

Bellringing by Instalments

by
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Instalment No. 11.

The Jargon Buster.

Jargon-Busting.

A comment frequently heard from learners is that they don't understand much of what is being said by their fellow-ringers because of the phraseology. Ringing jargon can be confusing because:

- Many words are unfamiliar.
- Some familiar words have a different meaning in ringing.
- Some words can have more than one meaning.

This booklet sets out to explain jargon in everyday terms where possible. Use of double quotes (“ ”) indicates that the word or term is explained elsewhere to save repetition.

Note: Items marked # are described further in Book 10 of this series, 'Little Bits of Theory'.

AFTER BELL#	The bell that follows you to lead and takes you from lead. (See “Coursing order”.)
BACK	A bell that is last in the ringing sequence (except for a “Cover bell”) is said to be ‘At the back’ or ‘Behind’.
BACKSTROKE	Pulling the bellrope from the “Tail end”.
BACKWORK	A sequence of ringing carried out at the “Back” .
BALANCED	When a bell is “Up” and just over centre it causes a slight upward pull on the rope. When the ringer holds the bell stationary by resisting this upward pull the bell is said to be balanced.
BALDRICK	A leather strap used in older bells to secure the “Clapper” to the “Crown staple”. Now becoming a rarity.
BEARINGS	The “Headstock” is supported in bearings to allow the bell to swing. Most modern installations feature ball-bearings which can reduce physical effort, but older bells often have plain bearings where the steel “Gudgeons” revolve in brass or bronze bearing blocks.
BEFORE	A “Calling Position” where the “Observation bell” comes to lead <u>before</u> the treble.
BEHIND	See “Back”.
BLOW	Each strike of the bell is sometimes termed a blow.

BOB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A “Call” that changes the “Coursing order” of the bells. (2) Describes methods, e.g. “Plain Bob”, “Treble Bob”. This possibly derives from ‘Bob’ being an early name for a dodge (3) Making the bob - usually “Making a place” when a bob is called.
BLUE LINE	The line that defines the path of a bell in a “Method”. So called because in some well-known ringing books the path of a “Working” bell is shown by a blue line whereas the path of the “Treble” is shown by a red line.
BRASSES	An old name for plain bearing blocks.
CALLS	Terms, normally “Bob” and “Single”, used in “Change ringing” by the “Conductor” to change the “Coursing Order” of the bells.
CALL CHANGES	A system of ringing where the conductor calls (tells) adjacent bells to change places with each other in the ringing sequence; they then remain in that sequence until the next change is called. This style of ringing has been developed to a high standard in Devon where it is usually rung “Cartwheeling”.
CALLING POSITIONS	The position of a bell in the ringing sequence when “Calls” are made. See “Before”, “Home”, “Middle” and “Wrong”.
CANNONS	The metal loops cast as part of the “Crown” of older bells to enable the bell to be secured to the “Headstock”. (Modern bells do not have cannons; the bell is bolted through the crown direct to the headstock.)
CARTWHEELING	A style of ringing without “Open leads”; the ringing does not have any pauses. Cartwheeling is usually associated with Devon-style “Call changes” and with six-bell ringing in parts of West Yorkshire.
CATERS	Change ringing on nine bells. (Usually with a tenth “Cover bell”.)
CHANGE	Alterations in the ringing sequence from one “Row” to the next row.
CHANGE RINGING	A system of ringing where some or all the bells change places at every pull according to a pre-set pattern.
CHECK	Applying tension to the rope at the end of the upswing to stop the bell before it reaches the “Balance”. Because the bell swings back quicker it will sound sooner. This shorter swing is needed to “Hunt down”. (At some point it will be necessary to pull harder to restore the bell to the balance for slower ringing - see “Hold up”.)

CINQUES		“Change ringing” on eleven bells. (Usually with a “Covering tenor”.) Pronounced ‘Sinks’ among ringers.
CLAPPER		The pivoted hammer-like length of iron which strikes inside of the bell during its swing.
CLAPPER LOCK		Or, clapper stay. A piece of wood which can be locked onto the clapper to prevent it moving so that the bell can be swung silently. Used for initial lessons in bell handling, also when a “Simulator” is being used. (See also, “Tied bell”.)
CLOCK HAMMER		A pivoted hammer, actuated by wires or rods from the tower clock, which strikes the bell on the outside to sound the hours. It is vitally important that this hammer is pulled off (i.e. rendered inoperative) before the bells are raised. (If the clock has chimes as well as striking mechanism there will be more than one clock hammer to pull off.)
CONDUCTOR		A person, usually one of those actually ringing, who makes the “Calls” and controls the ringing.
COURSE	(1)	A ‘Plain course’ is a sequence of “Change ringing”, from “Rounds” to rounds without “Calls”.
	(2)	See “Coursing Order”.
COURSE BELL#		The bell that comes to lead before you do. See “Coursing order”.
COURSING ORDER#		Basically, the order in which the bells follow (course) each other to lead. The “Natural” coursing order, best seen in “Plain Hunt”, for six bells is 2 4 6 5 3 1 or, on eight bells, 2 4 6 8 7 5 3 1. The same pattern follows on higher numbers and is known to many ringers as “Up the evens and down the odds”. “Calls” change the coursing order.
COVER BELL		When ringing changes on odd numbers of bells it is customary (except in five-bell towers) to have the tenor ringing last every time. It is then the cover bell, or is said to be covering.
CROWN		The closed end of a bell.
CROWN STAPLE		The fitting that retains the clapper. Earlier bells had cast in crown staples that were subject to corrosion which could crack the bell. Modern crown staples are made as a centre bolt fitting through the bell crown and the “Headstock”.
DODGE		A bell dodges when it makes a step back in its normal path and then resumes a hunting path. (See “Plain Hunt”.)
DOUBLE		A “Method” is termed double when “Work” done at the “Front” is repeated in mirror-image at the “Back”.
DOUBLES		“Change ringing” on five bells.
DOWN	(1)	A bell hanging mouth downward.

- (2) “Hunting” down in “Change ringing”: a bell moving progressively from the “Back” to the “Front”.

EXTENT The maximum number of changes that can be rung without repetition is called an extent. This can be found for any number of bells by multiplying $1 \times 2 \times 3 \dots$ to the number of bells involved. Mathematically, the extent for n bells is factorial n or $n!$.

FRONT The first or “Leading” places in the ringing sequence.

FRONTWORK A sequence of ringing carried out at the “Front”.

FULL CIRCLE Ringing bells through 360 degrees, from mouth-up to mouth-up and back again is termed ringing full circle.

GUDGEONS Round steel bars that protrude from each end of the “Headstock” and carry the weight of the bell. The gudgeons fit into “Bearings”, allowing the bell to swing.

GRANDSIRE A “Method” dating from the earliest days of change ringing. Grandsire, an adaptation of “Plain Bob”, is more suited to odd numbers of bells changing. It is possible that the name derives from an elderly ringer, Richard Rock, (called ‘Grandsire’ by his colleagues) who supposedly invented the method in the 17th. century, but this is far from proved.

HANDSTROKE Pulling the bellrope from the sally.

HEADSTOCK The pivoted beam from which the bell hangs.

HOLD UP Holding the bell “Balanced” for slightly longer periods so as to ring slower. This is needed when “Hunting” up, i.e., from front to back. (See also, “Check”.)

HOME A “Calling position”, usually applied to the tenor in “Minor” and “Major” methods; the call is made as the tenor comes into its Home position, that is, its normal place in “Rounds”.

HUNTING “Hunting” or “Plain hunting” is the basis of all change ringing. Each bell progresses one “Place” at a time from front to back or back to front. Unless otherwise stated the hunting is “Forward” where the bells “Lead” handstroke/backstroke. There is also “Reverse” hunting where the bells lead backstroke/handstroke:

Forward Hunting:

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

etc.

Reverse Hunting:

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

etc.

In “Treble Bob” methods the treble’s path involves “Dodging” in each pair of places, 1-2, 3-4, etc. This is known as a “Treble Bob Hunt”,

probably another example of the early use of “Bob” to indicate a dodge.

HUNT BELL	In some “Methods”, notably Grandsire, a bell other than the “Treble” also “Plain Hunts”. This bell is known as the hunt bell or is said to be ‘In the hunt with the treble’.
KINGS	See “Queens”.
LEAD	(1) A bell ringing first in the sequence is said to be leading or at lead. (2) A lead is a sequence of ringing from when the “Treble” is at lead to when it leads again.
LEAD HEAD #	The “Row” of each treble backstroke lead is a lead head, often referred to as a lead end.
LEADING RIGHT	Leading handstroke and backstroke.
LEADING WRONG	Leading backstroke and handstroke.
LIP	The rim of a bell mouth.
LOWERING	Shortening the swing of a bell to progressively bring it from the “Up” to the “Down” position. When this is done with all the bells ringing rounds it is called ‘Lowering in peal’.
MAJOR	“Change ringing” on eight bells.
MAXIMUS	“Change ringing” on twelve bells
METHODS	Systems of ringing where bells change places at each pull.
MINIMUS	“Change ringing” on four bells.
MIDDLE	A “Calling position” which in major methods is made as the tenor is about to “Dodge” 5-6 down.
MINOR	“Change ringing” on six bells.
OBSERVATION BELL	A bell that returns to its place in rounds at the end of each “Part”. So named because it is usually the easiest bell to “Call” from.
ODD-BOB	A term used in ringing Stedman if an odd number of “Bobs” is used. This makes the ringing more difficult than with “Twin bobs”.
OPEN LEAD	The practice of leaving a slight pause or ‘gap’ at each handstroke lead to punctuate the ringing. (See also, “Cartwheeling”.)
OVER	To ring over another bell is to ‘ring after’ or to ‘follow’ it.

PART	In “Change ringing”, where a sequence of “Calls” is repeated, each section is known as a part.
PEAL	<p>(1) A length of ringing of 5,000 changes or more. The origin of a peal seems to have been the ambition to ring the “Extent” on seven bells, 5,040 changes, which was first accomplished in 1715. The ‘Quarter peal’ of 1250 or more changes is more usual for everyday ringing, especially for special church services.</p> <p>(2) In many parts of Devon and Cornwall any sequence of “Call changes” is known as a peal.</p>
PLACES.	<p>(1) The place a bell occupies in the ringing sequence, e.g., if the bell is the third to sound it is said to be ‘In thirds place’.</p> <p>(2) In “Change ringing”, if a bell occupies the same place for two “Blows” it is said to have ‘Made a place’.</p> <p>(3) When a bell occupies the same place for more than two blows it is called a long place, e.g., ‘Long thirds’.</p>
PLAIN BOB.	After “Plain Hunting”, probably the earliest method of “Change ringing”. The term ‘Bob’ In this case seems to refer to the “Dodges” that occur when the “Treble” “Leads”. Plain Bob is much used for teaching the earlier steps in “Change ringing” but it is more suited for even numbers of bells. See also, “Grandsire”.
PIVOT POINTS#	Points on the “Blue line” where the “Work” of a bell reverses.
PLACE BELL#	When “Change ringing”, in any “Method”, each bell has a different start from rounds. To be (say) ‘Thirds place bell’ is to ring as 3 would start from rounds. This definition of how each bell works is useful in the more advanced aspects of change ringing.
PLACE NOTATION#	A system of defining a “Method” by where “Places” are made.
PLAIN HUNT	See “Hunting”.
PRINCIPLE	A form of “Change ringing” where the treble is also a “Working bell”. (As opposed to a “Method” where the treble has a “Hunting” path.) Probably the best known principle is “Stedman”.
QUARTER PEAL	See “Peal”
QUEENS	A ringing sequence often used for “Call changes”; on six bells it is 1-3-5-2-4-6. The name derives from a doubtful story that as Queen Elizabeth I was passing one of the London churches the bells were ringing in this sequence. On eight bells 1-3-5-7-2-4-6-8 is known as Queens. Other sequences have names, some of the best known being “Kings” which is Queens with the odd number bells reversed, (5-3-1-2-4-6) and “Tittums” where light and heavy bells alternate, 1-4-2-5-3-6 or 1 5-2-6-3-7-4-8. The explanation that this sounds like “Ti-Tum-Ti-Tum” is even more dubious than that for “Queens”.

RAISING	Swinging the bell, causing it to swing higher at each pull until it is “Up” or “Set”. When all the bells are raised together, sounding in “Rounds”, it is termed ‘Raising in peal’.
RING	A set of bells hung for “Full circle” ringing is called a ring of bells.
ROPE CIRCLE	The pattern formed by the hanging bellropes. (In some towers this is not a very accurate circle!)
ROUNDS	The bells ringing “Down the Scale”, numerically, 1-2-3-4-5-6 etc. So called because the ringing sequence is round the “Rope circle”. Call changes and change ringing usually start from rounds.
ROW	A row of figures used to show the ringing sequence of the bells, e.g., “Rounds” is 1-2-3-4-5-6. In “Change ringing” the bells change places every row, that is, at every pull of the ropes. (See also, “Change”)
ROYAL	“Change ringing” on ten bells.
SALLY	The woollen tufting in a bellrope.
SET	A bell which has been “Raised” and is resting on the “Stay” is said to be set.

SIMULATOR	A computer device that can (1) cause “Tied bells” to sound electronically through loudspeakers, enabling ‘Silent’ practices to be held or (2) ‘ring’ a method, omitting one bell . The ‘missing’ bell is put in by swinging a tied bell to keep in rhythm with the computer, allowing ‘personal’ practice. Not yet fully accepted by the ringing fraternity, but it has considerable potential, especially where prolonged practices might lead to complaints.
SINGLE	A “Call” to change the “Coursing order” of the bells. Singles differ from “Bobs”; the origin of the term seems to be that in the earlier days of ringing a Single caused a <u>single pair</u> of bells to change places.
SINGLES	“Change ringing” on three bells.
SHOULDER	The part of a bell where the “crown” curves down to the “waist”.
SLIDER	A pivoted wooden bar fitted in the bell frame, moved by the “Stay” between two limiting stops, enabling the bell to be “Set”.
SOUNDBOW	The thickest section of a bell, at its mouth, where the “Clapper” strikes.
STAND	A command from the “Conductor” to the band to “Set” their bells. Unless other instructions have been given the bells are set at “Handstroke”.
STAY	The wooden prop, usually made of ash, which enables the bell to rest in the “Up” or “Set” position. The stay usually works in conjunction with a “Slider” which limits the travel of a bell past its balance point. An alternative arrangement is the Hastings stay where a toggle (or dingler) on the end of the stay works in conjunction with a cam to do the same job. It is claimed that Hastings stays are quieter in operation.
STEDMAN.	Fabian Stedman, a Printer, was a prominent ringer in the 17th. century. He is best remembered today for the “Principle” invented by and named after him. At the end of the 19th. and beginning of the 20th. century Stedman was top of the pops among experienced change ringers.
TAIL END	The end of a bellrope, usually doubled back on itself to allow adjustment for length. (See also “Tuckings” and “Yorkshire tail ends”.)
TENOR	The bell with the lowest note.
TIED BELL	When the clapper is secured with rope to prevent it moving the bell is said to be tied. (See also, “Clapper lock”.)
TITTUMS	See “Queens”.
TRANSPOSITION#	A ‘shorthand’ system of writing “Methods” by the “Lead heads”.

TREBLE	(1)	The bell with the highest note.
rest	(2)	The command 'Treble's going - treble's gone' is a command to the of the band to (1) lift the bell off the stay and hold it 'balanced' and (2) that the treble has been pulled over the balance and that the other bells should follow in rounds.
TREBLE BOB		Methods where the treble follows a "Treble Bob Hunt". (See "Hunting".)
TRIPLES		"Change ringing" on seven bells. (usually with an eighth "Cover bell".)
TWIN BOBS		A term used in ringing Stedman when all the "Bobs" occur in pairs. (This makes the ringing easier than with "Odd-bobs".)
TUCKED UP		When the "Headstock" of heavier bells is arched so that the "Crown" of the bell is above the centre line of the "Gudgeons" the bell is said to be tucked up. This feature makes heavier bells easier to handle.
TUCKINGS		Another name for the doubled-back part of the "Tail end".
UNAFFECTED		A bell whose "Work" is not affected by "Calls".
UNDER		To ring under a bell is to ring before it or in front of it. Mostly used as an instruction in "Dodges" when ringing alternately over and under the bell you are dodging with.
UP	(1)	A term for a bell "Balanced", or resting ("Set") mouth upward.
	(2)	"Hunting up": in "Change ringing", a bell moving progressively from the "Front" to the "Back".
WAIST		The mid-section of a bell between the "Soundbow" and the "Shoulder".
WORKING BELL		Any bell that follows a path other than hunting; e.g., if it "Dodges" or makes "Places", it is said to be a working bell.
WRONG		A "Calling position" when the tenor is about to dodge 5-6 up in "Minor" methods or 7-8 up in "Major" methods
YORKSHIRE TAIL ENDS		Tail ends with a short length of woollen tufting instead of the rope being doubled back. Normally only found in Yorkshire. Ringers not used to these tail ends can find them difficult to handle.