



Surprise Major.

Following on from surprise minor, surprise major, taken a step at a time, is not as difficult as some people might think. And, when you have learnt your first Surprise major method, usually Cambridge, you will find that subsequent methods often use bits of work you already know, so you don't always have to learn everything entirely from scratch. Starting with Cambridge major, these notes assume that you are able to ring Cambridge minor (to know the method) and Treble-bob major such as Kent (for ropesight on eight bells with a treble-bob format). Looking at the entire blue line gives an overall view of the work in each method, but it is strongly advised that each method is learnt a lead at a time **by place bells**; this might take a little more time at first, but the advantages will be apparent later. And, when graduating to more advanced methods, don't forget to learn the simple things like where you pass the treble. Also, note where you meet your course bell and after bell in addition, of course, to dodging with them in 7-8. It can often be a good guide in moments of uncertainty!

These notes deal with the 'Standard Eight' Surprise Major methods, a useful collection for an advanced ringer's repertoire.

Cambridge Major.

Study the blue line and you will see how similar major is compared to minor:

- The frontwork is identical.
- The backwork is identical.
- The places are identical, but are now made in 3-4 **and** in 5-6.
- There are 2+1 dodges and 1+2 dodges, made at the back, as in minor.
- There is 'Lead and dodge', also 'Dodge and lead', as in minor.

In fact, the biggest difference is fitting in the extra places in 5-6.

To accommodate the method to eight bells there is also some dodging in 3-4 and 5-6 plus 'Treble-bobbing' at front and back.

So, here we go. Follow the blue line in the Diagrams book. ('Run through' = 'Don't dodge'.)

Seconds place bell.

Start as with minor, last part of the frontwork. Dodge 3-4 up, run through 5-6 to the 2+1 dodges, dodge 5-6 down becoming:

Sixths place bell.

Run through 3-4 to Lead and dodge, dodge 3-4 up, make 5-6 places up. Then 'Treble bob' in 7-8; on the first dodge you become:

Sevenths place bell.

Complete the treble-bob in 7-8, plain hunt down to the front (sometimes called 'Express bell'), treble-bob in 1-2, then make 3-4 places up. On the last dodge you become:

Thirds place bell.

Dodge 5-6 up, backwork as in minor, dodge 5-6 down and 3-4 down, becoming:

Fourths place bell.

The 3-4 down dodge is the start of places down; after the places you treble-bob in 1-2, then plain hunt up ('Express bell' again) to treble-bob in 7-8, becoming:

Eighths place bell.

Make 5-6 places down, dodge 3-4 down, dodge and lead. Run through 3-4 to dodge 5-6 up, becoming:



Fifths place bell.

Hunt up to 1+2 dodges in 7-8, run through 5-6, dodge 3-4 down to frontwork; making seconds place over the treble you become seconds place bell again.

Memorise the place bell order, **2-6-7-3-4-8-5** and think of this as a circle - you might start from any bell!

Some hints and tips. (But if they don't help, ignore them for now!)

- Learn where **not** to dodge; this is a possible source of mistakes.
Do not dodge in 5-6 before a 2+1 dodge or after a 1+2 dodge
Do not dodge in 3-4 before 'Lead and dodge' or after 'Dodge and lead'.
- During the places down phase; if you arrive on the front and are not sure whether to dodge and lead or to treble bob. If the bell you dodged with takes you from lead, **don't** dodge again! (Alternatively you can watch to see whether this bell makes seconds place over you; if it does you are 'Dodge and lead', so hunt up.)
- You always make the furthest set of places first. Making places up, the 5-6 places come before the 3-4 places. Making places down, the 3-4 places come before the 5-6 places.
- The blue line reverses in the middle of the backwork when you are thirds place bell. Because of this, Fifths place bell work is the reverse of seconds place bell work, Eighths place bell work is the reverse of sixths place bell work and Fourths place bell work is the reverse of sevenths place bell work. (The next four methods to be discussed, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Superlative and Pudsey, have the same place bell sequence, 2-6-7-3-4-8-5, so this pairing applies to them also.)

Calls.

Bobs are very similar to minor.

At bobs:

- If about to make 3-4 places down, **run in**, becoming seconds place bell.
- If about to make seconds place, **run out**, becoming thirds place bell.
- If finishing 3-4 places up, **make the bob**, becoming fourths place bell. As in minor, this means that you follow the places up with places down - no dodge in between.
- Bells above fourths place are **not affected**.

Singles are used sometimes; they can produce rounds on the treble's dodge after leading.

At singles:

- If making seconds place: you are **unaffected**. (You still become seconds place bell.)
- If finishing 3-4 places up: **make fourths place**, same as if a bob had been called. (You become fourths place bell.)
- If about to start 3-4 places down: **make thirds and out**. (You become thirds place bell.) Note that you **were** thirds place bell - you are thirds place bell again. So do all the backwork again!
- Above fourths place - you are **not affected**.

Cambridge, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Superlative and Pudsey have the same place bell sequence of 2-6-7-3-4-8-5. If a 'Half course' is called for in any of these methods you ring four leads which brings the handstroke lead of 1 3 2 5 4 7 6 8 and the call 'Plain Hunt' brings rounds as the next row. This is useful when there isn't time for a full course.



Yorkshire.

Study the blue line; Yorkshire has many similarities with Cambridge - thirds place bell work is identical! Some other points to note:

- Yorkshire frontwork (around the treble's lead) is much more simple. Dodge-lead-dodge with the treble, seconds place over the treble, dodge with the treble again, lead and dodge. 2 starts at the 'Seconds place'.
- The other pieces of frontwork in Yorkshire are, effectively, Cambridge frontwork split in two sections.
- Yorkshire places are half Cambridge places; in a plain course these places are made twice in 5-6 and four times in 3-4.
- The backwork is Cambridge.
- 2+1 and 1+2 dodges are the same as in Cambridge.
- Lead and dodge, also Dodge and lead occur, but not in the same places as in Cambridge.
- A new piece of work is the triple dodging in 5-6. (Count three backstrokes as you dodge.)

Learning the work by place bells:

Seconds place bell.

Last half of Yorkshire frontwork, (dodge-lead-dodge), dodge 3-4 up, **triple-dodge 5-6 up**, 2+1 dodges in 7-8, dodge 5-6 down becoming:

Sixth place bell.

Run through to lead, the frontwork here is Cambridge seconds place bell work, 'Dodge-lead-seconds-dodge-lead-dodge'. Run through 3-4 to 5-6 places up, treble-bob in 7-8. On the first dodge you become:

Sevenths place bell.

After the treble-bob in 7-8 run through 5-6 to 3-4 places down, dodge and lead, make 3-4 places up, becoming:

Thirds place bell.

As Cambridge! As you dodge 3-4 down you become:

Fourths place bell.

The dodge was the start of 3-4 places down, then lead and dodge, 3-4 places up, run through 5-6 to treble-bob in 7-8, becoming:

Eighths place bell.

5-6 places down, run through 3-4 to frontwork which is Cambridge fifths place bell work, 'Dodge-lead-dodge-seconds-lead-dodge'. Run through 3-4 to dodge 5-6 up, becoming:

Fifths place bell.

Hunt up to 1+2 dodges, triple-dodge 5-6 down, dodge 3-4 down to Yorkshire frontwork, becoming seconds place bell again.

Hints and tips department.

- The 3-4 places are made each side of dodge and lead, and lead and dodge.
- When sevenths place bell you dodge and lead.
- When fourths place bell you lead and dodge.
- **Don't dodge:** in 3-4 either side of the Cambridge frontwork bits, in 5-6 when running in to 3-4 places down (sevenths place bell), or when running out after 3-4 places up (fourths place bell.)
- Triple dodges in 5-6 occur before the 2+1 dodges and after the 1+2 dodges.
- Look at where you dodge with the treble when making places.



Calls.

Bobs are very much as Cambridge. Run in - become seconds place bell. Run out - become thirds place bell. Make the bob - become fourths place bell. (Remember it's 'short' places in Yorkshire!) And, similarly, for singles.

Lincolnshire.

Lincolnshire combines features of Cambridge and Yorkshire, so much of it will be familiar. It contains:

- Yorkshire frontwork and Cambridge backwork.
- Cambridge places in 5-6, Yorkshire places in 3-4
- 2+1 and 1+2 dodges, in the same places as Cambridge.
- Lead and dodge, also dodge and lead, but **not** the same as in Cambridge.

New work to learn includes:

- Lincolnshire places in 3-4, down and up. The places down are made by: Dodge 3-4 down, make thirds place, dodge 3-4 up, make fourths place, and in. Reverse this for places up. Study the blue line to see that these places are made down immediately before Yorkshire frontwork (when fifths place bell) and made up immediately after the Yorkshire frontwork (when seconds place bell).
- Five-pull dodging on the front, dodging down (lead last) when sevenths place bell, and dodging up (lead first) when fourths place bell.

Follow the blue line from the Diagrams:

Seconds place bell. Finish Yorkshire frontwork, Lincolnshire places in 3-4, run through 5-6 to the 2+1 dodges, dodge 5-6 down, becoming:

Sixth place bell. Run through 3-4 to **dodge and lead**, (opposite to Cambridge!) dodge 3-4 up, Cambridge places in 5-6 up, treble-bob in 7-8, on the first dodge becoming:

Sevenths place bell. Finish the treble bob, "express bell" to the five-pull dodge (lead last) on the front. Yorkshire places in 3-4 up, becoming:

Thirds place bell. Pure Cambridge - again! As you dodge 3-4 down you become:

Fourths place bell. Yorkshire places down, five-pull dodge (lead first) on the front, "express bell" to treble-bob in 7-8, becoming:

Eighths place bell. Cambridge places in 5-6 down, dodge 3-4 down, **lead and dodge**, run through to dodge 5-6 up, becoming:

Fifths place bell. 1+2 dodges in 7-8, run through to Lincolnshire places in 3-4, Yorkshire frontwork, becoming seconds place bell.

Bobs and singles are as Yorkshire. (Be sure of your place bells!)



Superlative.

This is a 'double' method; all the work done at the front is repeated in mirror-image from the back. It is Cambridge based and has the Cambridge place-bell sequence. Points to note:

- The backwork is Cambridge; the frontwork is Cambridge backwork reversed.
- The places are Cambridge **plus** an extra 'turning' place and dodge. This extra place may be at the start or at the end of the Cambridge places. This is further explained below. In Superlative the places **always** turn you round from hunting up to hunting down, or vice-versa. **Study these places closely.**
- New work is 2+5 and 5+2 dodges.

Following the blue line:

Seconds place bell. Finish the frontwork by dodging with the treble, lead, double dodge in 1-2. Dodge 3-4 up, 5-6 places, with the extra sixth (turning) place and dodge last. On the last dodge become:

Sixths place bell. Run through to 2+5 dodges at the front, "express bell" (plain hunt) to 5+2 dodges at the back. On the third dodge of the five become:

Sevenths place bell. Two more dodges in 7-8 (completing the five) followed by the two down dodges, run through to 3-4 places, making the dodge and thirds (turning) place first so that they become 'up' places. On the last dodge become:

Thirds place bell. As Cambridge - again! As you dodge 3-4 down become:

Fourths place bell. 3-4 down places, making the third (turning) place last, run out to 2+5 dodges at the back. On the third dodge of the five become:

Eighths place bell. Two more dodges in 7-8 (completing the five), "express bell" to 5+2 dodges at the front, run through to dodge 5-6 up, becoming:

Fifths place bell. The 5-6 dodge is the start of 5-6 places; make the sixth (turning) place first so that they become 'down' places. Then dodge 3-4 down to frontwork (Cambridge backwork reversed) where you become seconds place bell.

Hints and tips:

- Before and after frontwork, you **dodge** in 3-4; also before and after backwork you **dodge** in 5-6.
- Do **not** dodge in 3-4 or 5-6 immediately before 2+5 or immediately after 5+2 dodges.
- If you have come from frontwork or backwork to places, the turning place is **last**.
- If you have come from 5+2 dodges to places the turning place is **first**.

Bobs are as Cambridge. Again, make sure that you know your second- third- and fourth-place bells and, if you have made the bob, remember the final turning place of fourths place bell, so after these places you go **out!**



Pudsey.

As with the four methods so far discussed, the place bell sequence of Pudsey is the same as Cambridge. As a method it is similar to Cambridge, but has Yorkshire places plus some subtle twists that can trap the unwary.

Following the blue line:

Seconds place bell: Cambridge frontwork, dodge 3-4 up to **1+2 dodges** in 7-8, dodge 5-6 down to become:

Sixths place bell. The dodge is the start of 5-6 places down, then run through to treble-bob at the front, 3-4 places up, run through to another **1+2 dodges** at the back; on the first dodge become:

Sevenths place bell. Lay and double-dodge to finish the dodging in 7-8, 5-6 places down, dodge 3-4 down to a dodge and lead, **triple-dodge 3-4 up**; on the second dodge become:

Thirds place bell. Similar to Cambridge but start by making the last dodge of the triple-dodge in 3-4, dodge 5-6 up, backwork is similar to Cambridge but with **single dodges instead of double**. Dodge 5-6 down, **triple-dodge 3-4 down**, on the second dodge become:

Fourths place bell. Last dodge of the triple-dodge, Lead and dodge, dodge 3-4 up, 5-6 places up, **2+1 dodges** at the back, on the last dodge become:

Eighths place bell. Run through 5-6 to 3-4 places down, treble-bob at the front, run through 3-4 to 5-6 places up, becoming:

Fifths place bell. Another set of **2+1 dodges** at the back, run through 5-6, dodge 3-4 down, Cambridge frontwork, becoming seconds place bell.

Bobs are as for Yorkshire - remember, it's Yorkshire places.

Rutland, London, Bristol.

The remaining three methods to be discussed, Rutland, London and Bristol, complete the 'Standard Eight' Surprise major methods. These three are grouped separately because of their different place bell sequence, 2-3-5-7-8-6-4. For Rutland and London, sevenths place bell is the 'pivot'; eighths place bell work is the reverse of fifths place bell, sixths place bell work is the reverse of thirds place bell and fourths place bell work is the reverse of seconds place bell. (If you want to learn it this way.) Bristol is different again and will be discussed later.

Rutland is entirely 'forward' hunting, like the previous five methods, but with London and Bristol there is also reverse hunting with consequent leading (and laying) wrong.



Rutland.

Yorkshire frontwork and Yorkshire places will be familiar. Sevenths place bell has a frontwork of double-dodge, lead, double-dodge. (This lead is the 'pivot' where all the work reverses.) There is no special backwork. Something new is the 4-3-4 places or 'crankshafts', rather like Beverley except that after making these crankshafts you return to lead. Also, as well as 'Lead and dodge' we now have 'Lead and double-dodge', and the reverse.

Points worth noting:

- **Always** dodge in 5-6 except when sevenths place bell.
- **Do not** dodge in 3-4 except when making Yorkshire places.
- Remember the place bell order, 2-3-5-7-8-6-4.
- Note the sequence of the '2+1' dodging in 7-8: 2+1, 1+2, 2+1, 1+2.

Working from the blue line:

Seconds place bell. Finish Yorkshire frontwork, make 4-3-4 places ('crankshafts'), double-dodge in 1-2 and lead, 3-4 Yorkshire places up, becoming:

Thirds place bell. Dodge 5-6 up, 2+1 dodges at the back, dodge 5-6 down, lead and dodge, dodge 5-6 up, becoming:

Fifth place bell. 1+2 dodges at the back, dodge 5-6 down, **thirds and out**, 5-6 Yorkshire places up, treble-bob in 7-8, on the first dodge become:

Sevenths place bell. Finish the treble-bob, express bell (plain hunt) to the front, double-dodge, lead, double-dodge, express bell to treble-bob at the back, becoming:

Eighths place bell. 5-6 Yorkshire places down, **thirds and out**, dodge 5-6 up, 2+1 dodges at the back, dodge 5-6 down, becoming:

Sixths Place bell. Run in to dodge and lead, dodge 5-6 up, 1+2 dodges at the back, dodge 5-6 down, dodge 3-4 down, becoming:

Fourths place bell. The dodge is the start of 3-4 Yorkshire places down, then lead and double-dodge, crankshafts, and down to Yorkshire frontwork, becoming: **seconds place bell.**

Calls: As for Yorkshire.



London.

The notes for this method are written assuming that you can ring London minor, thus you already know London frontwork, Long London, fishtails, etc. Knowing the blue line for minor is a big step towards ringing major, but note:

- As well as the full London places we now have ‘half places’ consisting of a single place and a dodge (and the reverse); these happen in 5-6.
- The Stedman work (‘Short trousers’) is now split into two parts.
- As with London minor, much of the method involves reverse hunting with the consequent leading and laying ‘wrong’, so count places carefully!

From the Diagrams book, follow the blue line:

Seconds place bell. Finish London frontwork (as in minor), make fourths place and in to lead wrong, out to fifths place and dodge 5-6 with treble, fishtails in 7-8, hunt down to become:

Thirds place bell. Make thirds and out, fishtails in 5-6 then make fourths place and in to lead wrong, make sixths place and out to Long London (dodge first), hunt down to become:

Fifths place bell. Down to thirds place and in to a Stedman whole turn (lead right first), hunt up to make sixth place, treble-bob in 7-8, fishtails in 5-6 and out, lay wrong, becoming:

Sevenths place bell. 3-4 London places down, lead wrong, make fifths place and in, lead wrong, 3-4 London places up, become:

Eighths place bell. One more blow in eighths place (this is a lay wrong), fishtails in 5-6 and out to treble-bob in 7-8, make sixths place and in to a Stedman whole turn (lead wrong first), make thirds place on the way out to become:

Sixths place bell. Long London (dodge last), make sixths place and in to lead wrong, make fourths place and out to fishtails in 5-6, in to thirds place and out, becoming:

Fourths place bell. Fishtails in 7-8, dodge 5-6 with treble and make fifths place, in to lead wrong, make fourths place and in to London frontwork, becoming **seconds place bell**.

Note that the fifths place in the middle of the work of sevenths place bell is the pivot.

Bobs are similar to minor in that the bob is ‘Fourths and out’

At a bob:

Instead of:	You will now:	And you become:
Making seconds place over the treble,	Run out.	Thirds place bell. (Remember to make thirds place on the way out!)
Making thirds and out (after 5-6 fishtails as sixth place bell).	Make thirds and in .	Seconds place bell.
Making thirds and out (after 7-8 fishtails as seconds place bell).	Make fourths and out (making the bob).	Fourths place bell. (Which is out to 7-8 fishtails again.)

Bells above fourths place are not affected.



Bristol.

This method breaks new ground in many respects. It is a double method and also an 'Eighths place method'; eighths place is made as the treble leads instead of seconds place, thus there is no dodging at plain leads. Another feature of Bristol is that a bell will be working either in the front four places or in the last four places for long periods, interspersed with rapid dashes from front to back and back to front known as the 'Lightning work'. As Bristol is a double method any work done at the front is repeated in mirror-image at the back.

Note especially the 'Bristol' places which are made in 3-4 and in 5-6:



Look at the blue line start for thirds place bell; this is a 'treble-bob' in 3-4 followed by a thirds place and in. Turn this upside down and you have the 3-4 places made at the end of fourths place bell work.

Now turn it left-for-right (also upside down!) to give the places made in 5-6 by sevenths place bell and by eighths place bell. (Study the blue line!) So you have to learn these places four different ways, two from the front in 3-4 and two from the back in 5-6.

A useful guide is that the dodge between the two places is always with the treble and that the thirds place (sixths place in 5-6) is nearest the Stedman work, explained below.

From the Diagrams book, following the blue line:

Seconds place bell. This consists entirely of the frontwork: Dodge with the treble, lead right, double-dodge and lead wrong. 'Point fourths', lead right, point fourths, lead wrong. Double-dodge, lead right, dodge with the treble, become thirds place bell. **Learn this carefully** - because you will also be doing the same work, reversed, at the back.

Thirds place bell. Starts with Bristol places in 3-4, thirds place last. Make a Stedman whole turn on the front (lead wrong first), then another Stedman whole turn (reversed) in 3-4. That is, fourths place, point thirds, fourths place. Think of this pair of whole turns as the Stedman work. After this you start the 'Lightning work' with fishtails on the front, dodge 3-4 up and become:

Fifths place bell. Continue the lightning work by hunting up to a 'Point eighths' then down to fifths place and fourths place (both made wrong), point lead, dodge 5-6 up, fishtails at the back which ends the lightning work, start Stedman work in 5-6 (make fifths place 'wrong' first) and hunt up to become:

Sevenths place bell. Complete the Stedman work with a whole turn in 7-8, make places in 5-6 with the sixths place first followed by the 'treble-bob', then dodge with the treble in 7-8 which is the start of backwork - the reverse of frontwork. At the 'Lead right' in the middle, between the two 'point fifths', you become:

Eighths place bell. Complete the backwork, make Bristol places in 5-6, sixths place last, Stedman whole turn in 7-8 (Lay wrong first) then down to become:

Sixths place bell. Complete the Stedman work with a whole turn in 5-6, hunt up to start the lightning work with fishtails in 7-8, dodge 5-6 down, point lead, fourths and fifths places up, 'point eighths' and hunt down to become:

Fourth place bell. Complete the lightning work by dodging 3-4 down and fishtails at the front. Stedman work in 3-4 and 1-2, Bristol places in 3-4, thirds place first, then become seconds place bell.



- Always start the full Stedman work sequence with a wrong place. (But also remember that sevenths place bell and sixths place bell start by making the second of a pair of Stedman whole turns, so they start from rounds with right places.)

In this method seconds place bell is the pivot bell; observe that the pivot point is the 'lead right' in the middle of the frontwork; the other pivot point is the 'lay right' in the middle of the backwork, where sevenths place bell becomes eighths place bell. Thus with a place bell sequence of 2-3-5-7-8-6-4:

- Eighths place bell work is the reverse of sevenths place bell.
- Sixths place bell work is the reverse of fifths place bell.
- Fourths place bell work is the reverse of thirds place bell.
- Seconds place bell is the pivot bell.

(An eighths place method gives different pairings.)

Following the blue line, study the bells you meet and you will see that, in Bristol, much of the work is done in partnership with your course bell and your after bell, notably in the Stedman work with the associated 'points', likewise the double-dodging in the frontwork and backwork with the associated fishtails. Thus it really pays off to know your course bell and after bell.

Bristol bobs are usually made in fourths place; the bells below fourths place are not affected, the bells above dodge in pairs instead of plain hunting through the treble lead. This dodging causes the bells above fourths place to repeat the work of the previous lead, as in Kent. If you were fifths place bell up to the bob, the dodge at the bob will put you back into fifths place again, instead of becoming sevenths place bell.

If you are finishing your work as thirds place bell when the bob is called, finish the dodge and **make fourths place**, (the bob), becoming fourths place bell, and carry on from there.

If you are fourths place bell (about to become seconds place bell) or seconds place bell (about to become thirds place bell), when a bob is called you are **unaffected**.

As a change from the plain course, three consecutive bobs will bring rounds (as in Kent), giving a touch of 96, however this means that the ringers of 5, 6, 7 and 8 ring the same lead three times over and that 2, 3 and 4 never get above fourth place.

The 'Cambridge' half course ploy doesn't work with Bristol. To get a half-course call 'Plain hunt' as 8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 occurs halfway through the fourth lead, when the bells will plain hunt back to rounds, giving 120 changes.