



CLASSIFICATION OF METHODS

by
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In a recent Newbury Branch Newsletter, Geoff Dodd laid down the gauntlet and proposed that I should write an article describing method classification. Not being at all expert in the field, I wondered at the time, “*why me?*” and put it to the back of my mind for consideration later. However, I came across his challenge again the other day while I was looking at the Newbury Branch web page and thought I might try to do something in reasonably non-technical terms. So, here goes!

There are four types of methods, covering every possible way of producing changes as we know them.

The four types are:

- *Hunters* where at least one bell does the same work every lead and all the working bells do the same work as each other. There must be more working bells than hunt bells.
- *Principles* where no bell is a hunt bell; all bells do the same work and the number of leads is the same as the number of working bells;
- *Differentials* where either all the working bells do not do the same work or the number of leads is not the same as the number of working bells;
- *Differential Hunters* if the method has one or more hunt bell(s) but the working bells do not all do the same work or the number of leads is different to the number of working bells.

I shall now concentrate on methods with hunt bells, or *Hunters* because that is where Geoff’s comments arose.

There are five classes of methods with one hunt bell (usually the treble). They are referred to as follows: Plain, Treble Dodging, Treble Place, Alliance and Hybrid.

The following describes the methods themselves:

In **Plain methods** the path of the treble is a plain hunt. The method is classified as *Place* if the path of a working bell consists only of hunting and place-making (eg Winchendon Place Doubles) and as *Bob* otherwise (eg St. Simon’s Bob Doubles). Double methods have the prefix *Double* in the title (eg Double Oxford Bob Minor). The corresponding method with no internal places below the treble is prefixed *Single* (eg Single Oxford Bob Minor). Older systems used to use terms such as ‘Imperial’, ‘College’ or ‘Court’ to describe parts of the work done. They have been abandoned for naming new methods but are retained for old, familiar methods (Single, Double or Reverse Court, Hunslett Imperial, St. Clements College Bob).

Treble Dodging methods have the treble dodging consecutively in 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 etc., the number of dodges in each position pair being the same. They are classified as: *Treble Bob* (no internal places made as the treble passes from one dodging position to another), *Surprise* (at least one internal place made every time the treble passes from one dodging position to another) or *Delight*, covering all other Treble Dodging methods.

Treble Place methods have the treble path making at least one place in each half-lead, and the treble path symmetrical about the half-lead with the same number of blows in each place in the lead.

In **Alliance methods** the treble does not strike the same total number of blows in each place in the lead, but the path is symmetrical about the half lead (eg if it plain hunts to fourth’s place, dodges 5-6 up, then 5-6 down and plain hunts from 4th’s place down to lead, you will see that it strikes twice in each of 1st’s to 4th place, but four times each in 5th’s and 6th’s place).

Hybrid methods use a treble path which is not symmetrical about the half-lead. These are not commonly rung and tend only to be included in special performances such as peals and quarters for some specific purpose. Those who wish to research further could start with the definitive description of what methods are, how they are constructed and classified by looking up the Central Council Methods Committee’s web page. The address is: <http://www.methods.clara.net/ccdecs.htm>. The listing also defines what constitutes a peal and some other Council business, but Decision E (Methods and Calls) is the place to look.