

# Ringling with Pens

Helen McGregor

Helen McGregor is an ART member. Helen runs a number of basic ringing courses (virus regulations permitting) in Scotland and Alderney. Details can be seen at these websites:

<http://tullochbells.com> and <http://alderneybells.com>

Are you in lock-down and unable to ring with others? Fancy a challenge which will help your ringing when we can get back to it? If you enjoy this exercise there will be more fun to be had with pens in the next edition – can't wait? Join the Learn the Ropes Handbells scheme now:

<https://smartringer.org/ltrh>

## What you need:

1 x blue pen

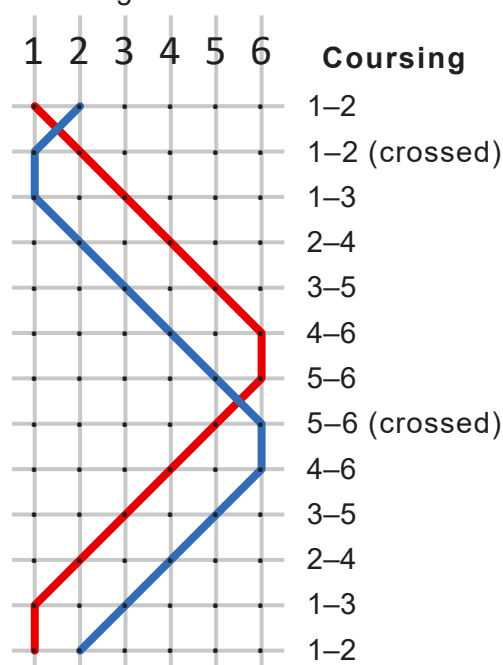
1 x red pen

Squared paper

An internet connection

## Method:

Write out plain hunt on 6 for the treble with the red pen and on the same diagram write out plain hunt on 6 for the 2 with the blue pen. Look at the diagram you have created – it should look like the diagram below:



Note that in the first half of the lead the 2 (blue) strikes before the treble (red) in every row and in the second half of the lead the treble (red) strikes before the 2 (blue) in every row.

Apart from when the bells are in consecutive places (front and back rows) there is a consistent gap of just one place between them. This pattern of 2 bells, both just hunting, but where the characteristic of the relationship between them is a gap of 1, except at front and back, is called COURSING.

Now sit down and hold the red pen in your right hand (the treble) & hold the blue pen (the 2) in your left hand. Imagine you are ringing rounds on 6 with 2 other ringers. For the handstroke: raise your right hand (red) and say 'first', raise your left hand (blue) and say 'second'. Pause while you imagine someone else say 'third', 'fourth', 'fifth' 'sixth'. Now ring the backstroke of rounds with you lowering your right hand and say 'first', lower your left hand and think 'second', imagine others saying 'third', 'fourth', 'fifth' 'sixth'. Repeat this a good few times to feel the rhythm of rounds.

Now watch the beginning and middle of the video which can be found on YouTube at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjA\\_Oj1Fn-0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjA_Oj1Fn-0)

Now reach for the piece of paper with your diagram and put it in your lap. The convention in handbell ringing is that the ringers ring only 2 rows of rounds and then commence the method – this is often referred to as 'up, down & away'. So with your pens, ring 2 rows of rounds (one up stroke and one downstroke) then follow the chart you have drawn on the paper:

In the table on the next page, I have emboldened the hand which strikes first out of your pair – think of it as the dominant hand – keep it correct and you will achieve BOTH hands in the right place.

90% of your concentration must be on the hand which is going to strike first out of your pair, leave a gap and then sound the other hand. You must always know which hand is going first out of your pair. Place your dominant hand correctly, leave a gap of 1 and then place your shadow hand. Don't forget that the gap of 1 disappears at both ends of the change when you strike consecutively, cross over and the dominant becomes the shadow and vice versa

The table is comprehensive but sadly is unmemorable!

	Right hand / red / treble	Left hand / blue / 2	Relationship
Upstroke / handstroke	<b>First</b>	Second	Together (rounds)
Downstroke / backstroke	<b>First</b>	Second	Together (rounds)
Upstroke / handstroke	Second	<b>First</b>	Cross
Downstroke / backstroke	Third	<b>First</b>	Gap of 1
Upstroke / handstroke	Fourth	<b>Second</b>	Gap of 1
Downstroke / backstroke	Fifth	<b>Third</b>	Gap of 1
Upstroke / handstroke	Sixth	<b>Fourth</b>	Gap of 1
Downstroke / backstroke	Sixth	<b>Fifth</b>	Meet
Upstroke / handstroke	<b>Fifth</b>	Sixth	Cross
Downstroke / backstroke	<b>Fourth</b>	Sixth	Gap of 1
Upstroke / handstroke	<b>Third</b>	Fifth	Gap of 1
Downstroke / backstroke	<b>Second</b>	Fourth	Gap of 1
Upstroke / handstroke	<b>First / lead</b>	Third	Gap of 1
Downstroke / backstroke	<b>First / lead</b>	Second	Meet
Upstroke / handstroke	Second	<b>First / lead</b>	Cross
Downstroke / backstroke	Third	<b>First / lead</b>	Gap of 1
Upstroke / handstroke	Fourth	<b>Second</b>	Gap of 1
Downstroke / backstroke	Fifth	<b>Third</b>	Gap of 1

Now try ringing it, thinking of each row this way:

Rounds (red then blue)  
Rounds (red then blue)  
Cross – still 1st/2nd but blue then red  
1st (blue), gap of 1 then red  
2nd (blue), gap of 1 then red  
3rd (blue), gap of 1 then red  
4th (blue), gap of 1 then red  
5th (blue) no gap the red (meet)  
Cross – still 5th/6th but red then blue  
4th (red), gap of 1 then blue  
3rd (red), gap of 1 then blue  
2nd (red), gap of 1 then blue  
1st (red), gap of 1 then blue  
Meet – 1st and 2nd place – red then blue  
Cross – still 1st/2nd but blue then red  
1st (blue), gap of 1 then red  
2nd (blue), gap of 1 then red

Ring what's on the left a few times, reducing what you say to yourself until you can say this:

Rounds  
Rounds  
Cross  
1st, gap, sound the other hand  
2nd, gap, sound the other hand  
3rd, gap, sound the other hand  
4th, gap, sound the other hand  
5th no gap (or meet)  
Cross  
4th, gap, sound the other hand  
3rd, gap, sound the other hand  
2nd, gap, sound the other hand  
1st, gap, sound the other hand  
Meet  
Cross  
1st, gap, sound the other hand  
2nd, gap, sound the other hand

Et voilà – you are ringing plain hunt on 6 on a coursing pair! To check you are correct please watch the rest of the video. Ring in time with the treble ringer on the screen & hopefully all will be well.

Next you may wish to ring in time with the ringer on 5/6 – she is ringing the same pattern as the treble ringer but is starting at what was your half-way point.

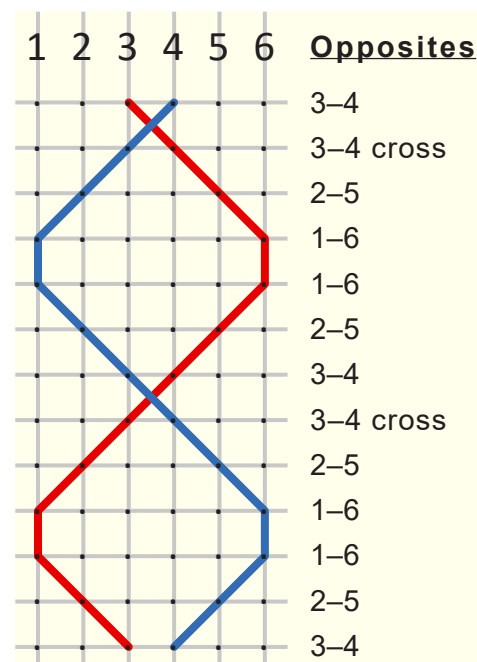
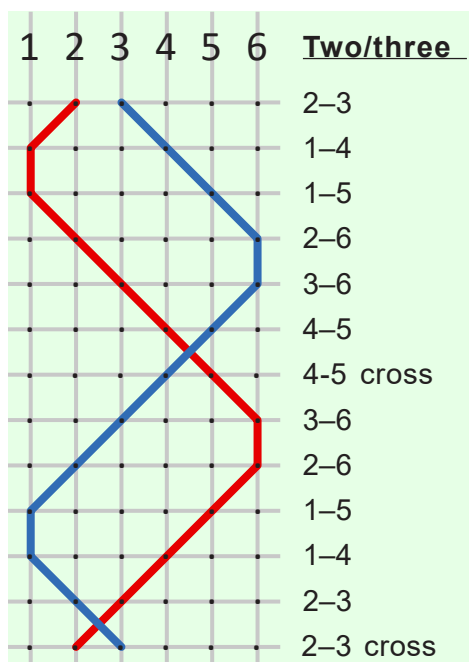
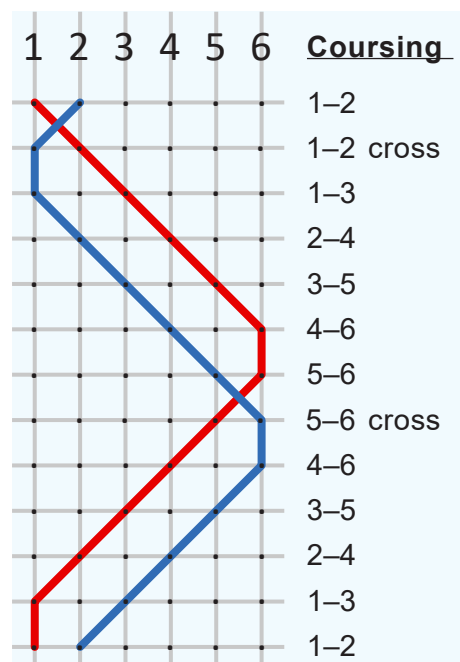
There are only 3 patterns to know about and here we have just learnt coursing. We can look at the other two patterns next time and I will explain how you can put them together to ring plain bob – or indeed any other minor method! And just with pens!

# Ringling with Pens – lesson 2

Helen McGregor

If you read the last article you will probably have tried plain hunt on 6, holding a red pen in your right hand and a blue pen in your left hand for a coursing pair – either trebles (1-2) or tenors (5-6).

Whichever two bells you ring when plain hunting on six, there are only three possible patterns: these are ‘coursing’, ‘opposites’ and ‘two/three’. Let’s start by looking at the two new patterns, opposites and two/three. To explore opposites, we will think about what the 3 and 4 do in plain hunting, and for two/three we will (as the name suggests) think about ringing the two and the three.



The last article described coursing in some detail. Here are similar explanations for the two new patterns (opposites and two/three), starting in each case with a handstroke and backstroke of rounds. Handstrokes are marked H: and backstrokes are marked B:

## Opposites

H: Rounds, 3rd & 4th, red then blue

B: Rounds, 3rd & 4th, red then blue

*At the start, 3 (red) moves out and 4 (blue) moves in, so your bells cross.*

H: Cross – still 3rd/4th but blue then red

B: Move further apart – blue in 2nd, red in 5th

H: Lead and lie – 1st (blue) and 6th (red)

B: Lead and lie – 1st (blue) and 6th (red)

H: Move closer – blue in 2nd, red in 5th

B: Meet – 3rd & 4th, blue then red

H: Cross – still 3rd & 4th but red then blue

B: Move further apart – red in 2nd, blue in 5th

H: Lead and lie – 1st (red) and 6th (blue)

B: Lead and lie – 1st (red) and 6th (blue)

H: Move closer – red in 2nd, blue in 5th

B: Meet – 3rd & 4th, red then blue (rounds)

## Two/three

H: Rounds, 2nd & 3rd, red then blue

B: Rounds, 2nd & 3rd, red then blue

*At the start, 2 (red) moves in and 3 (blue) moves out, so your bells move apart.*

H: Red leads; gap of 2, blue in 4ths

B: Red leads; gap of 3, blue in 5ths

H: Red to 2nd; still gap of 3 so blue in 6ths

B: Red to 3rd; gap closes to 2, blue still 6ths

H: Red to 4th, blue down to 5th, they meet...

B: ... and cross; still 4th/5th, but blue then red

H: Blue to 3rd; gap of 2, red to 6th (lie)

B: Blue to 2nd gap of 3, red still 6th (lie)

H: Blue leads; gap still 3, red down to 5th

B: Blue leads; gap of 2, red down to 4th

H: Blue to 2nd, red down to 3rd, they meet...

B: ... and cross. Red then blue, rounds

Try ringing ‘opposites’ first. When you start, 3 (being odd) hunts out, and 4 (even) hunts in. Notice that if one hand is in first place then the other hand strikes in last place. If one hand is in 2nd place (one away from the front) the other hand is in 5th place (one away from the back).

