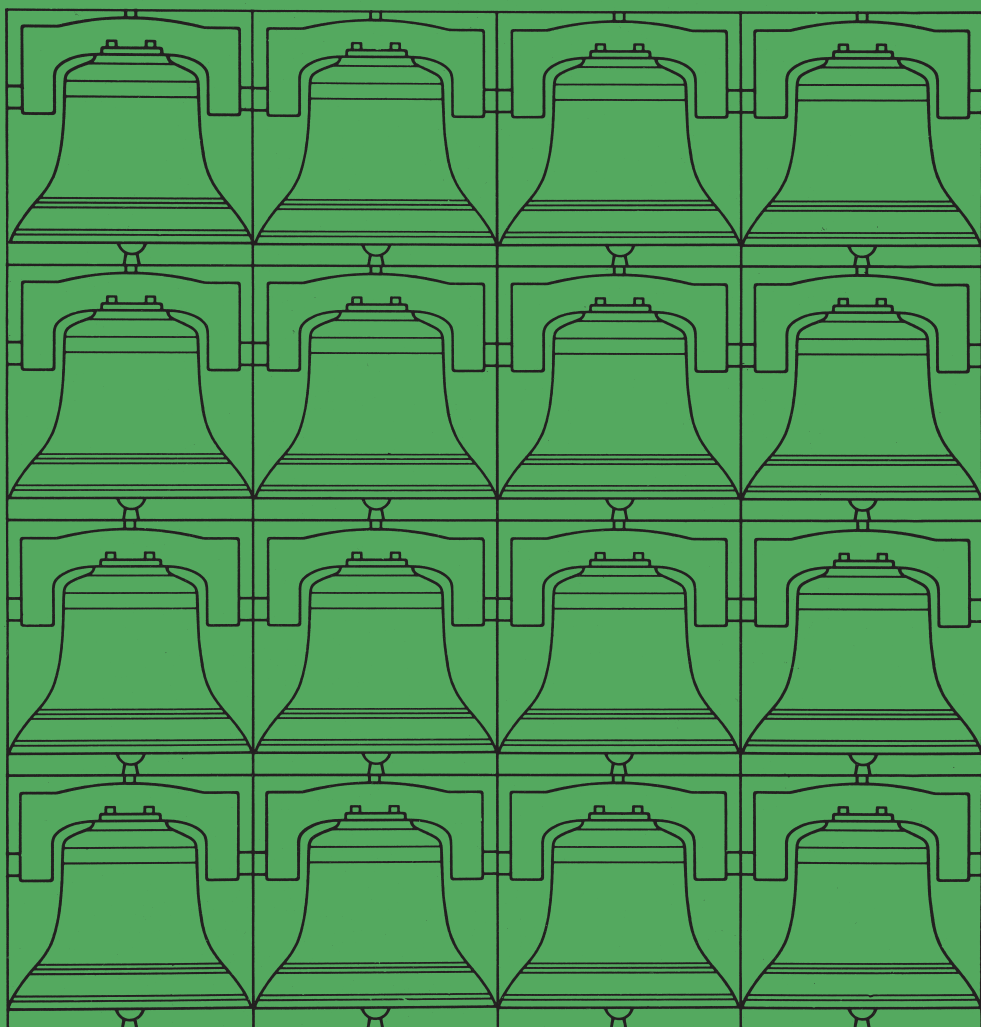


# Place Notation



A Central Council publication

## SUMMARY

This leaflet is written to give a starting point to ringers wishing to understand the basic principles of place notation. It starts with an outline of how methods work and how places affect a method, it goes on to explain some of the ways place notation is written down and how it can be transformed into a “blue line”. The fundamentals of ringing by place notation are given, together with some methods that might be attempted.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	2
Change Ringing	3
Place Notation	5
Ringling by Place Notation	8

# PLACE NOTATION

## UNDERSTANDING PLACE NOTATION

by

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### INTRODUCTION

As late as 1956, when it was an event to ring a new method, a half lead of any new method was printed in the Ringing World. Only a half lead and the lead end/head were printed because all the work of a method is contained in a half lead. The lead end/head can be changed to produce another method, so this has also to be given to define the method.

It is as well that a type of shorthand called place notation was introduced or it seems that by now we would have pages of half leads of methods in the Ringing World each week. Seeing place notation written down often gives rise to the question, how does it work? That question is then followed by: is it any help at all to someone who wishes to ring and not play with figures?

Answering the last question first, it can be a great help in practical ringing since the more systems used by a ringer the better. Also it is quite possible to ring solely by place notation if you are prepared to give it a try and work nearly as hard as you have with your present techniques. However for most ringers place notation will remain just a shorthand way of writing down methods, but it must be understood even for that, so on to the question of how it does work.

# PLACE NOTATION

## CHANGE RINGING

### BASICS

To start to understand how place notation works we must look back at what we know about change ringing and build up on that. Change ringing is made up of just three elements, hunting, dodging and place making. All methods are made up of these three operations mixed together in various ways. To ring a method one must be able to do all three with reasonable accuracy and ease. Which of these then is the most important?

### HUNTING

Plain hunting is moving one place further up to the back, or down to the front, in subsequent changes. If we don't plain hunt we don't get anywhere to dodge or make a place, so plain hunting can be considered the prime mover. Fig.1 shows a half lead of plain hunting.

B 123456  
H 214365  
B 241635  
H 426153  
B 462513  
H 645231  
B 654321

It should be remembered that it is possible to hunt forwards or backwards. NO! backward hunting does not mean down to the back and up to the front. It means that when hunting up to the back all handstrokes are in odd places and hunting down to the, front they are in even places. This is just the opposite to forward hunting.

PLAIN HUNT  
Fig.1

## PLACE NOTATION

Fig.2 shows a half lead of backward hunting.

It should be noted at this point that most, ringers do not know or care whether they are forward or backward hunting, but it is worth remembering that the two ways do exist.

B	123456
H	132546
B	315264
H	351624
B	536142
H	563412
B	654321
H	645231

## DODGING

Dodging is the technique of stepping back one place in the progression of plain hunting.

Dodging is usually learned next after plain hunting. Because of this many ringers feel that dodging is the most important and places take second place. In reality however this is not the case since if it were not for a place being made somewhere there would be no dodging. Fig. 3 is an example of seconds place being made and causing the pairs of bells in 3-4 and 5-6 to dodge.

536142  
351624  
315264  
132546  
135264  
312546  
321456  
234165

## SECONDS PLACE

Fig-3

## BACKWARD HUNTING

Fig.2

If seconds had not been made the bells would have had to hunt and rounds would have occurred. Places now take on a quite different aspect, they govern where dodges occur and thereby control the whole method.

## PLACES

Making a place should be an easy operation since it consists of remaining in the same position for two consecutive changes.

## PLACE NOTATION

However things are seldom as simple as they seem. There are two sorts of places, right and wrong. This does not mean correct and incorrect, it means that a right place is made at handstroke and backstroke whilst a wrong place is back and hand. Again many ringers, especially in the early stages, are not over concerned if the places are right or wrong, but eventually wrong places do have a considerable effect on the difficulty of the method.

123456  
214365  
124635  
216453  
261435  
624153  
621435  
264153  
624513  
265431  
256413  
524631  
256431

SURPRISE  
MINOR  
Fig.4

## PLACE NOTATION

### BASICS

For the sake of brevity and ease of understanding, the rest of this paper will deal mainly with right places only, except where stated. They are more easily explained and demonstrate fully the use of place notation.

First a few basic facts about places:

- (a) they must always occur in pairs.
- (b) Each set of places will be separated from the previous set of places by a condition where all the pairs of bells swap or cross.

Fig.4 shows a half lead of surprise minor. It will be seen that for the first change after rounds all the bells have hunted one place, that is: all pairs have crossed.

## PLACE NOTATION

Remember that the backstroke row of rounds at the start of a method is part of a lead end/head which must have contained some places. To get the third change thirds place has been made and sixths place has had to be made to pair up with it . For the fourth change all bells cross. The fifth change is obtained by fourths place being made and a lead to pair with it, then again all bells cross. This shows clearly that leading and lying are places and important ones. The term EXTERNAL PLACES is used for leading and lying, all other places being termed INTERNAL PLACES.

It is useful to remember these two types of places. This is because sometimes only internal places are given and since places occur in pairs. an external place is implied. By inspecting the rows it will also become clear that if an internal place is odd it must be accompanied with a lie and if the internal place is even it must have a lead with it.

## WRITING OUT

The most common use of place notation is for writing out methods. The system is very logical in concept but there are a few variations in techniques and symbols used. In this section Fig.4 will be used as a reference and the various techniques will be investigated.

As explained in the previous section the first change is produced by all pairs crossing or all the bells plain hunting. This transition is denoted by an “x” or a “-”, other symbols are occasionally used but these two are the most common.

## PLACE NOTATION

The next transition, produced by the thirds and sixths, can also be written in one of two ways. If the external places are included then it will appear as “36”, otherwise just as “3” which intimates an external sixths. Next will be “x” or “-” again and then “14” or just “4”. Following this system we get to the half lead which is a “56”. Writing this out in both ways shows just how different they can appear.

(a) x36x14x12x36x14x56.

(b) -3-4-2-3-4-5.

Various combinations of these systems are often used.

The only remaining information required to fully define the method are the lead end/head places. In this case “12” will give Cambridge whilst “16” will give Primrose.

One important fact to realise is that you have only got a half leads worth of places. To get the full lead, repeat the places, other than the half lead, backwards and add the lead end/head. A full lead of Cambridge will then be:

X36x14x12x36x14x56x14x36x12x.14x36x12

When a method has wrong places following right places there will be no cross between them. It is important to show that the places refer to consecutive rows and this is done by separating the places with a full stop. London minor will then appear as:

36x36 . 14x12x36 . 14x14 . 36



## PLACE NOTATION

### WRITING OUT

To write out a method given the place notation it is best to use squared paper and first of all write in the rounds at the top. Do not write in the squares but on the vertical lines. Now write the place notation vertically downwards about one square to the left of the leading bell column and in the squares. Fig.5 shows this type of layout. The places can be drawn in using the vertical lines of the squares under their place and opposite their notation. Next lightly fill in the crosses. Finally when you are sure the pattern is correct fill in with figures or lines as required.

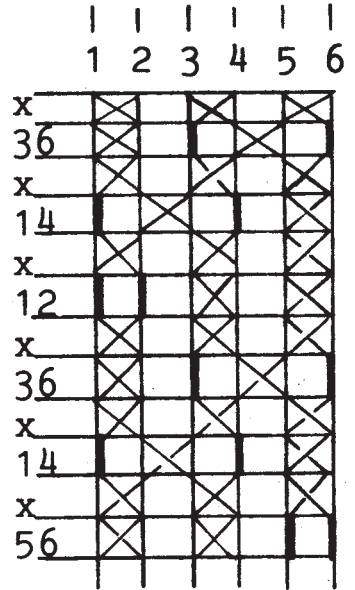


Fig.5

### RINGING BY PLACE NOTATION

#### GENERAL

With practice it is possible to ring by using place notation only and not know the "blue line" at all. It is advisable however, to use place notation as an additional system of ringing. It is very easy to learn a method in place notation and there is no difficulty with starts but it is very difficult to get right after a trip, unless the conductor is able to call out the places.

## PLACE NOTATION

Methods with right and wrong places call for considerable mental dexterity, but for right place methods ringing by place notation is well worth practising.

### PRACTICAL

First of all it is essential to have mastered plain hunting which will enable you to perform all the crosses without thinking of which way to go. After this Plain Bob is a good method to start with when thinking about place notation. The lead end/head of plain bob demonstrates one of the basic rules of place notation ringing. Take the bell making seconds ( Fig.3 ), it must have a bell making a place somewhere to pair with it.

1234567890ET  
2143658709TE  
2413567890ET  
4231658709TE  
4326157890ET

DODGE ABOVE  
EVEN PLACES

Fig.6

In this case it must be the treble as defined by the method. To prevent a repeat change the only thing the bells above the place can do is dodge. This clearly applies to any number of bells. If a bob had been called and fourths made, ignoring for a moment the bells below the place the bells above are affected in the same way. i.e. they must dodge. Fig.6 shows how an even place affects the bells. This gives the first rule:- ALL BELLS ABOVE AN EVEN PLACE DODGE.

The work under an even place is purely plain hunting. This can be seen by looking at plain hunting on any even number of bells.

## PLACE NOTATION

The even place is made by the bell lying behind and a lead is made to pair with it. Wherever the even place is made it is of no consequence to the bells below it, they will be plain hunting.

1234567890  
2143658709  
1246385079  
2164830597  
1246803957

DODGE BELOW  
ODD PLACE

Fig-7

Odd places work in the same way but in reverse. Fig.7 shows a method with an odd place being made. There are an even number of bells below the place therefore they must dodge together whilst the bells above plain hunt. The bell lying at the back pairs up with the place making bell. This gives the second rule which is :- BELLS BELOW AN ODD PLACE DODGE.

These two rules are sufficient to enable one to ring many minor and major methods.

There are, however, methods that have two or more internal places, how do the above rules affect these? Double Norwich Court Bob Major has the following place notation x14x36x58x18 with a lead end/head of "18". The two rules easily cover the "14" and "58" but what about the "36"? The rules still apply. The bells below an odd place and above an even place must dodge. The bells between the places behave as any bells between an odd and even place, they plain hunt. Beware, in theory this is quite simple, but in practice it can catch you out. Methods like Cambridge major have two internal places which require matching with external places giving a "1258".

## PLACE NOTATION

Although the basic rules still hold they are more difficult to apply. Looking again at the place notation of DNCBM it will be seen that the half and full lead places are “18” which indicates plain hunt for four changes at these points.

So far only dodging and hunting have been dealt with, the operation of place making has not been discussed. Quite clearly, from the nature of right places, IF at handstroke YOU ARE IN ANY PLACE THAT HAS TO BE MADE then at backstroke you must be in the same place i.e. you MAKE IT. From that position you will hunt in the appropriate direction, and may make the next place as well. Few methods have more than two blows in one place, the bob in Kent is an exception but then it has wrong places as well.

### SUMMING UP

The four basic rules can be stated as follows:

- (1) If you are above an even place, dodge.
- (2) If you are below an odd place, dodge.
- (3) If you are in the place to be made, make it.
- (4) Otherwise, plain hunt.

These rules hold for all methods but to start with be careful of methods with more than one internal place.

## PLACE NOTATION

### STARTING PLACE NOTATION

If you are thinking of having a go at ringing by place notation then you might try Double Court Minor as a starter. This method has a readily remembered place notation which can be easily reversed and with plenty of hunting. It may help if the conductor calls out the places for a while, until the ringers get familiar with the system. This will only be a help if the calls are put in at the right time, any deviation will be worse than having no conductor. On tower bells more than one ringer at a time can try the system, but it is best if not everyone starts at once. On handbells starting one ringer at a time is probably best. This gives a good chance of getting through a course and quickly gaining experience. If ringing Double Court and the third is chosen (or 5-6 in band) places are made early allowing plenty of dodging before the next lot of places are made. The one problem area in this method and in some other methods, is having the same half lead and lead end/head. It is very easy to forget which one you are at unless you keep an eye on the treble and this is difficult in the early stages. Also remember that the second half of the lead is more difficult. Reversing the order of the places does not come as easily as you may think. To overcome this it is best to learn the places for the whole lead.

The following methods are worth trying to start. They are all right place methods and all have single internal places. By the time you have finished these you will be able to choose whatever method you wish to ring next.

#### MINOR METHODS

		LEAD END
Double Court	x14x36x16	16
Double Oxford	x14x36x56	12
Cambridge	x36x14x12x36x14x56	12

#### MAJOR METHODS

Yorkshire	x38x14x58x16x12x38x14x78	12
Pudsey	x58x16x12x38x14x58x16x78	12



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