

The Education Column

3. How Quick are your Sixes?

This series of eight articles suggests ways in which teachers and ringing masters can help learners who have achieved bell control to make the transition to simple method ringing. The articles present various ideas and practice methods, not intended to be in sequence of increasing difficulty. The 'Jargon Box' serves both to explain terms to learners and to remind teachers not to assume that their learners will understand these terms.

This third article deals with Quick Sixes (also known as Cloister). This exercise can help both with developing ropesight and plain hunting skills with the early learner, and with introducing Stedman to more advanced students.

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In the last Education Column we looked at Bastow, which allowed our learner to experience a very simple method, involving nothing more for the treble than leading and making seconds – plain hunting on two. This was a stepping stone between call changes and Plain Hunt (on five or six). The next stepping stone on this journey towards plain hunting on larger numbers could be an exercise where the treble *plain hunts only to third place*.¹

Cloister, or Quick Sixes

Plain hunting up to third place and back takes six blows, and this exercise works in blocks of six. It's called either Cloister or Stedman Quick Sixes, and there are a couple of versions, both having two bells that spend their whole time plain hunting from lead to third place and back (taking six blows). The other three working bells spend six blows dodging 4-5 up, then six blows dodging 4-5 down, then six blows joining in with the two hunting bells at the front by ringing 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3.

Diagram 3.1 shows the version that is more useful to our student, who is ringing the treble. In this version it is 1 and 2 who plain hunt to third place and back. 3, 4 and 5 have more difficult work: 3 starts with dodging 4-5 up for six blows, then 4-5 down for six blows, then six blows with the hunting bells, hunting down to the lead and back out; 4 and 5 do the same work in a different order, with 4 starting with the frontwork, and 5 starting with the down dodges.

The benefit to the treble is much the same as for Bastow, but the exercise is just that little bit harder — another small step toward plain hunting on five or six. Hunting is only up to third place. It is always the 2 that takes the treble off the lead (so no need for that panic-filled looking around to see which bell it is, and then ringing late because you can't at first find it). But there's one other bell to ring after as well as the 2. It could be the 3, 4 or 5, so this gives very good practice at ropesight. Encourage the treble to think of coming off the lead by ringing after the 2, and then after one of the three back bells (so look at all of them and ring after whichever comes down first). But not to panic if you can't see which it is, as your next blow in third place is always back over the 2. Make sure that the learner appreciates that this *making thirds is wrong*² (i.e. backstroke then handstroke).

Quick Sixes Erin start

1	2	3	4	5
2	1	4	3	5
2	4	1	5	3
4	2	1	3	5
4	1	2	5	3
1	4	2	3	5
1	2	4	5	3
2	1	5	4	3
2	5	1	3	4
5	2	1	4	3
5	1	2	3	4
1	5	2	4	3
1	2	5	3	4
2	1	3	5	4
2	3	1	4	5
3	2	1	5	4
3	1	2	4	5
1	3	2	5	4
1	2	3	4	5

Diagram 3.1

Why 'Stedman' Quick Sixes?

First, be reassured that none of your ringers, let alone the student on the treble, needs to have the faintest idea what Stedman is. But those who do ring Stedman Doubles will see many points of similarity. The working bells (3, 4 and 5 in *Diagram 3.1*) spend six blows dodging 4-5 up and six blows dodging 4-5 down, just as in Stedman. When they do come into the front, for six blows,