

**Sparsholt Course**  
August 2001

Course notes

Group E1  
**Grandsire Doubles**

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## Introduction

These notes give a thorough description of Grandsire Doubles, how it works and how to learn it. There is probably more than you can absorb in one go, but you can take it away with you afterwards to consolidate what you learn on the course.

There is no single way to learn a method, and no one 'correct' way to think about it. If you can think about the method from different angles, you will master it more securely. Don't worry if you can't do it all at once, but be aware that you have not finished 'learning' until you have an all round view. This will stand you in good stead when the going gets rough and people (perhaps including you) make mistakes. This principle applies to simple methods like Grandsire Doubles, just as much as to fancy things like Tiddly Pom Surprise Maximus.

## Starting point for Grandsire Doubles

Each new thing you learn, and each skill you acquire sits on top of the foundation of what you already know and can do. If there are cracks in the foundation, it makes it harder to build the new layers on top, so before launching into the theory of Grandsire, just recap what ought to be securely in place before starting. Don't worry if there are a few shortfalls, we can cope with them.

- Safe bell handling
- Understand hunting, dodging and place making
- Awareness of where you are (even if you don't know where you should be)
- Ability to make the bell move quickly and accurately where you want it to go
- Reasonably accurate striking when you know what you are doing

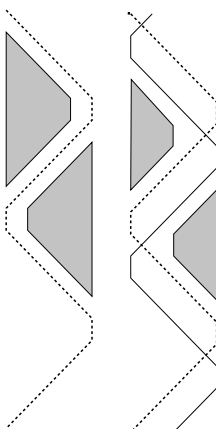
These notes also assume you are already familiar with Plain Bob Doubles. These days most people learn Plain Bob before Grandsire, so it provides a useful starting point. Don't worry if you don't know Plain Bob - the descriptions work perfectly well if you ignore all the 'like Plain Bob' or 'unlike Plain Bob' bits.

## Structure of Grandsire Doubles

What makes Grandsire like it is? Where are the bones and muscles that give it its shape and determine how it behaves? If you already understand Plain Bob, there are many similarities that will help you to understand Grandsire.

The Treble plain hunts (like Plain Bob). That fixes the lead length as 10 changes for Doubles (correspondingly more for more bells) and defines two areas (above and below the Treble) where everything else must happen. (See first diagram, right).

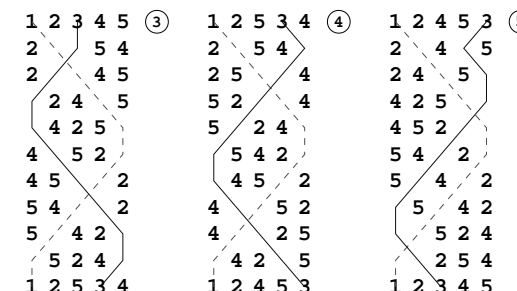
In the plain course, there is another hunt bell (initially the 2nd). It follows the Treble around (ie it 'courses' the Treble). This pair of bells leaves even smaller areas above and below the Treble for everything else. (See far right hand diagram)



happens, you will find that the bells 'work in pairs' from lead to lead. The two dodging on the back at one lead will be making places on the front at the next, and vice versa. If the call is a Single when they are on the front it will swap them over, otherwise they will continue to course each other the same way<sup>8</sup>. It can be helpful to recognise this, but do not become too reliant on it, or you will be caught out when there is a plain lead instead of a call.

## From the book

Most books print methods as a combination of figures and lines. Here is Grandsire printed in that style. You can compare it with the other diagrams in these notes.



The figures relate to a plain course only, whereas the lines apply completely generally to the method.

## Further reading

These notes don't tell you all there is to know, and you won't learn it all in one weekend either. Other books worth reading are:

<i>Bellringing by Instalments</i>	Peter Wenham	1996	Peter Wenham	Set of 15 booklets on individual topics from first lessons, through methods and calling, handbells and tutor's advice. [Part 5 - Grandsire & Stedman]
<i>Learning Methods</i>	Michael Henshaw	2000	CC	Practical advice on the theory and practice of learning methods.
<i>Method Ringer's Companion</i>	Steve Coleman	1995	Sue Coleman	Hardback book giving detailed guidance and practical advice on learning and ringing all the widely rung methods from Bob Doubles upwards. Chapters on listening, striking and method naming.
<i>The Tower Handbook</i>	John Harrison	1998	CC	Comprehensive reference book on all aspects of ringing with answers to over 800 questions. [Section 13.8 - Learning to ring simple methods]

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<sup>8</sup> This means they will hunt as a pair, with the same one arriving first at the front and the back.

Would have done (plain lead)	At a Bob do	At a Single do
3rds	Same as plain lead	2nds (and into the hunt)
4-5 up	3rds (and into the hunt)	Long thirds
4-5 down	Double dodge 4-5 up	Same as Bob
Hunt down	Double dodge 4-5 down	Same as Bob

Some people learn 'what to do next time' along with these rules. You can work it out for yourself from the information above, but there is another way.

The end of each piece of work at a call is actually the same as the work at a plain lead. Once you get to the second blow of the Treble's lead, you are in fact in the 'starting position' again. You do exactly what the bell in your position would do at the start of the method. These positions are shown as blobs on the diagrams. You already know what to do if you have learnt the place bells. For example if you double dodge 4-5 up, you arrive in 5ths place and become '5ths place bell', so you do what the 5th does at the start of the method (complete the dodge, lie behind, hunt down to be turned from the front by the Treble, make 3rds, ie become 3rds place bell).

There is another useful rule for calls in Grandsire, that applies on all numbers of bells, but is hardly visible in Doubles.

*If you would have dodged at a plain lead and a bob is called, then you double dodge in the 'previous dodging position'.*

This is actually where you will be when the call is called! In Doubles the rule only applies to the bell that would have dodged 4-5 down, but gets caught two blows earlier and does a double dodge in 4-5 up. (On higher numbers the bell that would have dodged in 6-7 up would get caught double dodging in 4-5 up, and so on, but you don't need to know that yet!).

## Useful points when ringing Grandsire

### Dodges

If you already know Plain Bob, learning Grandsire becomes a lot easier once you realise that some things happen at the opposite stroke from what you might have expected. You have probably become familiar<sup>6</sup> with the fact that in Plain Bob (on any number of bells) the 'reverse steps' in the middle of dodges all occur at backstroke. Knowing that is very useful if you 'slip a place' while hunting, since it allows you to get back on track at the dodge rather than ploughing on out of step with everybody else.

*In Grandsire (on any number) the reverse steps at dodges all come at handstroke.*

This is because the dodges are in odd positions (4-5, etc) rather than even positions (3-4, etc).

### Course bells

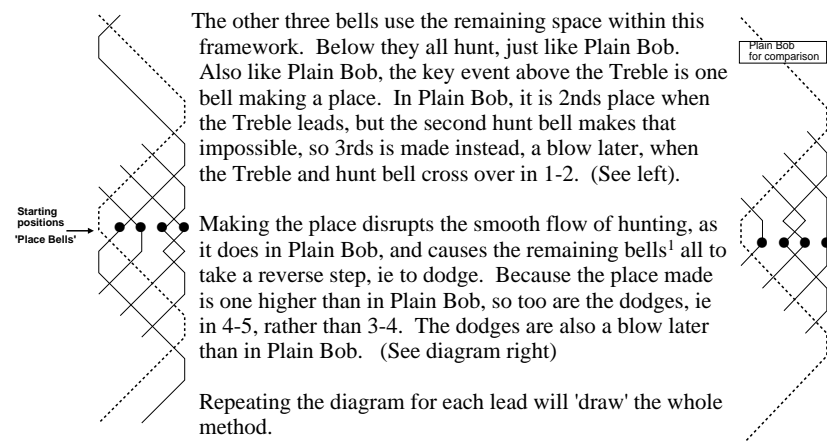
You may know that in Plain Bob, all the working bells 'follow each other around' so that in a plain course, the same bell turns you from the back and front except when the Treble is there. A similar thing happens in Grandsire, but it is less apparent with Doubles. There are only three working bells and two hunting bells, but you might find it handy to know. Calls change the order.

### Working in pairs

Touches of Grandsire doubles often have calls in several successive leads<sup>7</sup>. When this

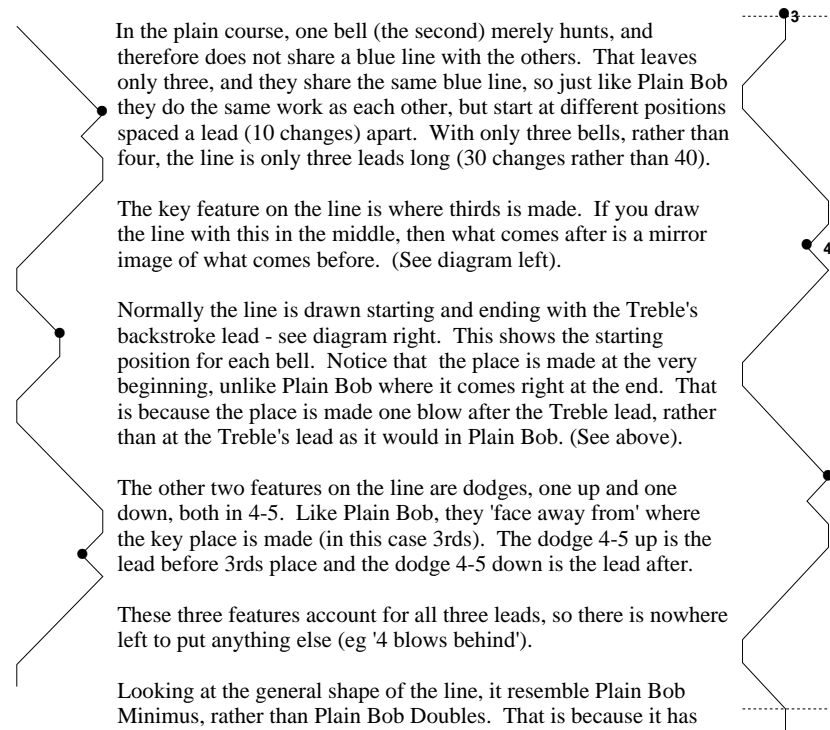
<sup>6</sup> Even if you were not conscious of it!

<sup>7</sup> There are sometimes more calls than plain leads. One popular 240 has only 3 plain leads out of 24.



Notice that one familiar feature of Plain Bob has not appeared. There are no 'four blows behind' (long fifths). The reason is simple - all the space has been used up with the dodging (whereas Plain Bob Doubles has one place 'left over' above the dodging in 3-4).

## Blue line of Grandsire Doubles



<sup>1</sup> In Doubles there are only two remaining bells.

## Starts in Grandsire

The starting position of each working bell is shown and labelled on the blue line on the previous page. You need to learn these starts so you know them without needing to think too much. The starting positions of each working bell are also shown as dots on all the diagrams.

## Rules for Grandsire Doubles

You probably know two sorts of rules for Plain Bob: about the 'order of work' and about 'passing the Treble'. Perhaps you find these easiest to memorise and use while ringing. Both can be worked out from information in the previous sections.

To get the order of work, simply read off from the Blue line. Most people remember it first by starting with 3rds place bell<sup>2</sup> (ie they remember '3rds, 4-5 down, 4-5 up') but to ring any bell, you must be able to start from any point and go round what is really a cycle with no beginning or end.

You can find the rules for what to do after passing the Treble from the diagram of the structure. As you might expect, there are some similarities with Plain Bob.

- If you pass Treble in 1-2 (ie if Treble turns you from the lead) you make the key place (3rds in Grandsire).
- If you pass Treble in 2-3 you dodge up (4-5 in Grandsire)

So far so good, but the next step in Plain Bob would be 4 blows behind, which doesn't exist, so what happens next? Look at the other extreme, ie the back.

- If you pass Treble in 4-5 you are the hunt bell (which doesn't exist in Plain Bob).
- If you pass Treble in 3-4 you dodge down in 4-5.

You can relate this last one to Plain Bob, by noting that 3-4 is the nearest position to the back that a working bell<sup>3</sup> can pass the Treble. The bell that does this in Plain Bob also dodges down (in 3-4). You now have a rule for passing the Treble in every place.

Notice that as you move along the blue line, you pass Treble one place nearer the front at each successive lead (see right hand diagram above). This too is like Plain Bob, except that the farthest passing position (4-5) is reserved for the hunt bell in Grandsire.

Most books only tell you about passing Treble on the way up, because this comes shortly before the lead end where you need to 'do something', but it is also helpful to know where you pass the Treble on the way down<sup>4</sup>. Because everyone plain hunts under the Treble, these positions all 'match' where you pass it on the way up before the next lead.

- Passing 5-4 down matches passing 1-2 up,
- Passing 4-3 down matches passing 2-3 up,
- Passing 3-2 down matches passing 3-4 up,
- Passing 2-1 down matches passing 4-5 up,

<sup>2</sup> 'Place bell' refers to the work done by that bell in the first lead of the course.

<sup>3</sup> "Working bell" means one that rings the work of the method, rather than something simpler like plain hunting.

<sup>4</sup> Sometimes passing on the way down is called 'cutting the Treble'.

## Structure of calls in Grandsire Doubles

Grandsire has two different calls, but their structures have some things in common.

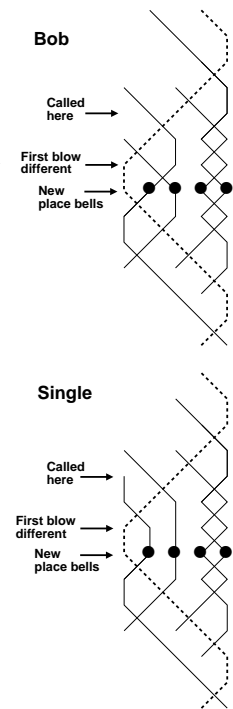
At a bob, an extra 3rds place is made, just before the Treble lead. This mirrors 3rds made just after the lead, inherited from the plain lead. That makes everything symmetrical about the Treble, with two lots of 3rds place made, and double dodging on the back to fill the correspondingly longer space available. (See diagram right)

Notice that the path of the hunt bell is broken by the call. The bell that was in the hunt gets caught in a double dodge (4-5 down), and the bell making the first 3rds place turns Treble from lead and then becomes the new hunt bell.

A single has even more places made, with 2nds and 3rds places made while the Treble leads. This middle thirds place joins up the other two to give 'long thirds' (4 blows).

2nds place is made underneath long 3rds, immediately over the Treble. This bell that has made 2nds now turns the Treble from lead, and so becomes the hunt bell.

The 'back work' at a single is the same as for a Bob, ie two bells double dodge together.



## Position of calls in Grandsire

The diagrams above show where the call is called. This should always be a whole pull (two blows) before the first blow that differs from a plain lead. This occurs one change before the Treble lead, (a blow earlier than in Plain Bob) so the call is called at the previous handstroke when Treble is in 3rds place.

## Rules for calls in Grandsire Doubles

There are two sorts of rule: those based on Treble passing and those based on what each bell would have done at a plain lead.

Look at the structure and you will see that the two bells that pass the Treble farthest from the front (in 3-4 and in 4-5) do the double dodges (up and down respectively). The two that pass the Treble nearest to the front (in 1-2 and 2-3) make the places (respectively first and last at a bob, or 2nds and long 3rds at a single).

If the call is called at the right time<sup>5</sup> (when the Treble is in 3rds place) the bells that are to dodge will already be above the Treble and those that are to make places will not yet have passed above it. This gives the rule:

*If you are above the Treble when you hear the call, then double dodge. It is good for Grandsire on any number of bells.*

By comparing the structure of the calls with that of the plain lead, you can work out all of the 'if you would have done A then do B' type of rules

<sup>5</sup> Not all conductors are so accurate!