

Calling and Conducting

Introduction & “Calling”

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These notes are the first of a pair; this first section gives a bit of an introduction to Calling and Conducting and goes through what “Calling” is all about; the second section goes on to look at the first steps on “Conducting”

They both concentrate on “Doubles”, with mention of the how the tricks here adapt to “higher numbers”.

There are a number of good books that explain the conducting side in a lot more detail, so if you want some more advice then try these:

Steve Coleman books

“The Bob Caller’s Companion”, a good introduction to calling Doubles, Minor & higher. A lot of helpful tricks and tips organised in bite sized chunks.

Central Council books:

“Will you call a touch please, Bob”, good introduction but with a lot less detail than the Steve Coleman book.

“On Conducting”, starts with Major and quickly goes on to “Surprise”.

John Longridge books:

“Conducting and coursing order”, similar material to the “On Conducting”

What are you responsible for?

- Make the calls
 - bobs, singles, method changes, “that’s all”
- Choose the composition and method(s)
- Stop the ringing if it has all gone wrong
- Put people right, if you can
- Stop the ringing if it is too bad
- Get the ringers, ask for the bells
- Stop fights at “the inquest”
- Buy the beer, take the blame!



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So, what is “Conducting” all about?

The “Calling” part of it is just the beginning. Putting in the calls and REMEMBERING when to call the “That’s all” at the end is all really important, and learning how to do that is probably all you need to get you through a practice night or Sunday morning.

If you are asked to call a quarter peal or peal then it is (almost) entirely up to you what to call. Compositions aren’t all equal, some take a lot more learning, are more complex to ring, and so carry a higher risk of failure. The choice will depend upon the abilities of you and the band, how important it is that “we must get it!”, and how much of a challenge you are looking for. Remember, that if the composition is more complex then you may not be able to devote as much thought to keeping people right.

Knowing when the ringing has gone wrong, and putting people right is covered in the “Conducting section”.

Standing the ringing up when it is too poor takes experience & judgement! Quarters are rarely stood up because by the time you realise it isn’t going to improve, it is almost over. For peals you need to be brave to stand one up, and it might depend on how much the band really want to ring it if it for a special occasion; I know of conductors that have deliberately miss-called peals as an excuse for setting up a poor one.

The rest ... is largely down to “people skills” ... a real minefield!

Choosing the composition

- What does a composition look like?
 - There are various ways of writing it down
- What should you look for?
 - Repeated work means less learning!
 - Compositions in “parts” often have an observation bell
 - A “one part” composition is more of a challenge



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The next few pages look at how compositions are written down and what makes a “good” composition.

Of course, this is all very subjective and entirely depends on what you are after. The notes here will try to pick out some of the pointers that it is helpful to look for.

There are also a variety of different ways of describing the same composition.

120 Plain Bob Doubles

12345
21435
24153
42513
45231
54321
53412
35142
31524
13254
13524
31254
32145
23415
24351
42531
45213
54123
51432
15342
13542 Bob
31452
34125
Etc.

The only choice you have is to either make a call ... or not ... so you could just write out these changes:

12345
13524
13542 Bob
15234
12453
14325
14352 Bob
13245
12534
15423
15432 Bob
14253
12345

... and the treble is always fixed, and it is really just "Plain, bob, 2 plain" repeated twice:

2345
3524
3542 -
5234
2453

3 part

... where the "-" indicates a "bob"

... or you could just write out where the bobs are called:

2345
- 3542 2
- 4352 4
- 5432 4
P 2345 2



This shows four common ways of writing down the same 120 of Plain Bob Doubles, with the 2nd observation (i.e. the 2nd does the same work, repeatedly, and by "observing" what it is doing you can tell when to call the next bob).

The first column on the left has every change written down and the "Bob" written at the side indicates where the bob is made (and so remember that the call goes in a bit earlier!). It shows all the detail but is obviously quite verbose. Perhaps get a computer to generate it if you need it!

The second version has every 10th change written down, since these are the only changes where we have a choice of having a bob or a plain lead. Two leads after the start you have a bob, then another bob 4 leads later, then after another 4, and rounds comes up 2 leads after that.

The third version is the same as the second, but only writes out a third of the composition because the same order of bobs and plain leads is repeated twice, in a 3 part composition; the treble has also been omitted (since it is always in the same place) and a "-" is used to denote the bob. Note that the 2nd is in the same position in the row at the start and end of the part, indicating that it is an "observation" bell.

The fourth version just writes out the bobbed leads and gives on the right hand side the number of leads between calls; the final "P" rather than a "-" denotes a plain lead. It is less obvious that there is an observation bell, but the clue is that the 2nd is in the same place at each of the bobs.

Where to make the call?

Grandsire Doubles

12345
21354
23145
32415
34251
43521
45312
54132 <= Call Here
51423
15432 Bob made here
14523
41532
Etc

Plain Bob Doubles

12345
21435
24153
42513
45231
54321
53412
35142
31524 <= Call Here
13254
12354 Bob made here
21534
Etc.



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The calls in different methods are called in different places.

In Grandsire, the bob is called as the treble comes down to 3rds (a handstroke).

In Plain Bob, the call is made one change later, on the backstroke as the treble comes down into 2nds.

In BOTH cases, the bob is made a whole pull later, this being the first change that any of the bells has to do something that it would not have done at the plain lead.

The rule is: make the call a whole pull before it happens

Grandsire Doubles
PLAIN LEAD

12345
21354
23145
32415
34251
43521
45312
54132
51423
15243
12534
Etc

Grandsire Doubles
BOBBED LEAD

12345
21354
23145
32415
34251
43521
45312
54132
51423
15432 This change is different
14523 .. so call 2 changes earlier
Etc



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As a general rule, always give a whole pull notice (2 changes) before the bob is made.

Compare the two leads of Grandsire above, one plain lead and one bobbed.

The change "15432 is the first that is different in the 2 columns. So, count 2 changes back, and that is where the bob should be called.

The same rule works for when to shout "That's all": it too needs to be a whole pull before anyone has to something different. So, for methods with have the treble plain hunting, call on the treble's handstroke lead, then rounds comes up anyway at the backstroke, and rounds are repeated thereafter (you've now stopped ringing the method) from the next handstroke.

Watch out if your composition comes round on the handstroke, you need to call "That's all" one change earlier, on the backstroke just before the treble leads.

May Day Doubles – where would you make the call?

Plain Lead	Bobbed Lead
12345	12345
21435	21435
24153	24153
42513	42513
45231	45231
54321	54321
53412	53412
35142	35142
31524	31542
13254	13542
13524	13524
31254	31524
Etc.	Etc.

Plain Bob
with a Pinks Single



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This is May Day Doubles: a variation of Plain Bob, with a Pinks Single for a call.

Where is the call made?

Again, find the first change that is different (31524 .v. 31542), count two changes back, and the call will be made as the treble comes down into 4ths ... one change earlier than Grandsire.

What is a variation? It is a method that instead of using it's "natural" bob or single, uses a different bob and/or single, or sometimes a plain lead as a call. More often than not, the calls are taken from another method, such as April Day, which is "Plain Bob with a Grandsire Single for a call".

For a list of THOUSANDS of different doubles variations and their calls, have a look at <http://www.hinton.me.uk/Methods/Doubles/index.htm>. There are variations named for just about any place or occasion, and if not then it lists the ones that haven't been named yet, so you can ring and name a new one. Many have silly names (Nick's got a screw loose, I don't mind, Whatever you want, Andy Pandey), for a lot of them you need to be able to think VERY quickly, some aren't easy to pronounce (Pseudopseudohypoparathyroidism), and some have eight different calls (Young Doubles).

March Doubles – where would you make the call?

Plain Lead	Bobbed Lead	
12345	12345	
21435	21435	
24153	24153	
42513	42513	
45231	45231	
54321	54321	Plain Bob
53412	53412	with a Gloster Extreme
35142	35142	
31524	31524	
13254	13254	
13524	13524	
31254	31254	
32145	32154	
23415	23514	
24351	25341	
Etc.	Etc.	



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This is March Doubles: a variation of Plain Bob, with a Gloster Extreme for a call.

Where is the call made?

Again, find the first change that is different (32145 .v. 32154), count two changes back, and the call will be made on the treble's backstroke lead!

In fact, you could shout "Go March, BOB", but it might be a good idea to warn people that a bob comes immediately after the start.

Note that some variations use calls that take effect below the treble as it hunts out; and the really tricky ones have some calls above the treble and some below the treble too, and can produce a very rapid rate of calls.

Calling the composition

- For an “easy life”
 - Look for a composition with a lot of parts and an “observation bell”
 - Ring the observation bell
 - Learn the places that you have to make a call
 - Probably only a few calling positions



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So far we have looked at how a composition is written down, how to tell if a composition in “parts”, has an observation bell, and how to work out where the calls need to be made.

On a practice night you may be asked to call a specific composition, but often, and especially if you are calling a quarter peal or peal, you will have the freedom to call whatever you want. What should you choose?

Your choice will depend upon how much of a challenge you want, or perhaps you may want to call a different composition this time to the one that was called before, just for a bit of variety.

If you wanted to make things as easy as possible, then the best choice is to choose a composition in “parts” with an observation bell, and ring the observation bell. You’ll need to learn where to make the calls, but there is probably only one or perhaps two calling positions.

DON'T FORGET to learn where it comes round too!

... An “easy life” 120 Bob Doubles

12345 From the 2nd ...

21435

24153

42513

45231

54321

53412

35142

31524

13254

13524

31254

32145

23415

24351

42531

45213

54123

51432 <= Call 1st blow of long 5ths

15342

13542

31452

34125

Etc.

Call it 3 times:

$$\begin{array}{r} 2345 \\ 3524 \\ 3542 - \\ 5234 \\ \hline 2453 \end{array}$$

3 part

Call “that’s all” just as you make 2nds after the 3rd bob



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So, for a reasonably simple first example, here is a 120 of Plain Bob Doubles with the 2nd observation.

The changes up until the 1st bob are written on the left, with the calling position marked: call on the backstroke of your 1st blow of long 5^{ths}.

On the right is the composition as you’ll probably find in a book, indicating a 3 part composition, so you’ll need to call 3 bobs in all.

Finally, note that this comes round a short while after the 3rd bob, just as you make 2^{nds}. Call on the treble’s handstroke lead.

Calling the composition

- For a challenge
 - Look for a composition with a lot of parts and an “observation bell”
 - Don’t ring the observation bell
 - Learn the places that you have to make a call
 - Probably a lot of them; different at each call
 - Need to know which one comes next



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For a bit more of a challenge, perhaps call the same composition, but don't ring the 2nd.

You'll not be doing a repeated block of work so you'll have a bit more learning to do: you'll need to learn more calling positions, and learn the order that you need to call them in.

... for a challenge 120 Bob Doubles

2345 Choose a non-observation bell ... perhaps the 3rd
3524
3542 -
5234 1st bob: Run in
2453 2nd bob: Run out
3 part 3rd bob: Make 4ths (Make the bob)

Learn it ... perhaps "Isle Of Man", IOM, standing for In, Out, Makelt

Learn the calling positions ...

In: in 4ths before you would have done 4-3 down
Out: as you lead before you would have made seconds
4ths: as you pass the treble before you would have done 3-4 up



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As an example, call the same composition as before (120 Bob Doubles, 2nd observation) but call it from the 3.

Look at the composition above: at the first bob it is in seconds ... you have just "run in".

At the end of the part, the 3 is in 5ths place, so to see what the 3rd does in the second part, examine the 5th: it is in 3rds at the bob ... you have just "run out".

The 5th is in 4ths at the end of the part, so in the final part examine the 4th: it "makes 4ths" at the bob, and finishes in 3rds at the end of the part ... where the 3 started from, of course.

So, the order is "In, Out, and Make the bob" often abbreviated to IOM.

You now have the three calling positions to learn ... and also to learn where it comes into rounds, of course!

... for a challenge 120 Bob Doubles

2345
3524
3542 -
5234
2453

What if you lose track of where of where you have got to?

Try not to panic!

3 part

Keep an eye out for the observation bell ... can tell where it is by elimination; e.g.

Watch for it making seconds & call 2 leads later;
easy enough to spot:

- ... if you dodge in 3-4 then you will strike over it as you are in 3rds
- ... if you doing long 5^{ths} then you won't strike over it at all !

Watch for it getting to 4-3 down & call 1 lead later:

- ... if you dodge with it, then it is obvious
- ... if you are making 5^{ths}, you'll strike over it & it goes down
- ... if you are making 2nds, it will follow you in to lead



Where to call the bob ... you know it is when the treble gets down to 2nds
... unless you will run out, you'll pass the treble before you call

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That was all very well, but at some point you will be distracted and forget where you have got to. Which call do you need to make next? In, Out or 4^{ths}?

Well, you remember that you were calling the 2nd observation ... see if you can work out where the 2nd is. You can usually do this by looking about you as you do your next piece of work, and use the position you met it (or perhaps the fact that you didn't meet it) to work out what it was doing.

The above hints help you to work out if it was making 2^{nds}, and then what you would expect to see if it was doing 4-3 down.

Once you have worked out what it is doing, use the "blue line" to work out how many leads are needed before it makes long 5^{ths} at the next bob: then work out what you will be doing at a bob on that lead.

Calling the composition

- For a BIGGER challenge
 - Look for a “one part” composition
 - Learn the composition
 - Break it into chunks if you can, and learn each chunk
 - Learn the work at each call, or...
 - Higher risk: just learn the spacing of the calls
 - Learn the places that you have to make a call
 - Probably a lot of them
 - Or practice, keep your nerve, and use the tricks on the previous page



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A one-part composition is even more of a challenge.

There is probably a lot more learning of the composition to do; you'll also need to concentrate harder on calling it correctly.

If the composition is quite long then many people try to break it into chunks and learn each chunk separately.

Learning the number of plain leads can be risky if there a lot of plain leads, as it is so easy to loose count.

... for a BIGGER challenge

2345
2354 –
3425 –
3452 –
4235
4253 –
4235 –
2543
2534 –
5423
5432 –
4253
2345

This is just two 60s of Bob Doubles, joined to give a false touch of 120 changes

First 3 bobs ... 5th makes 4ths (bob called every other lead)

Last 3 bobs ... 3rd makes 4ths (bob called every other lead)

Either just learn the spacing of the bobs

... or watch for the 5th then the 3rd alternately making 4ths & 5ths

You'll need to learn all of the calling positions

You'll need to learn where to shout "bob" or work it out as you go along (see next section)



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This example of a one-part composition is just two 60s of Plain Bob stitched together: it is quite obviously "false" as the row "4235" appears twice ... as does "4253"... and many of the changes within each lead too.

To call it, you could just learn the spacing of the bobs ... not too bad as there is at most one plain lead between them, and so you're unlikely to lose count in this composition.

Or more work, but with less danger of losing count, learn what you do at each of the bobs.

How do you know when to shout “bob”

- Observation bell ... easy enough to learn it!
- Non-observation
 - Note what you did last lead
 - Work out what you will do at the call
 - Call at the right place for that piece of work

 - ... or learn to watch for the treble



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Our example “one-part” composition has quite a bit of learning if you want to learn what you do at each of the calls ... and even more if you don’t know which bell you are going to be calling it from, and try to learn them all.

Is there an easier way?

Perhaps the least amount of learning for the composition is “3 bobs, every other lead, repeated, and 2 plain leads to finish”. But, if that is all you learnt then you’ll need to work out what you’ll be doing at each bob, and hence where to make the call. You can do this by noting what you did the last lead, work out what you would be doing at the next, and use the appropriate calling position (as you lead, or as you pass the treble, or whatever).

How do you know when to shout “bob” ... in Plain Bob

- Plain Bob has many fewer bobs than Grandsire, so “blue line” is more useful
- Learn the “blue line” well
- When you get to the next call, work out what you’ll do based on the work you have just done

- Or with practice ... watch for the treble as you hunt up and call as it reaches 2nds (unless you have to run out so call as you lead!)



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In Plain Bob the order of work, the “blue line”, is very useful because it isn’t usually much disturbed by a lot of calls.

So, when you get to the next call, you’ll know what you would have done next based on what you have just done.

All very well ... but eventually you’ll forget what you’ve just done! With practice, looking for the treble as you hunt up, and waiting the appropriate number of changes for it to get down to 2^{nds} will get you out of trouble. If you are able to learn how to watch for the treble then you’ll not need to learn so much on the calling positions either!

How do you know when to shout “bob” ... in Grandsire

- There are some short cuts ...
- If you are in the hunt ... easy ... call when you are at the back
- If you are double dodging up (like observation bell)... call as you pass treble
- Otherwise...
 - You’ll be on the front at the call; choice is to call as you lead, or just after you have lead
 - Call as you lead if you’ve just dodged up
 - Call just after if you’ve just dodged down



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Grandsire usually has many more calls than Plain Bob and so the order of work is less useful in calling.

However, the calls are usually every other lead so you'll probably only need to work out which change to call on when the next bob is coming up.

If you are in the hunt, or double dodging up then it is reasonably straight forward.

The tricky bit is usually working out if you should call as you lead, or just after leading, when you are going to be down on the front at the next call.

Well, the two bells on the front are the pair that dodged together at the back at the previous lead: and you'll need to call as the last one of the pair leads. So, if you dodge down you'll go down to lead first and so call after you lead, or if you dodge up you'll go down last and so call as you lead.

A GOOD TRICK: if you don't know whether to call as you lead or just after, then call as you lead ... because a LATE call in Grandsire is usually a disaster, and you can always then shout "sorry, bob now" if you realise you were too early.

Calling a quarter peal or peal

- Quarter peal
 - Usually between 1260 and 1320 changes for Doubles
 - 10 extents, and then a 60 or another extent
 - Should ring each change equal number of times ... with the extra 60 changes once extra
- Peal
 - 42 extents
 - each change rung equal number of times
- A “240” (each change rung twice) may be substituted for two extents



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Quarter peals and peals of Doubles must try to ring each change an equal number of times ... and for quarter peals, make it up to 1260 or more changes by ringing some of the changes an extra time.

The easiest way to do this is to call extents that contain each of the 120 possible changes once each.

You can substitute a pair of extents for a 240 that similarly contains each change twice over.

Counting to 10½ for a quarter

- How to remember how many you've called?
- Use a cunning plan!
 - If you have more than one calling, arrange them in a sequence and work through them in order
 - Call that sequence the required number of times
 - Call any extra extents to make the total up to 10
 - Finish off with the 60
- ... or just count them off out loud!



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And finally ... is there an easy way of “counting” the 10 extents you need for a quarter peal?

If you are using more than one composition, e.g. you are calling each of the four bells as observation bell in Plain Bob, then call each of the four compositions, repeat it, do another two and that is 10. Or, call the first one twice, then the next twice, and the next twice, until you have 8, then add another 2.

For Grandsire if you know how to call yourself observation then why not call each of the three 6-calls in order, three times over, then add your favourite one to make 10, and finally add the 60.

You'll probably find it easier to keep count if you have a plan and an easy to remember pattern to the callings!