

Why do people say Yorkshire's easier than Cambridge?

When I was first told to learn Yorkshire Major after ringing Cambridge I remember it looked totally illogical and I wondered how I'd ever remember it. Those funny 3-4 places in 4ths & 7ths place bell were a blinking nuisance! Eventually I picked up information bit by bit and then when I started ringing it on higher numbers things started to become clear and I suddenly understood why everyone kept saying it was easier than Cambridge. So here are my tips/explanations. You'll find it easier to follow them with a course of Yorkshire S Major, Royal and Maximus in front of you.

Key points

- There are two series of Yorkshire places. One incorporates a dodge with the treble (I call these "t places"), the other doesn't ("non-t places").
- T-places are made in every internal dodging position, ie not in 1-2 and not at the back.
- Non-t places are made in 1-2 (see 6ths place bell) and every internal position EXCEPT the highest one
- In both cases the places move 1 dodging position each lead.
- You only ever dodge with your course or after (c/a) bell at the front or back – NEVER in the inside positions. To see this more clearly trace over the paths of a bell and its course/after bells in different colours, say 2 (blue) with 3 (green) and 4 (black).

In the first half of the course of Surprise Maximus, starting with 2nds place bell

There are t-places in

9-10 up
7-8 up
5-6 up
3-4 up

In each case there is NO dodge in the position immediately *before* the places (note that the dodge/lead before 3-4 places is a missed dodge in 1-2). If you DID dodge in any of these places, it would be with your course bell (it is making places) and you know you NEVER dodge with it except on the front and back – if you don't know your course/after bells (eg after a call, or you've simply forgotten), you can pick up this info by noticing who you dodge with in the treble bob on the front and back and also at the back in 2^{nds}/3^{rds}/5^{ths} place bells.

The non-t-places are in

1-2 down
3-4 down
5-6 down
7-8 down
(NOT in 9-10)

The 'Cambridge front work' in 6th/8ths place bells is a set of Yorkshire places even though it doesn't really seem like it. In each case you miss the dodge before these too; here your c/a bell and the treble get in the way. This is why there is no dodge in $\frac{3}{4}$ at the start of 6ths place bell.

So in this half of the course, starting from 6ths place bell, to back up knowledge of the blue line which is the primary tool, I use mainly these rules:

- after leaving the front in 6th place bell:
 - Treble bob up until you meet your course bell.
 - Omit that dodge as you run through the course bell's places and dodge with the treble in the next position & make places. Your course bell then runs through your places.
 - Continue treble bob hunting up to the back to where your course bell will be waiting for you and down until you meet your course bell again.
 - Run through its places passing both it and the treble and then make your places & continue treble bob hunting. Notice the course bell running through your places.

Continue doing this through 10ths, 11ths and 7ths place bells. Finally you dodge & lead, missing a 1-2 dodge before your $\frac{3}{4}$ places which end at the start of 3rds place bell. That's how you remember if it's lead/dodge or dodge/lead.

In the other half of the course, starting with 4ths place bell.

Your after bell helps you, but you do need to keep a little more awake as the cue to make places isn't as clear as in the first half of the course. In 4ths place bell you

- make t-places in 3-4,
- then miss the next dodge (that's why you do lead/dodge instead of treble bob) &
- then do non-t-places in the *last but one* internal dodging position, ie 7-8 up, missing the dodge afterwards, instead passing the treble & running through your after bell's places.

The sequence continues similarly – the reverse of the 1st half of the course. Notice that you can tell when to do the t-places, because when you dodge in the position just before them your last blow is over the treble. There isn't anything so obvious that tells you when to do the non-t-places in this half of the course – but it's useful to remember that they start in the penultimate internal dodging position and move one step nearer the front each lead. You may find it's helpful to count the no of dodges you do before the places and reduce that by one for each lead eg in 4ths pb you dodge in 3/4, 5/6 & do 7/8 places, so you've dodged twice. The next run up it's one dodge & places 5/6 & finally it's no dodges & places 3/4.

A tip which may or may not help is that if you look at the line from 4ths place bell you pass through 4 possible opportunities to dodge as you go round the front, then do places (1-2, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, places 7-8). You then pass through 5 possible places to dodge as you go round the back, then do places (9-0, E-T, E-T, 9-0, 7-8, places 5-6).

Place Bells

I originally didn't know my place bells – I found learning them made life a lot easier. We all get thoroughly lost sometimes (so don't worry about it) and then the important thing is to be able to get right again with the help given. When people put you right they tell you what pb you are and that immediately lets you know which part of the blue line you're on – from there all the info above gets you back on track really fast. You may think the place bell sequence looks a bit odd and that you'll just have to remember it – not so, there is a pattern. Plain bob's is 2-4-6-8-0-T-E-9-7-5-3. In Yorkshire (& Cambridge, Lincolnshire & many others) you move on to the next-but-one pb in this sequence – 2-6-0 etc. In Bristol you move on to the next but two, ie 2-8-E etc, but that's another story.

Personally I also have some fixed things in my mind, including that 8ths place bell on any stage starts with 5-6 places, and 12ths place bell starts 7-8 places. The set of places I tend to miss if any is the non-T set in 3-4 up in 12ths places bell – dunno why – it's just me so I try to highlight it in my mind.

Even if you can't do it yet, you will find that you become able to pick out seeing/hearing the treble lead. This can be a great aid if your concentration has slipped (and it will). You wake up and find you're heading for the back – that's all you know. HELP! You're probably about to become 9,10, 11 or 12ths place bell, but you've no idea which one, or even if you're going towards 3rds pb or towards 2nds pb. If you can identify the lead end, you'll pick up where you are and nobody will know you've been lost! You could mutter to the ringer next to you "where's the lead end?" to elicit the same information if you can't see it yourself.

Why do course/after bells help?

The bells work in pairs

- the pair dodges together on the front
- the 1st one leaves and on its way to the back makes places
- the 2nd one follows and runs through the middle of these places (missing its dodge)
- the 2nd one stops and makes its own set of places while the 1st one runs through these
- the 1st arrives at the back followed by the 2nd
- they then dodge.

Seeing other bells so you know who you're working with

You'll quickly become aware that you meet not just your c/a bells, but *all* the other bells in a regular sequence (coursing order) and this helps with ropesight tremendously. Calls of course affect the sequence of only 3 bells at a time – on six that's over half of the working bells, so the overall impact is great – on 12, three bells is a very small number and it's worth noting that the bells affected are normally selected from 2-6, so 7 onwards will stay in the same relative sequence all the time. A point to be aware of is that when you

are hunting up/down in 2nds/5ths place bells the bells will come at you in a different order from the rest of the course. It's just that each pair is reversed! Don't let it unsettle you – be ready for it!

A note about “big bobs”, something you may encounter on higher numbers

Many conductors choose to use these to get better music in the composition. They're a bit daunting if you've never heard of them until 5 mins before a peal they're going to be used in, or worse until a conductor shouts “big bob” assuming the band all knows what they are!

The standard bob in a 2nds place method like Yorkshire has someone make the bob in 4ths place (we call that a 14 bob). The standard single is 1234. A big bob in Maximus is 18, ie someone makes the bob in 8ths place.

Let's see what this means by looking first at Plain Bob – Yorkshire's coursing order is identical, but I find it easier to think in Plain Bob as the complex work is removed just leaving a skeleton for clarity. In Major you're used to there being some calls at the “Before” position, ie when the tenor will run out and the 7th will run in while someone makes 4ths over them. In terms of coursing order (c/o) people often think the before has a different effect from calls at other positions – that's not the case. It can't be if you think about it as there are still bells running in, out & making the bob. Plain course c/o is normally thought of as 53246 no matter how many bells are being rung. Bobs cause three bells to rearrange in the pattern ABC becomes BCA. A is the bell that made the bob and it “jumps” over the other two, who stay in the same position relative to each other. You'll see information that tells you a Before causes the last bell in the sequence to move to the front, ie 53246 becomes 65324. Yes that does happen – but let's see that it's the same ABC→BCA. If you write down the c/o of ALL the bells, starting with the 6th, in the plain course it'll be 6875324. Now apply that transformation to 687. The result is 8765324. Can you see that the 6th has jumped over 8 & 7? Why leave 8&7 out of the things normally? All the calling positions are established relative to the 8ths position & the 7th is normally kept coursing with it (“tenors together”) so for simplicity they're left out, leaving the conductor to keep in memory only the c/o of the “affected” bells. Hence “the last bell goes to the front” is a very helpful (and accurate) way of noting the effect of a bob at Before on those bells.

When you move up to Maximus, the same thing applies except that if you call a 4ths place bob at Before, ALL the bells except 11 & 12 will be mixed into the coursing order. It is usually preferred (for music and stability) that the bells from 7 – 12 stay together. So if we want to change 54246 into 65324, we need the 6th to jump over the lot of them, not just over 11 & 12. So, while 11 & 12 are running in/out to 2nds/3rds place bells, 9&10 and 7&8 are ALSO running in and out, while the 6th makes 8ths over them.

What's the impact on the ringer? If you're above 8ths place you are totally unaffected. If you were going to dodge in 7-8 at the lead end to become 7ths pb, you make 8ths & become 8ths pb. Remember that causes symmetry – you are going to go into reverse and go back along the blue line you just rang & that can alleviate a moment's panic while you find your feet. (This incidentally is true of making 3rds at singles as well should you meet one unprepared. The method in which this can cause chaos is London, take a look at it). Finally, what happens to 8,9,10,11 & 12? Instead of dodging at the lead end (everyone above 2nds does at a plain lead), they all plain hunt two blows. Eg instead of dodging 56 down to become 6ths pb, you'd carry on down to become 4ths pb.

In Plain Bob that's easy – because you can then just plain hunt until the next lead end when you dodge wherever you happen to be & you're probably unaware of what place bell you are. In Surprise it's no different, but it is essential to know your place bells as you must know where in the blue line you've been shifted to & what your next work is. You'll need to pick up who your c/a bells are if they have changed too.

Heather