

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 sixth article introduces Kaleidoscope exercises. As with call changes, they can be introduced as soon as the student is coping well with rounds. Both Kaleidoscope exercises and call changes allow practice at very simple changes of position, but Kaleidoscope exercises require less mental effort from the student to work out where they ought to be.

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The kaleidoscope as an optical instrument may well rely on mirrors, if not smoke, but there's nothing deceptive about Kaleidoscope ringing exercises. They are practical, useful and very effective.

At what level is Kaleidoscope useful?

The term Kaleidoscope refers to a particular style of exercise rather than just one particular practice method, and so Kaleidoscope exercises cover quite a wide range of levels. They are most useful for students who are comfortable ringing rounds, and who have learned how adjust the speed of their ringing to achieve reasonable striking. Now they are moving on to learn how to change position, as a step towards plain hunting then ringing methods. The simpler Kaleidoscope exercises can therefore be introduced at about the same stage as call changes, but generally without the 'Who am I following now?' panic that sometimes happens during call changes, notably when the student's bell moves down in towers that call the changes up, 1 or moves up in towers that call them down.1

What is Kaleidoscope?

A Kaleidoscope exercise is any ringing in which the conductor sets a pair of adjacent bells swapping positions in some consistent pattern. For example, starting from rounds, the conductor could start 3 and 4 changing places with each other, maybe by having them dodging or making places. More than one pair of bells may be involved. In Diagram 6.1 the conductor has first set 2 and 3 making places ('2 and 3 go places'), and then later has also set 4 and 5 dodging ('4 and 5 go dodging'), before calling it round ('That's all') so that both pairs stop their swapping. (In reality of course each section would go on a lot longer.)

In call changes, each change of position is the result of a specific instruction such as '2 to 3'. So Kaleidoscope may well be the first time your student is expected, after a single instruction, to embark on some long and continuing series of alterations. This is second nature to experienced ringers — we are familiar with embarking on a possibly very long and complex sequence of changes when we hear 'Go London' or whatever — but it is new territory to our student. Therefore when introducing this concept we give them a very simple pattern of work.

In Diagram 6.1, the student on 3 merely has to change to second place over the treble for a handstroke/backstroke pair, then back to third place over the 2, which will be rounds, and keep repeating this. The bell they follow is always the 1 or the 2, which is easy for them to see without needing to look around, and they should also be able to hear their bell as it moves between second and third place, with the treble always leading.

