Oxford Diocesan Guild
Michaelmas Training Day 2012
Course Notes

Stedman Triples

Tutor
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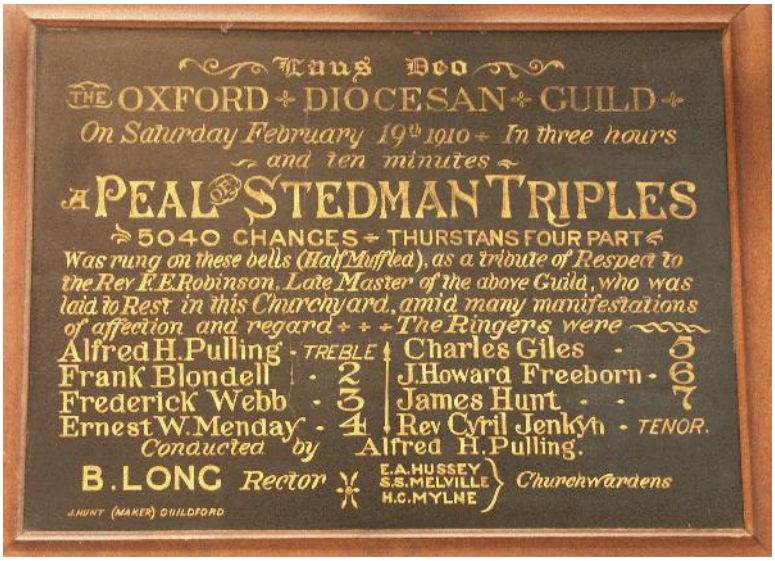


Contents

1 Introduction

These notes give a thorough description of Stedman Triples, how it works and how to learn it. There may be more than you can absorb in one go, so please revisit it after the course to help consolidate what you have learnt.

There is no single way to learn a method – there are several different ways to think about it, no single one of which is 'correct'. But if you limit yourself to a single view, you will miss out, and you will find it harder to ring the method reliably.

So do try to look at the method from more than one angle. 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.

Stedman is a notorious method for falling apart very quickly when one person makes a trip and the adjacent bells also become confused, especially on the front. The only way to avoid that situation is to learn the method thoroughly, and to know enough about how it fits together to be able to recover from any slips.

2 Starting point for Stedman Triples

Each new thing you learn, and each skill you acquire sits on top of the foundation of what you can already do, and what you know. 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 Stedman, let's just recap what ought to be securely in place before starting to ring any method, simple or complex.

- Safe bell handling
- Understanding of the mechanics of 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
- Being comfortable ringing to an 8-bell rhythm.
- Reasonably accurate striking when you know what you are doing

If you haven't yet acquired all those skills, you will find it harder to make progress with Stedman Triples. Don't worry – we will offer advice and help, so that you can work on improving these aspects as well as your understanding of the method.

These notes include references to Grandsire Triples, and Stedman Doubles, since most people learn them before learning Stedman Triples. But the descriptions should still work if you just ignore these references.

3 Wrong and right

Stedman includes 'wrong', ie' backward', hunting, as well as the more familiar 'right' hunting. You need to understand the effect that has on the method in order to ring it reliably and strike it accurately.

The most conspicuous effect of mixing wrong and right hunting is that it sometimes you lead normally, ie hand-back, and sometimes you lead 'wrong, ie back-hand. You need to know when to do which, or you will get in a muddle.

As well as knowing when to lead wrong, you also need to learn how to strike it properly. When leading right, you get used to the first blow being slow and the second being quicker, because of the open handstroke lead. If you do that when leading wrong, you will get a slow backstroke and a quick handstroke, which is the opposite of what you need. Ringing the first lead blow quicker than the second can feel odd at first, and takes a little practice to get used to.

4 Structure of Stedman Triples

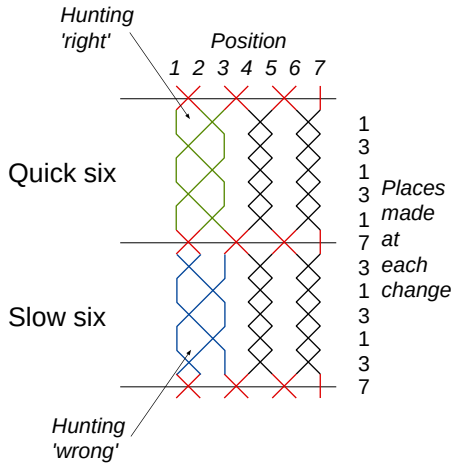
Stedman is a principal, unlike most methods where the Treble provides a framework within which the work of the other bells fits. That means there are no 'lead ends', and the course isn't divided into 'leads'.

If you are used to relying on the Treble for clues about what you should be doing, you can't do that in Stedman, because the Treble does the same work as all the other bells.

Stedman is structured in blocks of 6 rows, called 'sixes'. Within each six the front three bells hunt while those above 3rd place dodge together in pairs.

The sixes alternate between 'quick sixes' (which have normal 'right' hunting in the front) and 'slow sixes' (which have backward 'wrong' hunting on the front).

At the join between sixes, all bells hunt, with the bell at the back making a place. That shunts all the bells round to do something different in the following six.

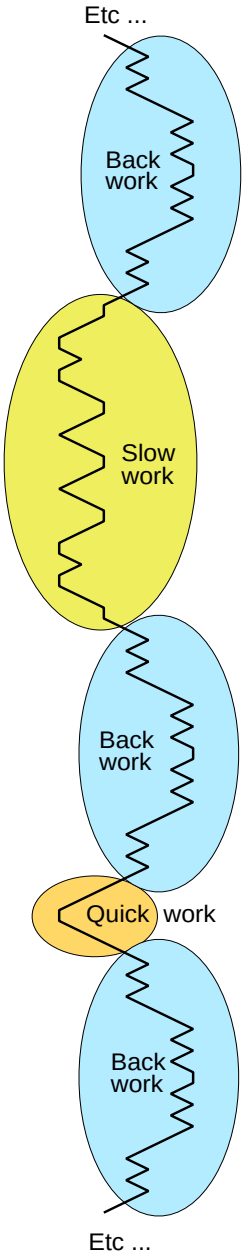


There are 7 pairs of sixes (quick and slow) in Stedman Triples, which gives an 84 row course – longer than Grandsire (70), and the same as Plain Bob.

Interesting aside – Because Stedman is based on pairs of sixes rather than on leads, the course length rises more slowly on higher numbers than it does with other methods. Stedman Caters is 108 rows compared with 126 for Grandsire and 144 for Plain Bob, and Stedman Cinques is only 132 rows compared with 198 for Grandsire and 220 for Plain Bob.

5 The line of Stedman Triples

The line is divided into alternating blocks of 'back work' and 'front work'.



All the back work is the same, with double dodging in every position (4-5 up, 6-7 up, 6-7 down, 4-5 down) as shown by the blue areas.

There are two types of front work: 'slow' and 'quick'.

The quick work is just 6 blows of hunting – in quick and out quick – hence the name.

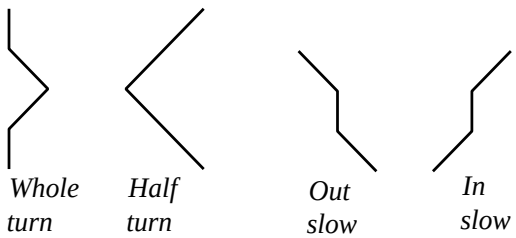
The slow work lasts 30 blows, and is the main thing that you need to learn to ring Stedman. It is divided into smaller pieces of work, each with its own name.

Learn these names (see below) or you won't know what to do when people try to help you by telling you what you should be doing.

NB – The sequence of work in the diagram is longer than a course, so that you can see the whole pattern more clearly.

6 Anatomy of the slow work

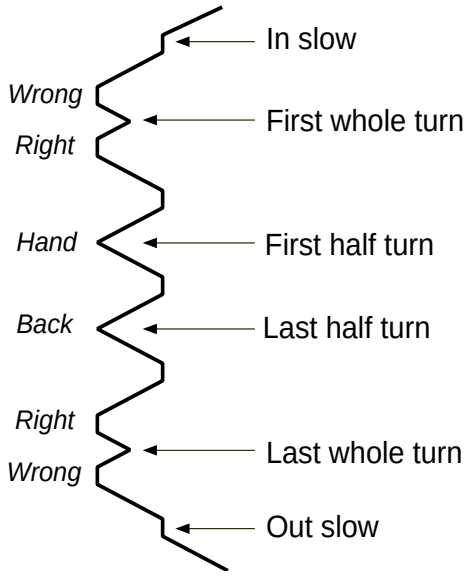
The slow work includes four named types of work, shown below:



In and out slow are self explanatory – the extra blow in 3rds delays your progress, ie slows you down.

The 'turn' in 'half turn' relates to being on the front. In a half turn you are there for one blow, and in a whole turn for longer – again self explanatory.

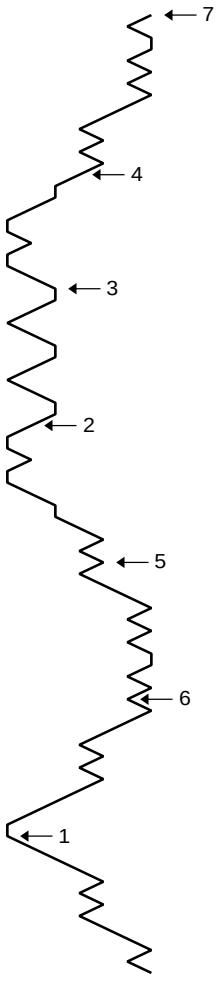
The diagram shows the whole slow work. There are two whole turns and two half turns, first and last of each.



Notice where you lead right (hand and back) and where you lead wrong (back and hand), also which half turn comes at handstroke and which at backstroke. Learn them thoroughly, so you know which is which without thinking.

7 Starts in Stedman Triples

The course of Stedman starts part way through a quick six (which makes the first three blows like Grandsire).



The bells 'on the back' ie 4-5, 6-7 (and higher pairs if ringing above Triples) all start with the final point of a dodge, then back to their home position, and then 'move on' to whatever comes next. For all bells but the 4, that means another double dodge in the position that comes next.

So 5 completes its 4-5 up, moves up to 6-7 and dodges there. 7 completes its 6-7 up, lies and dodges 6-7 down. 6 completes 6-7 down, moves down to 4-5 and dodges there. 4 completes its 4-5 down and then goes into the front work.

All four eventually go down to the front – some going in quick and some slow. To remember which does which, use the mnemonic for dancing the Quickstep – 'slow, quick, quick, slow' – 4 goes in slow, 5 & 6 will go in quick, 7 will go in slow.

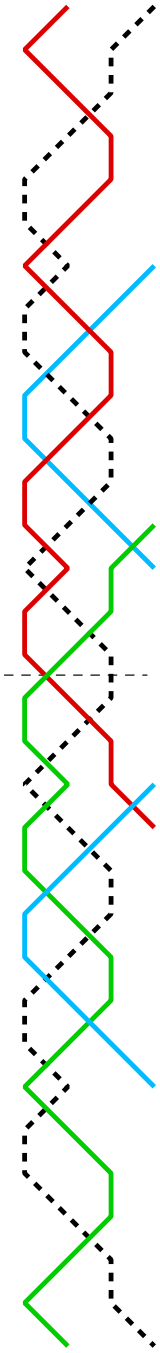
This extends to higher numbers, for example Cinques is: 'slow, quick, quick, slow, slow, quick, quick, slow'.

The bells 'on the front' ie 1, 2, 3, are doing front work. You need to know whether it is quick or slow, and how far each is through it.

1 is in the middle of its quick work (which looks like the Treble lead of a normal method).

The other two are part way through the slow work. 2 is about to do its last whole turn and 3 is about to do its first half turn.

8 Fitting together



The front work in Stedman is like a jigsaw puzzle. If you understand how the pieces fit together it will help you to ring it confidently, and it will help you to recover from small trips.

The diagram shows the whole slow work for one bell (dotted black line). The first half fits together with the end of another bell's slow work (red line). See how they fit together, with the black bell's whole turn snap fitting the red bell's half turn snap, and vice versa.

Half way through the black bell's slow work (shown by a dashed line) the red bell goes out and the green bell comes in to start its slow work. It fits with the second half of the black bell's slow work in exactly the same way.

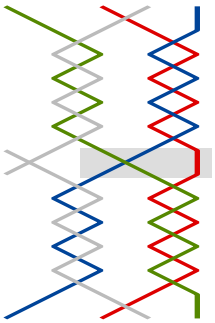
It's a bit like a progressive dance – the first half of the slow you dance with one partner and the last half you dance with another partner (who in turn then dances with another partner).

Notice that mid way through each pair's dance there is a gap, which is filled by a quick (shown blue).

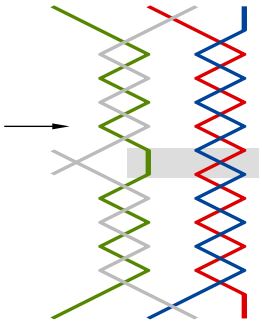
Knowing that you work with a partner can help you both, because if either of you trip up, the other should be able to help correct the trip.

Knowing how the bells fit together also helps with getting the leads the right way round. Notice how the 'outside end' of the whole turns, which is a whole pull lead wrong, fits next to the 'outside' of someone else's whole turn, whereas the 'inside end', which is a whole pull lead right, fits next to a quick bell, which always leads right.

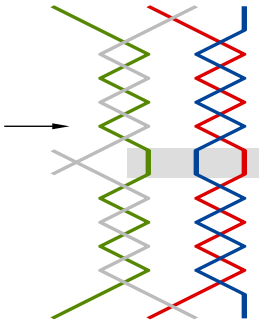
9 Structure of calls in Stedman Triples



Calls in Stedman Triples only affect three bells at the back, and they are made between sixes, at the change when all bells normally move on to the next dodging position. The diagram shows what the back bells do when there is no call, and the grey rectangle shows where the call has an effect. The bells affected are the ones shown in colour.



At a bob, the bell that has just dodged up makes 5th place, and then dodges down (as if it were ringing Stedman Doubles). The bells in 6-7 have to dodge over the place in 5th, which puts them both at the start of another double dodge, so having counted two, they count another one at the bob, and then two more – five in all.



At a single, the same bell makes 5ths, but instead of dodging over it, the pair in 6-7 both make a place. That still puts them at the start of another double dodge, but the opposite way round. So the bell that dodged 6-7 up is now dodging 6-7 down (the same as if there had been no call), and the bell that dodged 6-7 down turns round and dodges up again, as if it had only just arrived at the back.

The arrows show where the call is called, at the handstroke of the second dodge, which is a whole pull before the first blow changed by the call.

10 Rules for calls in Stedman Triples

At a bob:

- If you are dodging 4-5 up, make 5ths and double dodge 4-5 down.
- If you are dodging 6-7 up, do another dodge at the call and then another double dodge 6-7 up.
- If you are dodging 6-7 down, do another dodge at the call and then another double dodge 6-7 down.

At a single:

- If you are dodging 4-5 up, make 5ths and double dodge 4-5 down (same as a bob).
- If you are dodging 6-7 up, make 7ths and then double dodge 6-7 down (ie unaffected).
- If you are dodging 6-7 down, make 6ths and then double dodge 6-7 up.

Normally each time you go onto the front you alternate between quick and slow. A call can change this, so:

- If you make a place, it doesn't affect how you go in next time.
- If you don't make a place (ie you keep dodging) it changes the way you go in next time.

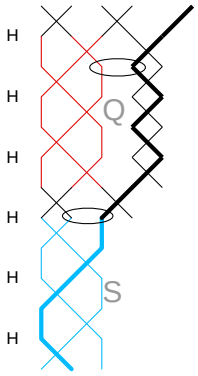
The above rules apply for each call. If two calls change the way you will go in, then they cancel each other out.

11 Going in quick or slow

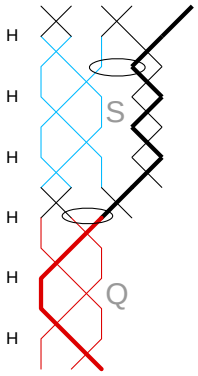
Going in the wrong way is a common problem. It's easy to lose track if you are affected by several calls, or just to forget which way you should go in next. If this happens, you can work it out from what the other bells are doing, ie from the structure of the method.

The way you go in depends on whether you arrive in a quick or slow six. Since they alternate, the six when you double dodge 4-5 down will be the other kind. If it is a quick six, the bells will be leading right (hand & back), so you go in slow to the next six. Conversely, if it is a slow six, the bells will be leading wrong (back & hand) so you go in quick at the next six.

You probably find it too hard to see how the bells are leading when you are in 4-5, and there is an easier way based on seeing who you follow on your first blow in 4ths, and on your first blow in 3rds. These two points are marked in the diagrams below. In a quick six you follow the same bell at these points (left) so you go in slow to the following six. In a slow six, you follow a different bell at these points (right) so you go in quick to the following six.



Going in slow



Going in quick

12 From the book

The column on the right shows Stedman Triples in 'Diary format' – the figures of a plain course with the line for the 7th, marked with the start points for the other bells.

The horizontal lines mark the boundaries between the slow and quick sixes.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7  (7)
2 1 3 5 4   6
2 3 1 4 5 6
3 2 4 1 6 5 7
2 3 4 6 1   5
2 4 3 1 6 5
4 2 3 6 1   5
4 3 2 1 6 5
3 4 2 6 1   5
4 3 6 2   1 5
4 6 3   2 5 1
6 4 3 2   1 5
6 3 4   2 5 1  (4)
3 6 4 2   1 5
3 4 6   2 5 1
4 3 7 6 5 2 1
3 4   5 6 1 2
3   4 6 5 2 1
  3 4 5 6 1 2
  4 3 6 5 2 1
4   3 5 6 1 2
  4 5 3 1 6 2
  5 4 1 3 2 6
5   4 3 1 6 2
5 4   1 3 2 6  (3)
4 5   3 1 6 2
4   5 1 3 2 6
7 4 1 5 2 3 6
4   1 2 5 6 3
4 1   5 2 3 6
1 4   2 5 6 3
1   4 5 2 3 6
  1 4 2 5 6 3
1   2 4 6 5 3
1 2   6 4 3 5
2 1   4 6 5 3
2   1 6 4 3 5  (2)
  2 1 4 6 5 3
  1 2 6 4 3 5
1   6 2 3 4 5
  1 6 3 2 5 4
  6 1 2 3 4 5
6   1 3 2 5 4
6 1   2 3 4 5
1 6   3 2 5 4
6 1 3   5 2 4
6 3 1 5   4 2
3 6 1   5 2 4
3 1 6 5 7 4 2  (5)
1 3 6   5 2 4
1 6 3 5   4 2
6 1 5 3 4 7 2
1 6 5 4 3 2
1 5 6 3 4   2
5 1 6 4 3 2
5 6 1 3 4   2
6 5 1 4 3 2
5 6 4 1 2 3
5 4 6 2 1   3
4 5 6 1 2 3
4 6 5 2 1   3  (6)
6 4 5 1 2 3
6 5 4 2 1   3
5 6 2 4 7 1 3
6 5 2   4 3 1
6 2 5 4   1 3
2 6 5   4 3 1
2 5 6 4   1 3
5 2 6   4 3 1
2 5   6 3 4 1
2   5 3 6 1 4
  2 5 6 3 4 1
  5 2 3 6 1 4  (1)
5   2 6 3 4 1
5 2   3 6 1 4
2 5 3 7 1 6 4
5 2 3 1   4 6
5 3 2   1 6 4
3 5 2 1   4 6
3 2 5   1 6 4
2 3 5 1   4 6
3 2 1 5 4   6
3 1 2 4 5 6
1 3 2 5 4   6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
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13 Useful tips for Stedman Triples

- In all dodges, the way you are going is at backstroke, with the reverse step at handstroke.
- Slow and quick alternate in a plain course.
- Quick bell always leads right.
- Every time you make a point, or a ‘slow’ place, it switches you between forward and backward hunting, so the slow work includes wrong and right leading.
- The bells on the back course each other (so you can see what you do relative to your course bells for a short while).
- You don’t have the same course bells throughout a course (unlike Grandsire and Plain Bob). If you go in quick, you come out again after only one six and ‘jump the queue’ compared with your course and after bells, which both go in slow for five sixes. Likewise if you go in slow, you course and after bell will go in quick and get ahead of you.

Further reading

Other books that you might find worth reading are:

Title	Author	Date	Publisher	Comment
The Learning Curve	John Harrison	2002, 2004, 2006, 2008	Central Council Publications	108 articles about learning and teaching ringing. Volume 3, Chapter 17 *Fitting together* is about Stedman. Also downloadable from: cccbr.org.uk/education/thelearningcurve/pdfs/200505.pdf
Learning Methods	Michael Henshaw	2000	Central Council Publications	Practical advice on the theory and practice of learning methods.
How to Learn Methods	Michael Foulds	2008	The Whiting Society	More practical advice on the theory and practice of learning methods.
Method Ringer’s Companion	Steve Coleman	1995	Sue Coleman	Hardback book giving detailed guidance and practical advice on learning and ringing many methods. Chapters on Stedman.

Space for your notes