

The benefit (perhaps to all your band!) is that it encourages a quick reaction to calls (as they aren't restricted to the predictable treble leads where we all expect a call). This quick reaction is a skill that will be particularly useful later on when it comes to splicing. However, the work at the Bob is quite simple, with easy ringing after the call (plain hunting), and no brain-strain trying to work out what the 'next work' is (just keep on plain hunting until the next call).

Very simple touches

The simplest touch is a Bob each time one particular bell is leading (so 'Bob' is called one blow before that bell leads). The top half of Diagram 5.2 shows a Bob happening each time 4 is leading. The Bob is called at the arrow, as 4 moves from third place to second place. This touch comes round after three Bobs, with 4 and its *course bells*³ (2 and 6) unaffected; the other three bells (1, 3 and 5) each do a 5-6 up dodge, make the Bob, and do a 5-6 down dodge, in some order or other. Notice that if the Bobs are made with the treble leading (boring!), it is the same as a Bob course of Plain Bob Minor.

After trying this with Bobs as 4 leads, you might want to give the other bells a go at being affected. If so, have Bobs as 3 leads instead (so this time it's 1, 3 and 5 that are unaffected, and 2, 4 and 6 that do the work). Diagram 5.2 shows the first touch (Bobs made as 4 leads) running straight into the second touch (Bobs made as 3 leads), so that everyone gets a fair go.

What next?

If your band found this a fun and challenging exercise, as most do, you might want to take this a bit further by introducing Singles, or ringing on eight. You need to know that calls affect only the back three bells. So, at a Single in Original Minor, places are made in fourth, fifth and sixth places (so the bell making sixths is unaffected, and it is 4 and 5 that swap). In Original Major, it is a sixth place Bob: a bell makes the Bob by making two blows in 6th place, with 7 and 8 dodging; and at a Single, 6, 7 and 8 all make places. The simplest touch is two Singles instead of three Bobs (happening as before when one particular bell is leading).

More difficult touches in Minor could involve calls in rapid succession, guaranteed to keep your ringers' minds alert – and there's a good chance that your learner will cope no worse than your other ringers. From any bell, call three Bobs in immediate succession so that you spend six blows dodging 5-6 up, then let yourself lie at the back, and then call another three Bobs in succession so that you spend six blows dodging 5-6 down. So there's just one handstroke-backstroke pair without a Bob being made in that sequence, as you lie in sixth place. Then plain hunt until you are coming up to your next 5-6 up dodges. Repeat this (four more times in Minor), and it will come round. Congratulations to any band that manages this at the first attempt! If you can manage that, you might go for a quarter peal.

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Jargon Box

1. Touches

If the conductor says "Go Plain Bob Minor", and the ringers just keep going until the "That's all" as the bells come back into rounds, this is a **plain course** of Plain Bob Minor. If conductor also makes calls (usually by saying 'Bob' or 'Single', which tells the band to make some particular variation in the pattern) we call it a **touch** rather than a plain course.

2. Make the Bob

In Original Minor, a bell makes fourths at a Bob. We say that this bell **makes the Bob** by ringing these two blows in fourth place. In Original Major it's a sixth place Bob instead of a fourth place Bob.

3. Course Bells

In Original Minor, all bells do the same work, and (until a call is made) they lead in the order 2, 4, 6, 5, 3, 1, 2, 4, 6, 5, 3, 1...

The bells before and after you in this list are called your **course bells**. So if you are 4, your course bells are 2 and 6. The course bells for 6 are 4 and 5. Your course bells may change at a call.

This notion of course bells has many applications in ringing, but that's enough for this article!

One touch or two?

For a short touch, make just the first three calls. This touch is essentially two similar touches run together

