

# The Education Column

## 3. How Quick are your Sixes?

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This third article deals with Quick Sixes (also known as Cloister). This exercise can help both with developing rope sight and plain hunting skills for the early learner, and with introducing Stedman to more advanced students.

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In the last Education Column we looked at Bastow, which allowed our learner to experience a very simple method, involving nothing more for the treble than leading and making seconds — plain hunting on two. This was a stepping stone between Call Changes and Plain Hunt (on 5 or 6). A natural follow-on to this on the journey towards plain hunting on larger numbers is an exercise where *the treble plain hunts up only as far as third place*<sup>1</sup>.

### Cloister, or Quick Sixes

Plain hunting up to third place and back takes six blows, and this exercise works in blocks of six. It's called either *Cloister* or *Stedman Quick Sixes*, and there are a couple of versions, both having two bells that spend their whole time plain hunting from lead to 3rd place and back (taking six blows). The other three working bells spend six blows dodging 4-5 up, then six blows dodging 4-5 down, then six blows joining in with the two hunting bells at the front by ringing 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3.

*Diagram 3.1* shows the version that is more useful to our student, who is ringing the treble. In this version it is 1 and 2 who plain hunt to 3rd place and back. 3, 4 and 5 have more difficult work: 3 starts with dodging 4-5 up for six blows, then 4-5 down for six blows, then six blows with the hunting bells, hunting down to the lead and back out; 4 and 5 do the same work in a different order, with 4 starting with the frontwork, and 5 starting with the down dodges.

The benefit to the treble is much the same as for Bastow, but the exercise is just that little bit harder — another small step toward plain hunting on 5 or 6. Hunting is only up to third place. It is always the 2 that takes the treble off the lead (so no need for that panic-filled looking around to see which bell it is, and then ringing late because you can't at first find it). But there's one other bell to ring after as well as the 2. It could be the 3, 4 or 5, so this gives very good practice at rope sight. Encourage the treble to think of coming off the lead by ringing after the 2, and then after one of the three back bells (so look at all of them and ring after whichever comes down first). But not to panic if you can't see which it is, as your next blow in 3rd place is always back over the 2. Make sure that the learner appreciates that this *making 3rds is wrong*<sup>2</sup> (i.e. backstroke then handstroke).

### Why 'Stedman' Quick Sixes?

First, be reassured that none of your ringers, let alone the student on the treble, needs to have the faintest idea what Stedman is. But those who do ring Stedman Doubles will see many points of similarity. The working bells (3, 4 and 5 in *Diagram 3.1*) spend six blows dodging 4-5 up and six blows dodging 4-5 down, just as in Stedman. When they do come into the front, for six blows, they do Stedman 'quick' frontwork —

hence the term 'quick sixes'. One thing that is different from Stedman in *Diagram 3.1* is the start; all bells go straight into a block of six (for example 4 heads directly into its frontwork), whereas in Stedman there are two initial blows before the first block of six (so 4 does a 4-5 dodge before moving to down to third place). Those of you who ring Erin as well as Stedman will recognise this as more like an Erin start — it too gets stuck straight into a block of six. The other variation of this method (*Diagram 3.2*), is more like Stedman: it has the two introductory blows before the first block of six. This time it is the 2 and 3 that spend their whole time plain hunting to 3rd place and back, and while 1, 4 and 5 have the more difficult work, which again consists of six blows dodging 4-5 up, six blows dodging 4-5 down, and six blows of 'quick' frontwork. You can still achieve the same benefit for your student if they ring the 2 or the 3, but the trickier start makes it a more challenging exercise.

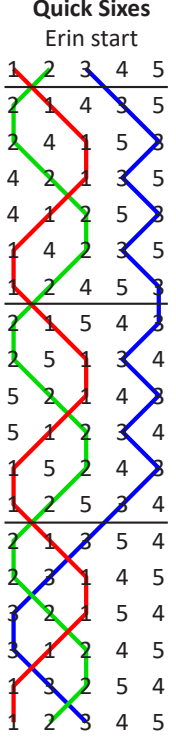
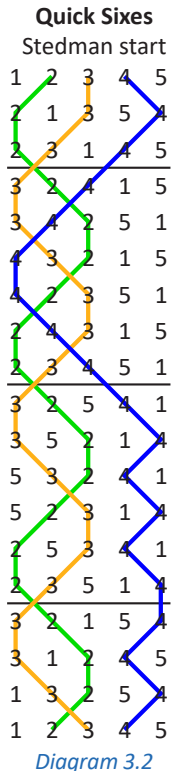
### Where are the steak knives?

Bastow had a bonus 'but there's more — free steak knives' in that it had a second use. It was useful for the student on the treble, but as we saw it had an additional benefit when a slightly more advanced student is put on the 2, 3, 4 or 5, where they get to experience the 3-4 dodges and the long fifths that they meet in Plain Bob Doubles, but without the worry of *when* to do this work. Each bell ALWAYS dodges 3-4 up and 3-4 down and ALWAYS makes long 5ths. Similarly this *Quick Sixes* exercise has a bonus benefit: it is a great way to introduce Stedman. Stedman has various difficulties for the beginner — a slightly tricky start, the blocks of six dodging in 4-5 up then down, the six blows of 'quick' frontwork, and then the great brain-strain of the slow frontwork.

The *Quick Sixes* exercise has the benefit of introducing the blocks of six, the 4-5 dodging up and down, and the six blows of quick frontwork, WITHOUT the added problem of having to memorise the slow frontwork. If you use the second variation (*Diagram 3.2*), which is the better version for this purpose, it also has the same start as Stedman. Put your student on a non-hunt bell (1, 4 or 5) to give them a useful stepping stone towards Stedman. They can practise many of the features of Stedman (the essential concept of lots of slow-moving dodging punctuated by occasional forays into the front, the start, counting the dodges in 4-5, and the quick frontwork) without the need to learn the pattern of the slow frontwork, and without having to work out whether they go in quick or slow.

There's another benefit too. The student who is learning to cover can usefully ring the 6 to the 'Erin start' version, where the bell they follow will always be the 3, 4 or 5; it's comparatively easy for them to keep an eye on these three bells.

David Smith, CCCBR Education Committee



### Jargon Box

**1. The treble plain hunts to 3rd place**  
*"The treble plain hunts"* means that it moves one place OUT or UP (nearer the back) each blow; so, starting from rounds, it rings in 2nd place (handstroke) then 3rd place (backstroke) and so on. To achieve this, ring slower. *"Plain hunt to 3rd place"* means that this moving out stops when you reach 3rd place; you then ring a second blow in 3rd place (handstroke) and then move IN or DOWN one place (nearer the front) each stroke until you are back at the lead.

**2. Making 3rds is 'wrong'**  
*"Making a place"* means ringing for two blows in that place. So *'making 3rds'* means ringing in 3rd place for two blows. Sometimes we give more detail and talk about *'making 3rds right'* (the two blows are handstroke then backstroke) or *'making 3rds wrong'* (backstroke then handstroke).