

**Bastow / Bistow  
Doubles**

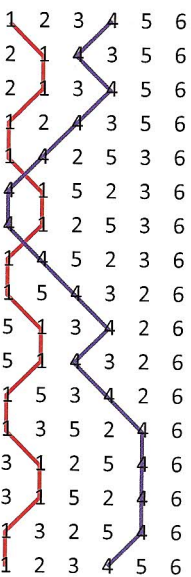


Diagram 2.2

this can be a huge challenge. Suddenly the student is expected to change position at every blow, to keep track of their position right up to the back, to see many ropes descending in front of their rope, to hear their bell anywhere among the five or six bells being rung, and to be able to see who they are following, which could be pretty much anyone!

If the student copes easily with this, that's fine. But many struggle, and difficulties here often lead to long-term problems, such as an over-reliance on learning by rote the order of the bells that one follows, and an under-reliance on hearing one's bell. The solution is to split the leap to Plain Hunt into a number of smaller steps, and Bastow/Bistow is a great tool for this.

If our student rings the treble to Bastow, they change place only every other blow. The change is always at handstroke (which will be familiar from call changes). They never move beyond second place. In terms of ropesight, they only ever have to find one bell to ring after, and can ignore the rest. If they get lost, they can easily be put right again ("Lead now!").

There are a few choices and variations for you as the teacher. You may decide to start them with Doubles, if they are happier leading after a fixed *cover bell*.<sup>2</sup> You may wish to teach them the order in which bells come down to lead and which they must therefore follow for two blows (2, 4, 6, 5, 3 in Minor), or you may not. If they do learn this order by rote and then rely on it too much, you could well repeat the exercise after calling a change from rounds before you start, so that the order is no longer what they are expecting.

The result of all this is a much smaller and simpler step forwards for our student; they are still changing places in a regular pattern after the 'Go!' call, but in a much simpler pattern than in Plain Hunt, and one which makes both ropesight and hearing much easier.

**But more — free steak knives!**

Well, maybe not steak knives, but as with many useful exercises there is more than one potential benefit. Another of those huge leaps comes with the introduction of ringing inside to a method, and Plain Bob Doubles is often the first. The problem here is that the student needs to grasp simultaneously both *how* and *when* to dodge or make places. Dodging accurately is not easy, and even the long fifths often comes out not as an exact 3, 4, 5, 5, 5 but more like 3.0, 4.0, 4.8, 5.2, 5.1, 4.7. It's a bit much to expect the student to be accurate with this work while also struggling to remember the order of work and when to make those wretched dodges or places. Bastow to the rescue again! The work in Bastow/Bistow Doubles for each working bell does not involve seconds, but has the 3-4 dodge both up and down as well as long fifths — but without the added problem of remembering when to do this work. You ALWAYS make long fifths at the back, and you ALWAYS dodge in 3-4 both up and down. So there's lots of practice at the dodges and long places, without the added brain-strain of working out when they occur. Better than steak knives any day!

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*Jargon Box*

**1. Up / Down / In / Out / Front / Back / Dodge**

Plain hunting involves changing your bell's position by one each stroke. If the alteration is to ring one position later (such as moving from 3rd place to 4th place), we call this moving **up** or **out**, towards the **back**; if we ring one place earlier, this is moving **down** or **in**, towards the **front**.

Hunting from 1st place up to 6th place involves moving out, ringing successively in positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. A 'dodge' involves making a step in the opposite direction. So doing a '3-4 up dodge' means ringing in positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 4, 5, 6. You are moving up, but then dodge from 4 back to 3 before continuing to hunt up to the back. Equally, a '3-4 down dodge' would mean that instead of hunting down 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, you instead put in a step in the opposite direction and so ring in positions 6, 5, 4, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1.

**2. Working Bells / Cover Bell**

Typically, when ringing a method the treble rings something simpler than the other bells. In Doubles on six bells, the tenor **covers**, meaning it always rings in last place. We refer to the other bells as '**working bells**'. So in Bastow Minor the working bells are all the bells except the treble (which has simpler work); in Doubles the working bells are the 2, 3, 4, and 5 (but not the 6, which is covering).