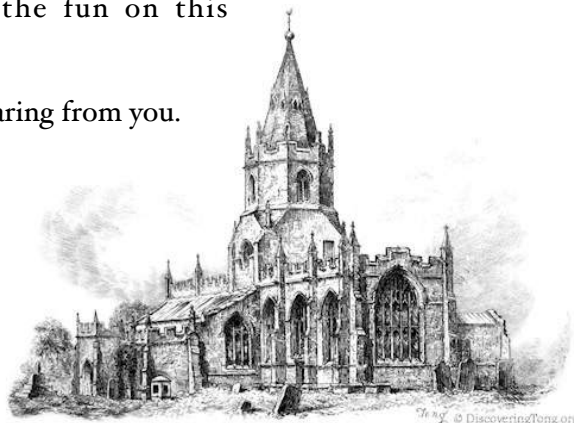
The ring of six are also rung from the ground floor and, whilst they are very easy going, it would be wrong of me not to advise that good handling is required due to the amount of unguided rope.

If on arrival you have second thoughts about 'taking hold' all is not lost as the church is an absolute gem and well worth a look round. More information can be found here: <https://tong-church.org.uk/>

This invitation is open to all Guild members. Please let me know if you'd like to come along and join in the fun on this occasion.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Phil Ramsbottom
phil.ramsbottom@live.co.uk
07971 009689




A Notable Performance.

In the words of her husband, James, '...here's a rather impressive performance from Casey:'

**CELEBRATORY
BELL RINGING**


St Martin's Guild
On Thursday, 2 June 2022 in 2h 17
Selly Oak, West
Midlands
21 Fladbury Crescent




5056 Cambridge Surprise Major
Composed by Charles Middleton


1-2	Casey McLellan
3-4	Oliver C Bates (C)
5-6	Jimmy L Yeoman
7-8	James P Ramsbottom

1-2: First peal
First peal on James & Casey's handbells.
Rung to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II.





Simon Linford
President
The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers



All of the Platinum Jubilee performances listed under the St Martin's Guild can be found [here](#).



Shirley Parish Street Party for the Platinum Jubilee.

The parish of St James the Great, Shirley had decided to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by holding a street party in the road between the church and Church House in the afternoon on the Saturday of the Jubilee weekend (4th June), thus closing the road off to traffic for the first time I can ever remember.

The parish had also asked the ringers at St James to mark the opening of the street party with some appropriate ringing, so we put our heads together to determine how best to do this with the resources we had available. In

the end we decided to have an extended session of about half an hour's ringing on 8, starting with a touch of Grandsire Triples, followed by some well-struck Call Changes, which included Tittums, Whittingtons, Kings and Queens. The concluding piece was a touch of Plain Bob Triples.

It was generally agreed that the standard of ringing was very good, so we then went down to join in the party out in the street, sampling sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee, etc.

The accompanying photos show the ringers who took part on the day and a general view of the church with tables down the middle of the closed road. Another photo shows a plant arrangement inside the church,



Birmingham School of Bellinging.

Level 2 at Harborne.

Level 2 is fun, learning things like Mexican Wave makes you feel like you are accomplishing something compared to just ringing on your own. You also work to a series of goals and you get to ring with other people which makes it loads more fun.

You learn a variety of things but it's also about style and getting rid of bad quirks (like not pulling all the way down at handstroke and backstroke!). It also starts to look at stuff to prepare you for change ringing. The school also encourages you to ring at your home tower and ring at other places so you can ring at different towers all with different bells.

Tony, Janet and Eleanor have all been great, teaching us the ropes along with numerous helpers who are supportive and encouraging to me, Matthew, Elliot and Harvey, although it is difficult to remember everything they say and there are always adjustments to make.

Last but not least there is always a good supply of chocolate biscuits at the break and even hot chocolate for those who are tempted.

Thomas Healy



put together by the bellringers with appropriate decorations. There is also a [short video](#) showing the scene outside the church, with accompanying call changes.

All in all, a suitably appropriate way to mark the Platinum Jubilee, and goodness knows when the road will again be closed off like this – probably not in my lifetime!

Richard Andrew.

Celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at Harborne.

I'm sure that the number of bell ringing events at Harborne will not have been unusual over the four-day Bank Holiday weekend. A glance at the 3039 linked performances on Bellboard confirms this. In common with much of the United Kingdom, we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee enthusiastically.

We started early and everyone was invited to ring for the lighting of beacons across the Commonwealth on Thursday evening. Everyone came, even our youngest ringers, who demonstrated their conducting prowess by taking turns to call some call changes.

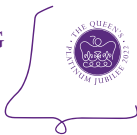
On Friday there was more ringing to coincide with the service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral and in the afternoon a celebratory quarter peal was scored. Lex and max Earthquake came up trumps and supplied us with Jubilee themed cocktails after the ringing.

Another quarter peal on Sunday evening and the weekend was complete.



CELEBRATORY BELL RINGING

On Thursday, 2 June 2022
Birmingham, West Midlands
St Peter, Harborne



Call Changes

Rounds to Queens and back to Rounds

- 1 Christine Barnell
- 2 Max Earthquake
- 3 Helen Surr
- 4 Elliot J Daniel (C)
- 5 Sarah C Jones
- 6 Lex Earthquake
- 7 Sally Daniel
- 8 Richard A Lewis

Rung at dusk for the lighting of beacons across the Commonwealth as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.



Simon Linford
President
The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers



CELEBRATORY BELL RINGING

On Thursday, 2 June 2022
Birmingham, West Midlands
St Peter, Harborne



Call Changes

Rounds to Queens and back to Rounds

- 1 Lex Earthquake (C)
- 2 Eileen Keeble
- 3 Elliot J Daniel
- 4 Christine Barnell
- 5 Max Earthquake
- 6 Sally Daniel
- 7 Tamsin Lane
- 8 Richard A Lewis

Rung at dusk for the lighting of beacons across the Commonwealth as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

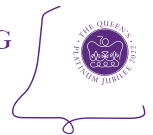


Simon Linford
President
The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers



CELEBRATORY BELL RINGING

On Thursday, 2 June 2022
Birmingham, West Midlands
St Peter, Harborne



Call Changes

Rounds to Queens and back to Rounds

- 1 Max Earthquake (C)
- 2 Elliot J Daniel
- 3 Tamsin Lane
- 4 Lex Earthquake
- 5 Sally Daniel
- 6 Clare McArdle

Rung at dusk for the lighting of beacons across the Commonwealth as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.



Simon Linford
President
The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers



Ringling at St Giles, Sheldon.

In May I organised a Plain Hunting Special Practice to give three people (one from our tower, one from Castle Bromwich and one from Solihull) the opportunity to focus on this for much longer than they would on a normal practice night. It also ensured that they had a 'stander behind' to support them and to help make improvements. It was very rewarding to see the progress made in just one evening.

Unfortunately, our special practice in June was cancelled as most ringers were on holiday or unavailable.

Our next planned practice in July is to help several ringers begin to ring touches of Plain Bob Doubles. When planning a practice of this sort I tend to do a lot of preparation work. I read every available article on the internet and often have to learn things that are unfamiliar. Planning begins a month in advance to ensure I can rely on the support of enough experienced ringers to make it worthwhile.

With learners to Plain Bob Doubles I plan to start by calling them unaffected and later progress to practising running in, running out and making the bob - one at a time initially. In order to entertain the more

experienced ringers I thought we'd try ringing singles! If, like me, you thought they didn't exist for doubles - you'd be wrong. According to ART, ringing singles has several benefits:

- 1) Many more 120s are possible rather than just four using only bobs.
- 2) Learners are encouraged to use prior knowledge.
- 3) Learners are introduced to singles early which avoids the usual trepidation that often instills panic at the thought of making thirds from the back.

If you are thinking of trying singles in bob doubles in your tower you may find [this link](#) useful.

More recent practices have benefitted from having refreshments at 9pm when we finish ringing rather than half way through which we tried previously. This means people are less rushed and have time to chat as they enjoy (hopefully!) our home-made cakes with their tea or coffee.

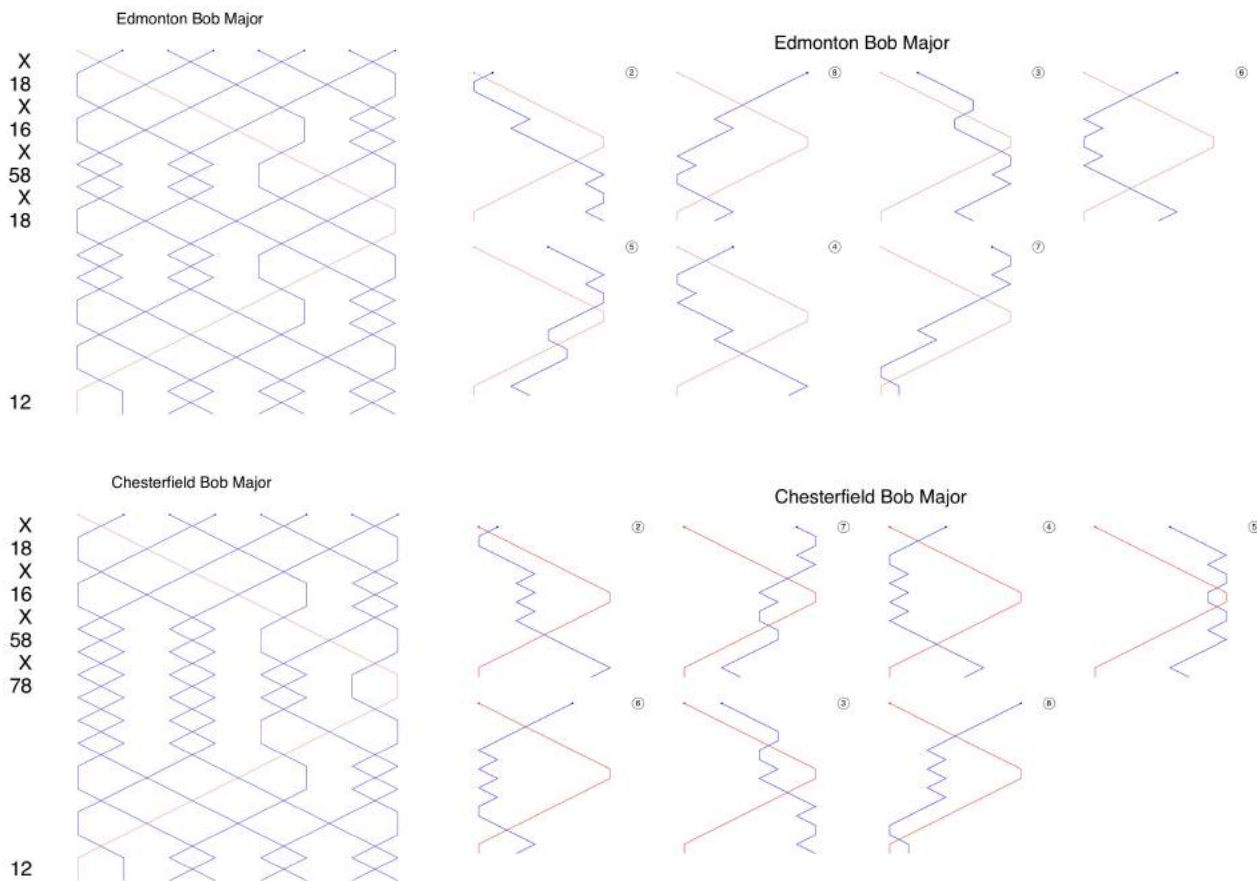
I hope my experiences inspire you to start organising some practices at your own tower!

Margaret Burling
Deputy Ringing Master
St Giles, Sheldon.



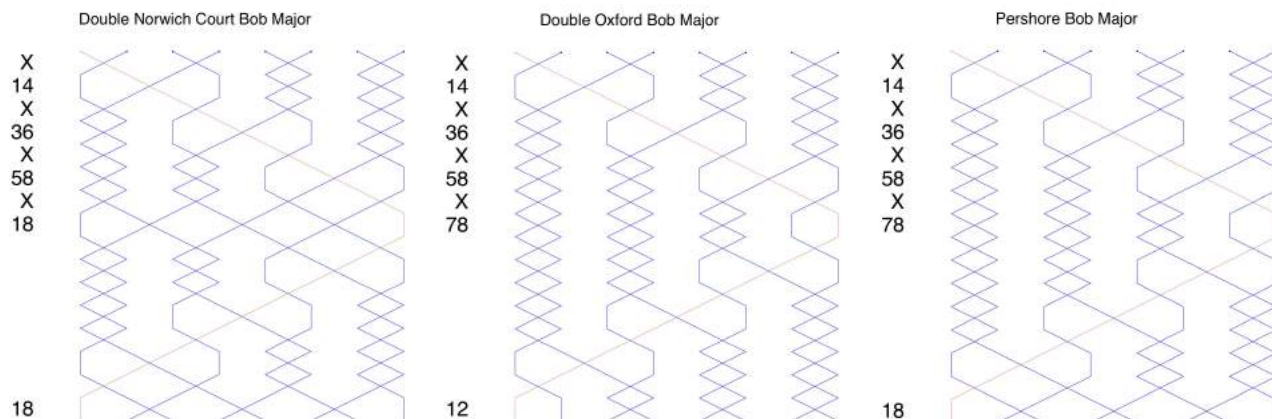
Crossing the Great Void - Plain Major.

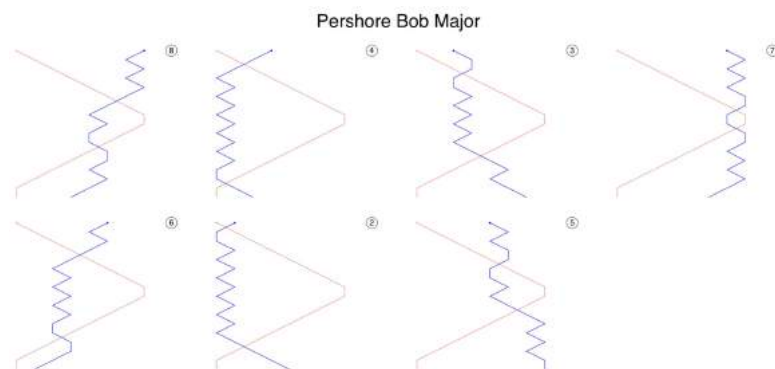
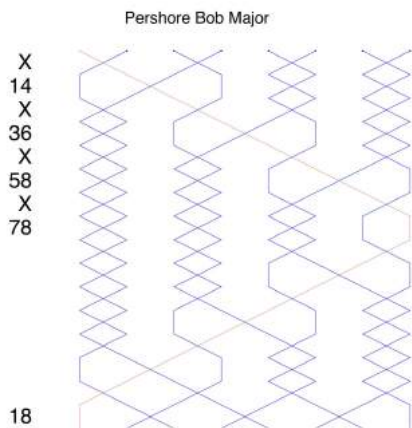
In the rush to toward Surprise, Plain methods are often not given more than a passing glance. This is a shame because there are some easy right-place methods that are well structured and musical. If you are on the Yellow Pathway you might well have rung Edmonton Bob. Chesterfield is Edmonton above with some triple dodging in 1-2 and 3-4 across the half-lead; and so lots of runs can be had.



For a quarter peal of Chesterfield Bob Major, try (SH,4ths,5ths,M,5ths,5ths,In,W,In,H) x 2. This gives 20 each of 5678 and 8765 at the back and 24 each of 5678 and 8765 off the front.

Pershore Bob is Double Norwich with 7ths at the half-lead, or 8ths place Double Oxford, if you prefer. The five-pull dodges on the front might upset some but I expect they would ring Superlative without complaint.

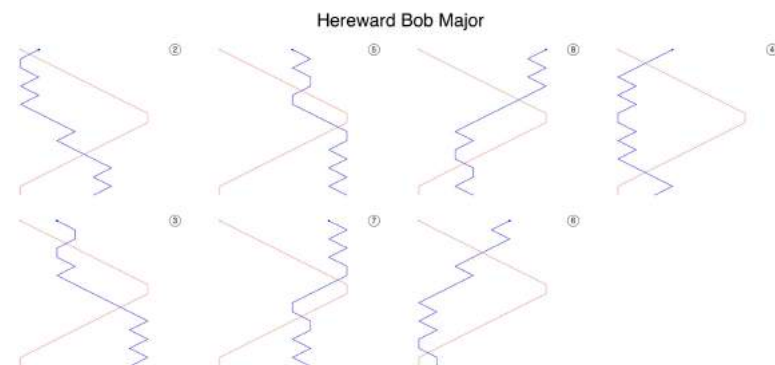
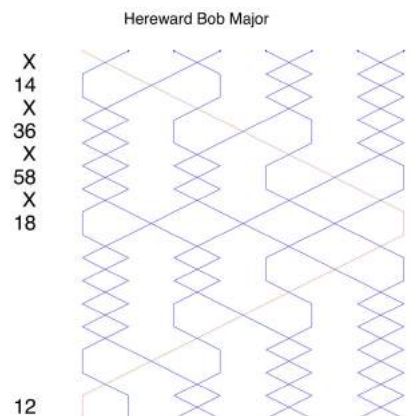




1344 Pershore Bob Major

4	O	M	H	5
4362578	3*		-	
2735468		-		3
3245678	-		-	

2 part. 3* = s,b,b 6ths place bobs and 678 singles.
 24 x 5678 back; 24 x 8765 back; 16 x 5678 front; 16 x 8765 front.



Once you have rung Double Norwich, Double Oxford and Pershore you will need this one to complete the set of four. Hereward has seconds place at the lead end and 18 at the half-lead. Let's call it second's place Double Norwich but it might not be too good a plan to try ringing it like that unless you are sure you can.

It is possible to obtain all the 5678s and 8765s front and back in a qp length, this 6-part for example:

(p, b, 2p, b, 3p, b, 2p, b, p, b*) x 6. *Single for Bob half way and end.

Back: 24 x 5678; 24 x 8765. Front: 24 x 5678; 24 x 8765.

Now all we need is a composition to splice up the four: Double Norwich, Double Oxford, Pershore Bob and Hereward Bob. They used to ring a lot of this sort of stuff in The Olden Days.

AJB