



Call Changes.

When ringing call changes the conductor “calls” pairs of bells to change places with each other; they then ring in that sequence until the next call.

Before attempting call changes, get used to looking at ALL the other ropes as you are ringing. Unless the ropes in your tower are spaced unusually, you should be able to see all of them with little or no head movement. You will see later why this is important.

Next, as you ring rounds, as well as watching the rope you are following, notice the rope of the bell that (s)he is following, e.g. if you are ringing bell 3 you are following 2, and two is following 1 (treble). You will see that as you start to pull your handstroke treble has just finished pulling their handstroke. This is how you can identify the bell that is **two** places in front of you, regardless of what order the bells are ringing, and this is also important.

There are many different ways of calling; we shall look first at the system known as “Calling Up”, and these notes assume that you are ringing on five or six bells.

Note that each bell keeps its own number; if you are ringing “3”, the third bell in rounds, you are always “3” although you might move to a different “place”. In the following notes think of yourself as ringing 3. (For 5-bell towers disregard the figures “6”.)

Calling up.

This is the most usual way of calling changes.

To change the order of the bells from 1 2 3 4 5(6)

to 1 2 4 3 5(6)

the conductor will call “3 over 4” (or “3 after 4”) at a handstroke, and the bells affected change places on the next handstroke. 3 must “hold up” on this handstroke to give 4 time to pull in front. (4 must ring sooner and follow 2.)

4 is now “in thirds place” and 3 is now “in fourths place”.

When a bell is called “over” your bell you have to pull in or “check” your bell to ring one place sooner and you must now follow the bell that **was** two places in front of you

To show this, from rounds, 1 2 3 4 5 6

the call “2 over 3”, gives: 1 3 2 4 5 6

Here, 3 should know that 2 is following the treble (1) so, as 2 moves over 3, 3 moves down to follow 1. (In the early stages the conductor might add “3 after treble” to keep you right but, with practice, you will see this for yourself.)

Of course, after a few calls the bells may be ringing in any sequence. So it is important, after each call, to find who is two places in front of you. (Unless, of course, you are in seconds place or leading.)

Again starting from rounds, and you are ringing 3; if the call is “Treble over 2” (or sometimes it will be “Treble over 2 lead” to remind 2 to lead),



from 1 2 3 4 5 6
we now have 2 1 3 4 5 6.

You (3) are following 2 but on hearing the treble called over 2 you know that you will now follow the treble. However, **do not change the rhythm of your bell** because in this case you do not move up or down; you “stay in the same place” while the two bells in front of you change places.

That’s the basis of call changes; the most important thing to watch, as you gain experience, is not only to know which bell you are following, but also to know which bell they are following.

In summary, you may be affected in one of three ways:

- **You are called over another bell.** This is straightforward; hold up and follow that bell.
- **A bell is called over you** (say it’s 2). Check your bell to follow the bell that 2 **was** following.
- **A bell is called over the bell you have been following.** Follow the bell that has been “called over” - but do not hold up or check; just keep the same rhythm because you stay in the same place.

To ensure good striking in call changes it is necessary to change the pace of your bell for one pull only.

- If you are called ‘over’, hold up for the one handstroke pull then resume the normal ‘rounds’ rhythm.
- If a bell is called over you, pull sooner on the handstroke to ring one place sooner, but at the same time pull a little harder to re-balance your bell so as to resume the normal ‘rounds’ rhythm.
- The hallmark of good call changes is keeping an even rhythm as the bells change.

Listen for your bell!

You have been taught to count and listen, so that you can hear you own bell striking. In rounds, if you are ringing 3 you will always be “in thirds place” and you hear your bell on the count of “three”. But, ringing call changes (or when ringing method) your bell is constantly moving to a different “place”. Now, in order to hear your own bell you should be aware of which place you are in. When you have mastered the basics of call changes, start counting which place you are in after each call and listen for your bell in that place. (Remembering also that your bell always sounds as your hands move up past your face.)

**Calling down.**

In some towers this is the standard system of calling.

In this system, to change from 1 2 3 4 5 6
 to 1 2 4 3 5 6

the call is “4 to 2”. 3 has been following 2 but, if 2 is going to follow 4, 3 must hold up, to make space for it.

5 has been following 4 but, on hearing 4 called down, knows that another bell will take 4’s place. If you are watching who is following who you will have seen that 4 has been following 3 so, as 4 moves down 3 must move up.

When calling down is used it is useful to see who is following you, because this is the bell that can be called down in front of you.

Calling the changes.

Before attempting to call changes you must be able to see the order in which the ropes are falling. Equally, you should know the order in which they **should** be falling after each call so as to be able to correct any errors.

On six bells a useful starter is to call the bells from rounds (1 2 3 4 5 6) into “Queens” , (1 3 5 2 4 6). In some towers Queens is called “Thirds”.

From: 1 2 3 4 5 6
 Call “4 over 5” to give: 1 2 3 5 4 6
 Call “2 over 3” to give: 1 3 2 5 4 6
 Call “2 over 5” to give: 1 3 5 2 4 6

This is an easy sequence to remember, however, study how the bells move at each step when you are calling it.

Now to return to rounds. When calling up the easiest way to get rounds is to move the larger bells to the back in sequence until 5 is in its own place (or “Home”), then call 4 up until it is home, and so on. To do this you must be able to see who is following who, calling the “target” bell up one place at a time until it comes into its own (“home”) place.

Thus to return from Queens to rounds, start by calling 5 up over each bell in turn until 5 is “home”, (in fifths place).

From: 1 3 5 2 4 6
 Call “5 over 2” to give: 1 3 2 5 4 6
 Call “5 over 4” to give: 1 3 2 4 5 6 (4 & 5 are now “home”.)
 Call “3 over 2” to give 1 2 3 4 5 6.

Calling the larger bells up is the easiest way of returning to rounds if you are calling up; calling the little bells down is easiest if you are calling down.

Bell Ringing by Instalments

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On five bells, from rounds, 2 4 1 3 5 sounds similar to Queens on six bells:

From:	1 2 3 4 5
Call "Treble over 2" to give:	2 1 3 4 5
Call "3 over 4" to give:	2 1 4 3 5
Call "Treble over 4" to give:	2 4 1 3 5.

To return to rounds call 4 up to fourths place; now 3-4-5 are home. Now call 2 over treble. You can work out your own sequences for other callings. "Tittums" on 6 is 1-4-2-5-3-6, and Steve Coleman's book gives lots of other examples such as "Hagdyke" and "Kings".

Useful sequences on eight:	Queens	1 3 5 7 2 4 6 8	
	Kings	7 5 3 1 2 4 6 8	(or 1 7 5 3 2 4 6 8)
	Tittums	1 5 2 6 3 7 4 8	
	Whittingtons:	1 2 7 5 3 4 6 8	



Raising and Lowering in Peal.

Good raising and lowering in peal might well be considered the ultimate in bell control. In preparation for this it is necessary to learn to raise and lower a single bell (preferably a tied bell!). Then learn how to “chime” the bell, making it sound while swinging in a small arc; this is essential at the start of a raise and at the end of a lower. Raising, lowering and chiming is best taught by demonstration and practice; attempting to describe it can be confusing.

The following notes are intended for learners who can raise and lower a bell unaided, especially that they can confidently take up coils during the lower. Raising and lowering in peal should not be attempted until this skill has been achieved.

Consider two basic facts:

- The **only** control you have for timing the strike of your bell is the height to which you swing it; until a bell reaches the balance it can only swing in its own “natural” time. So, if you find that you are closing in on the bell in front of you, swing your bell a little higher; if you are striking wide you may have to check slightly. (More will be said about corrections later.)
- **All errors are cumulative**, meaning that you must correct errors immediately they happen - or they will build up and in a few swings you might be too far out of place to do much about it. Thus **listening** is vital throughout.

Two more important points before you start practising:

- Don't try to make large corrections, at least until you have gained experience. Make small corrections and listen for results. You keep better control this way.
- Small bells have to be swung higher than big bells to keep the same timing; this is especially important at the start of a raise and the end of a lower. Look at the ropes while the bells are chiming; the treble will have quite a large rope movement while the tenor rope movement is quite small.

When learning, lowering in peal usually seems easier than raising, possibly because there is less physical effort.

Lowering in Peal.

The start of any good lower is good, rhythmic rounds. This is our “baseline” to work from. At first you will probably be ringing one of the smaller bells - but not the treble!

On the command “Downwards” the smaller bells should **not** start to lower immediately; they should ring closer to each other, giving the back bells room to start lowering. Then, gradually, as the ringing gets faster, you will find that you need to “check” your bell sooner to keep in time.

It is at this point, when all the bells are ringing short of the balance, that good bell control becomes vital. Remember that now it is the height to which you swing your bell that controls your striking. One classic comment (often quoted by Bill Collins) is that “The only way to ring a bell down is to keep it up” - meaning that it is easier to check a bell that is a little too high than to raise one that is too low. Always be sure that your bell is high enough; “fine tuning” your pulls can come later.



A potential crisis is when you take up the first coil. Don't do this too soon because, if you have insufficient rope free, you will drag the bell down and out of place (and errors are cumulative!). Making sure that you have sufficient rope free, make the first coil as small as possible; wrap the rope closely round your hand. You can then feed more rope into the coil as needed. Similarly, when making the next coil, don't take up too much rope; many ringers pull a little rope out of the first coil when making the second coil.

As the bells come lower the tenor will cease to strike "both strokes"; it strikes and misses alternately. For an experienced band this is a signal to check harder, bringing all the bells down until they are all chiming. The sooner this can be done the better, but it is not easy at first.

At this stage the tenor should be swinging in a small arc, although the smaller bells will still have a considerable swing. To get a good finish to a lower it is essential to bring the back bells down to the minimum swing possible. Keep hold of the sally at a comfortable height, pull hard enough to be able to check and still keep the bell swinging. If you finish with "Three - miss - and catch" **don't** check on the "miss", but check hard on the "catch", so as to stop your bell "dead". If you don't succeed in this, don't check again; let your bell come to rest on its own. This way you may avoid the odd "dong" after everyone else.

As with all ringing, raising and lowering is a team effort. A team must have a leader; for raising and lowering this is the treble. However, the treble must be guided by the tenor, which is the slowest bell to raise and to lower. In lowering, the treble ringer must listen and keep a suitable gap from the tenor, whilst the tenor ringer concentrates on lowering at a steady, controllable pace. The other bells must "fit into" the remaining space; **each ringer should listen to the bell behind as much as to the bell in front.** Thus if the tenor is clipping the fifth, fifth should pull in a little, which sends a message to fourth, and so on. It isn't on for the tenor to have to pull up during a lower. Equally, if there is too much gap between fifth and tenor then fifth should hold steady for one or two pulls. Many striking faults during lowering are caused by wide striking on the middle bells, so keep close. The ringer of the second has a particular responsibility, as in rounds, because the following bells tend to take their time from the gap between treble and second.

Before moving on to raising, a situation that can happen is where you are striking too wide by the same amount every time. This means that you are swinging your bell to the correct height - or else your striking would vary. So, when you check your bell to close the gap, pull a bit harder as well to restore your bell back to where it was or you will find that a couple of pulls later you will be clashing with the bell in front. (Think about it!) Obviously the reverse is true; if you are consistently too close, pull harder to widen the gap, but be prepared to check afterwards so that you don't go progressively wider.

Raising in Peal.

As with lowering, the treble is the team leader, but the tenor is the controlling bell. At the start of a raise the first essential is to get the bells chiming in rounds. To do this the smaller bells need to be rung maybe a third of the way up, while the tenor is still swinging in a small arc. The treble should be rung high enough to leave a considerable gap in the striking at this stage. Some points to watch:



- Except for the leading gap just mentioned all bells must strike very close or they won't all strike before the tenor. This tempts the tenor to swing higher - which makes the treble go higher - and we have a "chasing your own tail" situation. We **must** have all bells chiming rounds at the start of the raise. This timing should be dictated by the tenor.
- Except for treble and tenor, listen to the bell after you as well as the bell before you to make sure that you are striking close enough for the back bells to fit in.

When all bells are chiming and the tenor starts to swing higher concentrate on keeping your bell in place; it is better to pull slightly too hard and have to check a little than have your bell fall short; as with lowering, fine-tuning your pulling will come only with practice.

Up till now all bells have been sounding "single strike", but at some point the treble will strike on both sides. If enough gap has been left this second strike will sound immediately after the tenor, so the bells will sound:

1 2 3 4 5 6 1 - - - -1 2 3 4 5 6 1 - - - -1 2 3 etc.

As the bells rise higher more join in the second strike until all bells are sounding on both sides and we have full rounds on both strokes. It is the treble ringer's responsibility to keep the treble sounding correctly after the tenor so that all bells fit in smoothly at this stage. Everyone should keep firm control of their bell, **taking care not to be caught with a slack rope** through letting out too much - ensure that each upswing takes your hands well above your head.

Through the second half of the raise the striking should become progressively wider. As always, the ringer of the second has a special responsibility for setting the "gap" because the bells following tend to set the same gap.

When the treble comes up to the balance the tenor may not be much more than halfway up. The treble ringer, and the following bells in turn, must now be careful not to over-balance, which makes for late striking - and the back bells can't hold up yet! As your bell gets nearer to the balance less strength is needed to raise it the last bit, so don't be caught out by your bell going "over the top" unexpectedly. As the back bells ring higher the striking must "open out" to match.

Eventually, when all the bells are up, "Stand" is called. This is usually left to the treble ringer and can be the subject of eye-contact or sign-language between tenor and treble. It seems so much easier if the tenor ringer were to call "Stand" - - but maybe that is too logical.

When a band can raise in peal with confidence there are some variations that may be tried. These seem to have originated with West-country call-change ringers, where raising and lowering has been developed to a fine art, and is included in their striking contests.

1. Swing the bells twice round without checking (hence no sound); next time round check only the treble, next time 1 and 2, then 1, 2 and 3 - and so on.
2. Swing the bells two or three times round without checking then, on a signal from the treble ringer, check them all to strike in rounds. This is a very effective start, but it works best on lighter rings.