Landbeach Bell Ringers Worksheet 5 – Methods ctd

From Worksheet 4:

Question: How many different rows are there in Plain Hunt on 3? Answer: 6. (The first lot of Rounds is not part of the method, but the second lot is.)
Question: What is the maximum number of different rows possible on 3 bells? Answer: 6

They are the same number. That means that, once we have rung Plain Hunt on 3, we have rung all the rows we can, and we haven't repeated any. That's neat! Bell-ringing is a neat-minded occupation.

Exercise: Write out Plain Hunt on 3 as call changes.

1 2 3	(Rounds)	1 to 2 lead
2 1 3		1 to 3
2 3 1		2 to 3 lead
3 2 1	(Back Rounds)	2 to 1
3 1 2		3 to 1 lead
1 3 2		3 to 2
1 2 3	(Rounds)	

Question: What is novel about these call changes (compared to all others you have met so far)? Answer:
1) They are on an odd number of bells.
2) The bells at the front and back change, too. When a new bell leads (rings first in the row) we may use the special word "lead" in the call.
So these are slightly more complicated call changes than the very simple ones you have met before.

Learning Methods

In the seventeenth century, when people started to ring methods, they used to write out all the rows. They called this "writing out the figures", because "figure" is an old-fashioned word for "number". Sometimes they wrote them on the ringing room wall. You have seen the figures for Plain Hunt on 3 several times already, but here they are again:

1 2 3	*Rounds before the method starts*
2 1 3	First row of method
2 3 1	
3 2 1	
3 1 2	
1 3 2	
1 2 3	Rounds as last row of method

If you concentrated very hard, it would be possible to learn all these rows, and remember them even while you were ringing your bell.

But it is simpler just to learn what place your own bell rings in at each row.

For example, if you are ringing the treble (bell number 1):

1 2 3	*in Rounds before the method starts:*	*in first place*
2 1 3	at the first row of the method:	in second place
2 3 1	at the second row of the method:	in third place
3 2 1	at the third row of the method:	in third place again
3 1 2	at the fourth row of the method:	in second place
1 3 2	at the fifth row of the method:	in first place
1 2 3	back in Rounds at the sixth row of the method:	in first place again

Exercise: Write out the figures for Plain Hunt on 3. Against each row, write what place the second (bell 2) is in. Then do it for the third (bell 3).
Question: Over the six rows of the method, how many times does each bell ring in each place?
Question: In what way do the bells all do different things? In what way do they do the same thing?
Question: Do any rows occur more than once in the figures for Plain Hunt on 3?

The blue line

To help them remember which place their bell rings in at each row of the method, people often trace a line over the figures, through the places for their bell. You can use a pen, or your finger, or just your mind's eye. This line is called the blue line of the method. Why blue? Because a very popular ringers' book, called Diagrams, draws the lines in blue. Ask your teacher to show you a copy of Diagrams.

Exercise: Write out the figures for Plain Hunt on 3 three times. Draw the blue line for the treble through the first set of figures, the blue line for the second through the second set, and so on.

The grid

If you write out just one set of figures and draw the blue lines for all the bells through that one set of figures, what you have drawn is called the grid of the method. Obviously, it is clearer if all of the so-called "blue" lines are in different colours!

From the grid, you can see how the bells interleave with each other. Grids are very informative, but you need practice to understand them.

Exercise: Write out the figures for Plain Hunt on 3 yet one more time and draw in the grid, using a different colour for each bell.

Words

You can also describe a method in words. For example, one verbal description of Plain Hunt on 3 is:
Three lies still at first blow.
Odd bells hunt out.
Even bells hunt in.
Each bell leads right.
Each bell lies back and hand.
As you can see, describing a method in words may be quite helpful if you know the terminology, but is of precious little use otherwise.