Dear Fellow Collector,
Dear reader of the PLUMB BOB NEWS,
As always, I am searching for new material and information associated with plumb bobs.
Please feel free to share new photos, catalogs, articles or stories of a personal nature.
I welcome input from fellow collectors!
Wolf

PLUMB BOB NEWSLETTER 2017- Q 01
TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................................................1
2. PLUMB BOB GLOBE as a gift from NORM NILSSON .....................................................................................1
3. UNUSUAL PATENTED PLUMB BOB US 2713211 from the collection Jim Holman...........................3
4. LEISTNER and HEIMBACH SURVEYOR TYPE in wooden boxes ...............................................................10
5. PLUMB BOB SCULPTURE in the district administration of KLEVE, Germany ....................................11
6. SPECIAL LEVEL patent LIFA for gang saws from Austria ...........................................................................13
7. ARTHUR PETERS † in Christchurch New Zealand .......................................................................................15
8. ARTIST KEMAL TUFAL AT CONTEMPORARY ISTANBUL 2016 .............................................................16
9. PLUMB BOBS ARE STILL USED ..................................................................................................................16
10. MY X-MAS CARD 2016 ..................................................................................................................................16
11. SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT ...............................................................................................................17
12. REMARK.......................................................................................................................................................17

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear reader of my newsletter,
Dear Fellow Collector,
Dear Friend,
Thanks to all who sent me wishes for X-Mas and the New Year 2017.
Last year I did not have enough time to write my planned 4 newsletters for various reasons.
There are thousands of excuses. ☹ Sorry.
For the year 2017 I will still try to publish again some newsletters.
Today I will tell you about some correspondence I had with collectors who asked me for help.
This information could be of interest to many collectors. Positive feedbacks always give me motivation to continue with these publications on my website in English and German.
If you have any questions, don’t hesitate and feel free to send me an email.

2. PLUMB BOB GLOBE as a gift from NORM NILSSON

Let me start with a very big THANK YOU to Norm Nilsson, a long-time reader of my newsletters. In April I got a parcel from the U.S.A. with a letter (next page) inside:
I am totally speechless about this great gift.
The photos and his letter say everything about this excellent symbolic plumb bob that looks similar to the logo that I use at every end of my newsletters.
April 14, 2016

Wolf;

As a tool collector who specializes in plumb bobs, please accept the enclosed plumb bob on my behalf. It was created to recognize your efforts and to show my appreciation for the following:

*Wolf’s Plumb Bob News since 2007*
freely providing information and extensive research
timely exchange of emails

I know of no other tool collector who has devoted so much time and effort to research and freely release and share the information to the whole world - at no expense - to any and all! While I am a primitive tool collector and not a plumb bob collector, I do have a few plumb bobs.

My initial reasoning for making the plumb bob was to “concept” a plumb bob which illustrates your bringing together individuals, from around the world, interested in plumb bobs.

The plumb bob that I designed and created for you is fashioned from cherry. It has 7 "brackets" around the world globe. The 7 "brackets" around the globe represent the 7 Continents and how they can collectively associate, and come together in unified support, to focus on plumb bobs. (And even the International Plumb Bob Collectors Association)

The name tag has a hole in it in case you would like to use it to display a small plumb bob.

Norm Nilsson
Franklin, PA

plumbbobwolf@t-online.de
3. UNUSUAL PATENTED PLUMB BOB US 2713211 from the collection
Jim Holman

As very often, this interesting research started with a short three-line request-email…

UNKNOWN PLUMB BOB marked SHS from the collection of JIM HOLMAN
UPDATE 1 with information about the patent US 2,713,211 D.V.FELLA 1955

Jim,
you asked me recently…
“I have enjoyed your ezine concerning plumb bobs. I am attaching 3 photos of a recent find that I cannot identify.
Take care and good luck finding new plumb bobs
Jim Holman”
… and added some more information:
“Wolfgang,
Thank you for the quick reply. To answer your questions.
I am a lifelong, age 68, tool user and collector. My collection is not focused on any particular tool or device, but I tend to purchase interesting items that pop up near my home, Ridgeville South Carolina, and those seen when traveling.
This plumb bob was found at a local garage sale. There were no other interesting tools and the owner knew nothing in regard to its history or function. The plumb bob is made of brass and weighs 1 lb 14.7 ounces or .870 kg.
The threaded hole in the top is 1/4" and is threaded for 20 TPI. I will attach several pictures to this post providing additional information. Some of my thoughts are below.
It appears that there was once a "key" on the shaft which interlocked with a corresponding key way in the reel. This would enable the knurled knob to lock the reel when tightened. There is a faint impression in the reel shaft which supports this theory. The key way in the reel support structure would enable the reel shaft and reel to be assembled. I am at a loss as to the purpose of the hole in the reel. I originally assumed it was for the string. I also found what appears to be Han or Hall scratched in the top. Perhaps a previous owner?”
First photos:
Later I got the following close up photos:
Here comes my answer.

**Description:**
Let me have a close look at the different parts.

**MATERIAL AND SHAPE:**
It is a huge plumb bob from **BRASS**, that could be used in two shapes, as **“bell up” and “bell down”**. This changing of the center of gravity should reduce the time of swinging. The length of the line from the hand of the user to the center of gravity of the plumb bob is an indicator for the time of swinging until it comes to rest. But in most cases there was no practical use and it was only an advertisement point of the maker/seller. Sometimes this changing of the shape could help to see the tip better, because the tip was in “the shadow” of the lower part of the “body” of the plumb bob. But on our plumb bob you can see the tip very good in both versions. So we have no advantage from this changing upside down of the body part.

The bell up and bell down is well known and good to see on the Leistner (fig. right) plumb bob type “lamp” or “common sense”.

The **elegant shape of the body** is not known on common plumb bobs in the U.S.A., but from the type 3 of the ancient Anatolian/Ottoman plumb bobs in Turkey or Syria, but without technical details like spools etc. 😊.

**WEIGHT:** With **1 lb 14.7 ounces or .870 kg** it is relatively heavy and not used by surveyors under the tripod. But for bridge-builders it is not heavy enough and the line not long enough. So it could be used for common working.

**TIP:** The **horizontal hole in the tip** is for easier unscrew the tip (to change it when it was bent …). This kind of hole I saw the first time in the “Curry patent” from 1906 and in a 1910 Frederick Post Co. catalogue, and so the plumb bob is not older than 100 years **defined by this detail**.
My estimation is that it was made between 1940 and 1960.

**MAKER:** It is not “home-made”, but produced by a professional maker/shop. Especially the elegant shape of the body is too special for a simple worker. Common home-made shapes are cylindrical and conical.
UPPER PART with spool and storage for the line:
The size of the spool inside is for such a huge plumb bob too small. Calculating the diameter of the line etc. you can store not more than 2 yards.
The classical spool and break-system of the Traut patent for the Stanley plumb bob from 1874 looks as shown below.

Let’s have a look on the parts of the storage area.
I am not sure if the spool is put in correctly in the figure left. Usually the hole in the spool should match with the hole in the axe. Through these holes the end of the line is knotted to be fixed on the spool and fix together spool and axe.
I can’t see how the turning of the axe can be stopped. (brake system). Perhaps the brake works (stop the rotation), when the axe is screwed in very fast.

This break-system here is not well known in patents or produced plumb bobs. It does not look very professional and good working.

It would be very interesting to know (find) the missing part on top.
There must be a part that guides the line through a vertical hole with the diameter of the line. The actual hole is too large to center the line correctly and the sharp thread would damage the line when gets in contact.

OWNER:
The marking by hand HAN or similar can be the name of one of the previous owner.
The marking/logo SHS:
The very professional cut in logo with letters and floral design reads SHS PAT’D.
Searching for the abbreviation SHS gave a lot of hits, but nearly all are ending with … HIGH SCHOOL
Other names are …
SHS = Spokane Hardware System (Washington) ☺
SHS = State Highway System ☺
SHS = Surplus Hardware Supplies Ltd. UK ☺
SHS = SURVEYORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY ☺
… but none of them are from around South Carolina
or well known as plumb bob maker or seller.
That means, I don’t know the maker ☺
I will publish the search for this plumb bob in one of my newsletters and perhaps a Fellow Collector will know it.

The script type is SHS SHS cut in Old English Text MT

Old English Text MT

The marking PAT’D stands for “patented” and says nothing, because it was used often to “protect the tool” with illegal information by the maker. If the seller had asked for a patent, he would mark it with “patent applied for” and if he got the patent with the “patent number and date”.
Searching for SHS in the patent data bases as inventor or maker was negative.

FACIT:
Even when I saw several thousands of plumb bobs from all over the world, I did not see this one before. Also asking friends and specialists for American marked plumb bob gave no positive result. Nobody ever saw this special plumb bob.
I will publish the search for this plumb bob in one of my newsletters and perhaps a Fellow Collector will know it.

If you get more information about it, please let me know.

Hope I could help you, even when I could not define your plumb bob exactly.

Wolf Ruecker

That was my first answer, before I knew the patent number ☺
UPDATE 1 with information about the patent US 2,713,211 D.V.FELLA 1955

Jim sent me after the first conclusion this important email:

“Wolf,
Thank you for the detailed reply. The only other information I have is US Patent 2713211. This is similar but by no means identical.
Take care
Jim”

I knew this patent, given to DOMINICK V. FELLA July 19, 1955 SELF CENTERING GAUGE, but did not remember it. Below the page 1 with the drawings.

The complete patent you can download on Google using the information: FELLA patent self centering gauge 2713211

Let’s have a look at the details….
Dominick V. Fella from Cheltenham, PA explains in his patent:
This invention relates to a centering device particularly adapted for use in combination with the frame or chassis of a motor vehicle, and in particular a weight in the form of a plumb bob having a pulley block on the upper end and a point extended from the lower end whereby with the pulley positioned to travel on a cord suspended with slack therein between the two points from which the cord is suspended.
The purpose of this invention is to provide a device that facilitates centering the frame or chassis of a motor vehicle to ascertain whether or not the frame is in alignment.

We know this use of a Slack Line from a publication of General Andreossy in 1828. This type of instrument was the tool of preference for the surveyors, “fountainiers,” of Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey, at the beginning of the 19th century. (published in my newsletter about Ottoman and Anatolian plumb bobs 2009-08).
BUT there they used this installation inverse:
They fixed the plumb bob IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LINE and pushed up or down the end of the line on the rod until the small plumb bob in the middle of the triangle instrument (called TERAZI) showed the verticality. Here the line is horizontal and the plumb bob is rolling to the middle!
Now we also know why this plumb bob has such a small spool. It is a PULLEY to guide the line and let the plumb bob roll to the middle of the slack line. It is not a spool to store the line as I thought.

Now we are one step further, but the search for the maker SHS of this tool was still negative. We have a proverb in Germany: HOPE DIES AT LAST. So I hope to find more in the future and will let you know.

If you - the reader of this newsletter - know more about this plumb bob, please let me know. Thank you.

Remarks
I just copied the doc-file from my answer to Jim into this newsletter. That’s why it has not 2 columns as the rest of the text. Thanks to Jim for allowing me to publish these information about his plumb bob in this newsletter. I think it is good information for all plumb bob collectors.

4. LEISTNER and HEIMBACH SURVEYOR TYPE in wooden boxes.

On the photos below you see two very nice examples from the well-known factories of Leistner (right) and Heimbach (left). Type surveyor. Both in nearly identical wooden boxes. This is another point that shows that the - from Germany immigrated - Leistner and Heimbach in St. Louis worked close together. Thank you to Greg Lathan in North Carolina for sharing these photos with us.
5. **PLUMB BOB SCULPTURE in the district administration of KLEVE, Germany**

Recently, one of my readers, (surveyor in the city of Krefeld) visited the district administration (Kreisverwaltung) in Kleve and saw a sculpture with a huge plumb bob in a floor. He had already sent me pictures of the monuments in Brussels and Copenhagen. With his camera he made some pictures for me (see on this page) and tried to find out more information about this sculpture on site. Unfortunately with little success. No sign with information on the wall and only few facts given by the administration. Thank you Udo to send me the photos.

Now it was my part to research. Already in my Plumb Bob Newsletter 2012-12 Artists and plumb bobs I published several monuments and sculptures with plumb bobs made by artists.

After some days contact with a lot of people I found: The former Kreisbaudirektor a. D. Friedrich Veith had in summer 1998 the idea to install in the free space of a new constructed building a small monument with relation to the department working in this part of the building, the construction department of the district administration. With the help of partner companies and by chance they found cheap material for the plumb bob: A stainless steel part in shape of a plumb bob body (German type) as a rest from a withdrawn order. Skilled craftsmen welded a cap on top of it with the same material and put a big screw for the line on it. The red loose line was built from a rod of iron and painted red. The body is 1.60 meter high and has a diameter of 1 meter. It is made of 7mm thick stainless steel sheet. (A)1 4571 ... is the code for für X6CrNiMoTi17, known as V4A. On the ground was set a flat steel pyramid to fix and hold the object.

**This plumb bob sculpture should say:** Something went wrong here (The cord is torn). The plumb bob was fallen from the top of the roof into the house and stuck now not straight in the ground.
Later I got additional photos and newspaper articles as you can see below.
From Mr. Veith I got also the very first sketch that he made when talking with his friend how the sculpture should look. This sketch was on the draft-invitation for the handing over / inauguration of the sculpture Dec. 12, 1998.
With some special effects I could separate the “birth certificate” from the disturbing text. 😊
See fig. right.
The official address of the building is:
Kreisverwaltung Kleve
Nassauer allee 15-23
47533 Kleve
Deutschland
6. SPECIAL LEVEL patent LIFA for gang saws from Austria

Wolfgang Jordan, a German specialist for trademarks and patents from woodworking tools was ask from a collector in Czechoslovakia for information about this special level shown in the photos below. After some searches we found the name of the owner of the factory with this trademark. FRANZ LIPOWSKY
Now the search for a patent and the purpose of the very uncommon level began. I found a French patent (brevet d’invention) FR1013138 from 1951 and a Swiss patent CH275525 from 1951 (see headlines right) for an Instrument for measuring the overhang of gang saws.

This maker of saws LIFA had also an American patent US3712348 SAW BLADE for a frame saw having reinforced edges 1971/73.

With the level shown right you can measure the angle of the (not vertical) saw blade, by pressing the level with its iron foot on the saw blade. (see my patent-drawing-combination right). I learned that the saw blade is not vertical in the saw, so that not only the first tooth is used. Sorry, I am not specialist for cutting logs, but the collectors and woodworkers will know it. 😊 On the other way you can preselect with the handle the wanted angle for a given stroke (up and down of the gang saw) and verify with this level if the installation is correct.

After we (Wolfgang and Wolfgang) found all these information about this relatively rare and unknown level it was offered some months later in Austria on eBay. That was the chance for me to buy one. 😊 The body is from wood, 16 inch long, 6 inch wide and 1 inch thick. The scale and protection sheet is from brass. The bottom is from steel. On top we find a level with vial. My level has the number 677. The patent information “PAT.ANG.” means patent applied for. That shows that it was (perhaps) produced between the first letter to the patent office in 1949 and the official patent date 1951.

I am not sure, but I think the photo below shows such a gang saw where this level could be used.
In April 2016 I got an email from my long-time friend Arthur Peters from New Zealand. He is living next door to the only known plumb bob factory (now closed) in Christchurch NZ: CHCH. See a plumb bob from this factory in figure right. When he was searching for more information last year, I got this message: “You may remember asking me to try to find the Newzealand plumb bob maker in Ferry road Christchurch? Unbeknown to me the two brothers were still living in the remains of their factory, and burglars broke in, assuming (as I did) that the derelict place was empty. They were challenged by the brothers, and while trying to escape, violently assaulted the brothers and one died!!! Too late for me to find them now!! Arthur.”

“Dear Wolf,
Many thanks for your informative letters on plumbbobs. And you have changed me from a slightly interested collector of tools and measuring tools, into a keen watcher for plumbbobs.
Today while garage saling (boot sales) I saw and purchased a set of very old scientific scales (pictured) and thought little of them until I got them home and set them up for close inspection. I paid $40.00 nz for them about 20 English pounds for the scales and the box of weights.
And wow I found that I had also purchased as part of the scales, the very smallest working plumbbob that I have ever seen.
You can clearly see the plumbbob hanging on the righthand side of the scales support post. Do I have the record for the smallest operating plumbbob? The plumbbob is hung over an embossed knob to ensure the scales are sitting correctly.
The scales are made in England by Griffin & Tatlock, (just had another earthquake)), and the bob is 5mm by about 15mm high. Im sure some one may find a smaller working bob, but with a bit of luck I am first, at this moment. Hope this adds to your cache of plumbbob information.
All the best wishes from New Zealand. Arthur Peters”

Unfortunately I had to tell Arthur that there are some much smaller plumb bobs on the market, but the plumb bobs on the scales are really very small working plumb bobs and some of them have also an elegant shape, like one from my collection on the photo right.

As you can read in his email he was living directly on an earth-quake crack. Often when writing me he had to stop when the house was shaking. Long time ago he told me how his plumb bobs where swinging during such an earth-quake. Unfortunately he could not make a photo of this situation, because he had other things to do. He told me that in this region earth-quakes under a value of 4.8 are not mentioned in the newsletter. In other parts of the world this value would be a catastrophe.

In September 2016 he displayed some plumb bobs during a meeting in Christchurch:

On Nov. 22, 16 Arthur's step daughter Andrea told me that Arthur passed away last night. He was ill for a few weeks.
Arthur, I will miss you and the communication with you!
8. ARTIST KEMAL TUFAL AT CONTEMPORARY ISTANBUL 2016

A German collector, living in Istanbul, Turkey sent me the information about plumb bobs in an exhibition October 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. Artist Kemal Tufan at Contemporary Istanbul 2016.
The “plumb bobs” are from stainless steel.

9. PLUMB BOBS ARE STILL USED

My son sent me a photo of an installation where a small plumb bob was used to verify the correct position of the tubes and pipes etc.

10. MY X-MAS CARD 2016

This is a very special brass A-level used by Santa Claus especially in December. From the collection of Wolfgang Koecker

Merry Christmas to you and your family &
a Happy, Healthy and PEACEFUL New Year 2017
11. SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

On eBay I found an offer for a “18th C ANTIQUE NORTH AFRICAN CAST BRASS BRONZE ORNATE UNUSUAL PLUM BOB TOOL 146g” with a buy it now price of $285. 😊

I don’t know what it really is, but never a plumb bob.

DO YOU KNOW MORE?

12. REMARK

DEAR READER OF THE PLUMB BOB NEWS,
DEAR FELLOW COLLECTOR,

This is an article of the regularly published WOLF’S PLUMB BOB NEWS that is sent on demand as PDF-file attachment by email. FREE.
You can see all former publications and newsletters on the website www.plumbbobcollectors.info
on subpage “NEWSLETTER ENGLISH”.
Remarks and contact by email: plumbbobwolf@t-online.de

Enjoy it
Wolf Ruecker

PS. This NEWSLETTER is also available in GERMAN /DEUTSCH.