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 02
TALKING ABOUT PLUMB BOBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 1823 SILVER SET pb etc. £ 2.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. PLUMB BOB FOUND IN A WALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. BELLIEI FIL A PLOMB France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. CHB FCBB SILVERWARE from a SWISS UNION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ARTISTS POLKE + KOHLHÖFER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. COLLECTION published the first time to the public!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 2 kg LEAD FILLED DECORATIV PB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. JACK DANIEL BARRELHOUSE PLUMB LINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. FREEMASON GLASSES and TILES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. SEARCH IN MOROCCO for plumb bobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. 4 LBS UNUSUAL SHAPE GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. 23 POUNDS 16 INCHES PB and other heavy weights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. HORTUS DELICARUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. RUSSIAN PLUMB BOBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. TRENCH ART from GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. ANATOLIAN PLUMB BOB COLLECTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS OF PLUMB BOBS in Istanbul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. MY X-MAS CARD 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. REMARK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear fellow collectors, friends and readers of my newsletter:

Last year I did not have enough time to regularly draft my newsletter on a quarterly basis. As a result of my limited time, this issue will only be the second edition of "Wolf's Plumb Bob News" during 2017. Since launching my newsletter in 2007, I have covered many brands of plumb bobs, along with specific details regarding their construction and respective provenance. If you have any questions regarding any edition I have complied since 2007, please let me know.

Please enjoy the results of my research.

Wolf

Figure to the right: this plumb bob was displayed by Riccardo Chetoni in the church of S. Mary of the Thorn, Pisa in 2014 during out meeting there.

Do any of you have any additional information to add to it?
2. **1823 SILVER SET pb etc. £ 2.300**

If you do not already have a Christmas gift for this year, here is a good idea from a seller in England on eBay # 142383973239:
(Was still online on Dec. 1, 2017; 5 observers)

**Antique 1873 Silver Trowel - Set Square / Plumb Bob - Mallet LLANYBRI Coombe**
Buy it now for: £2.500 +£65 shipping
Ca. EUR 2.796 (inclusive shipping)
Description by the seller:

“Here is an exceptional antique cased sterling silver presentation trowel for a foundation stone laying ceremony if ever there was one .... Usually you only were given the silver trowel quite often they have lost their boxes as well along the way. This is a fabulous cased lot. I know there will be very few of this full kit of "Masons" tools around even in the museums ... very few and far between.

So let me describe the box first. Its a mauve leather colour with a gilt top line on the embossed tooled step edge.... the corners and edges have scuffs and rubs... its not been as well looked after as what its holding. ....You will now be feasting your eyes upon the 3 contents which are all inset into a green plush velvet base. The underside of the lid is a cream silk and again due to age the silk is ripe and is torn and pushed into the lid. the mauve leather which covers the wood frame of the box is missing on the very edges in places.... this is ALL superficial really and the box has done well to survive at all.... so we are thank full for that. The contents include a trowel and a set square which has a plumb bob on it as well and a masonics stone mallet - maul - hammer. All the sterling silver is very well fine engraved of the highest quality too. You will see the TROWEL has an outer border then a wonderful foliage - floral theme going up to a tied ribbon in a bow and right at the top in the V it has a WINGED CHERUB wearing a collar and a smiley face. The engraved wording says: Presented to Mrs Wm Morris COOMBE On the occasion of LAYING FOUNDATION STONE of NEW CHAPEL LLANYBRI 6th June 1873. The sterling silver hallmarks are on the back EXETER 1870 makers mark is JW & JW which is James & Josiah Williams and a product number 1686. With Queen Victoria’s Bust profile of course too. The set square / plumb bob is once again fantastic with the 4 and a 1/2 inch measurements engraved with the foliage swirl pattern ...then the plumb bob hole is pierced and a fine string with the bob ball is hung on here... it swings in the hole easy.... up this length it has a wonderful engraved design so you can see if it is out of plumb.... it too is hallmarked the same as the trowel on the back. The maul - mallet - hammer is inset into the green velvet...it has no silver bits. The trowel is 12 inch long x 3 and a 1/4 inch at the widest part. The plumb bob / set square is 4 and 1/2 inch longest part x 3 inch the plumb bob part and the plumb bob ball is 1/4 inch dia. The masons mallet is 5 and a 1/4 inch long x 1 and a 1/2 inch dia at the widest point. Remember this set was presented to William’s Wife as often is the case with such ceremonies..... but I would imagine him being a banker he will have been a Freemason and this cased set will be influenced by that I would think. The box is just over 13 inch long x 6 inch wide x 2 and a 1/4 inch deep.... the box and contents weigh 1 kilogram. and will be sent to you GLOBAL PRIORITY if you live overseas as this is the quickest and safest way to send anything. Coomb House a property dating back to the early 18th Century was re-built in 1865 ish by William Morris a banker of Carmarthen in Gothic Style.”

Did you ever see a better one?
Let me know when you bought it. 😊 .

plumbbobwolf@t-online.de
3. PLUMB BOB FOUND IN A WALL

Question from Weston, WV, U.S.A.

“... I work for a group who is preserving a massive Historic Landmark in Weston, WV USA. It was built from 1858 to 1881. It is the second largest hand cut sandstone building in the world....Yesterday, while poking around in behind a built in wall, we found a solid brass plumb bob. I have attached a photograph. The area was remodeled in the 1930’s. I do not know if it is from that time frame or if it is older. Can you direct me where to turn for help? ...
B. C.
Office Manager
Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum.”

Here are my remarks:
The lady recently forwarded me photos of the following plumb bob (Weight is 6.6 oz and length 3+ inches.) located during preservation of a massive sandstone building, classified as a major landmark located in Weston, WV in the US. I canvassed some friends and none of those contacted have a similar plumb in their collection or have encountered one in their personal archives or in plumb bob manufacturing catalogs.
We used the shape and form of the plumb bob to estimate the date of production. The fact that there is no hardened steel tip present to prevent damage to the directional end of the plumb bob, especially if it is dropped or even damaged through contact with other tools during storage in a toolbox, is very unusual. These separate tips were used by major plumb bob manufacturers since the 1870s. (known from catalogs). However, smaller plumb bob makers who had lowered quality standards during plumb bob manufacture and typically made plumb bobs from one single material. These materials were typically all brass (where the soft tip could be easily damaged during a fall) or sometimes made of all iron/steel.

Additionally, the shape of the cap was not found in catalogues. Although the shape of the top is uncommon, it is also not rare. I asked the owner if the cap screwed on the body, but received no confirming response from her or other fellow collectors, so I assume it is a one piece.

The line (still sturdy and waxed) that was found on the wooden spool is too thin for the vertical hole. Typically the line has nearly the same diameter as the vertical hole, so the user can be certain it hangs "dead center" and exactly vertical. However, we often find that the craftsman did not use adapted lines, employing whatever they could locate in their toolbox. We can’t say from what factory or maker it was produced. For estimation of the age we have the shape and the form of the cap. Also the fact, that it has not a tip from a different (harder) material. (See pages from catalogues right column). These hardened tips were made from steel to protect the tip against negative influences. (Falling to the ground or contact to other tools in the toolbox).

Age: our guess was different between 1890 and 1920 and the second said 1920 to 1940. My own guess is 1920 +/- 10. This matches with the time when the area of the house was remodeled, 1930s.

For plumb bob collectors this item is not so interesting, because it was produced cheaply by a simple method. The collectors like more mechanized plumb bobs etc.

For your information some shapes from big makers from the time after 1900 (catalogue Brandis 1902 and Dietzgen 1931 and 1941)
4. BELLIERI FIL A PLOMB France

A Fellow Collector from Luxemburg sent me a photo of a plumb bob that he found recently. It is an architect plumb bob, with a tip which can be simply be modified by turning it upside down. After some time I found it in a catalog from Bellieri, Nancy, France from 1912. See figure below right.
5. CHB FCBB SILVERWARE from a SWISS UNION

Silverware, spoon and fork made for a Swiss Union prior to 1990. These two pieces I got from a French seller who offered it on eBay: Rare couvert compagnon Suisse rabot compas fil à plomb charpentier menuisier?

On Wikipedia I found that the abbreviation CHB stands for Christlicher Holz- und Bauarbeiterverband der Schweiz.
(Christian Timber and Construction Workers Association of Switzerland)
and FCBB for Fédération chrétienne des ouvriers du bois et du bâtiment
(Christian Federation of Wood and Building Workers)

Christlicher Holz- und Bauarbeiterverband der Schweiz CHB
Archiv Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv
Bestandessignatur CH SOZARCH Ar 73
Titel Christlicher Holz- und Bauarbeiterverband der Schweiz CHB
Laufzeit 1901 - 1998

6. ARTISTS POLKE + KOHLHÖFER

From a “friend of a friend” I got this photo taken in Baden-Baden, GER in the Museum Frieder Burda. , 1969/90
Christof Kohlhöfer and Sigmar Polke are a team of artists (photographer and painter).
Unfortunately I don’t know anything about the artists, but I see it is a very interesting position to take a shot of a plumb bob.
7. COLLECTION published the first time to the public!

I received some photos of a sizable collection of plumb bobs from a collector in Kentucky, US, who has never shared his collection with others before.
Thank you for sharing these photos with us.
Great collection.
Enjoy it!
8. **2 kg LEAD FILLED DECORATIVE PB**

On eBay I found in England a “**Very rare Huge decorative brass plumb bob, over 2kg**” and got it (only bidder) for £ 9.99 + £ 12 shipping. See figure right. I was happy UNTIL IT ARRIVED. See photos below! The seller put it into the parcel **without protection**.

The tip from lead was seriously bent. I did not complain, because the price was so low and I wanted the plumb bob, not the money back.

I had forgotten to ask the seller for a good protection **before** shipping! Usually I send a information to the seller.

With some skill I found a way to bring the tip in a position that you can’t see the defect at the first view. I have experienced this problem with numerous poorly packaged plumb bobs I have received in the past. Due to the mass of heavy plumb bobs, they should be well padded or double boxed during shipment to prevent damage to the tip from improper handling by shippers.
9. JACK DANIEL BARRELHOUSE PLUMB LINE

Thanks to a fellow collector and friend, Dogan, who sent me this page from a magazine advertising Jack Daniels spirits. Whether a distiller of bourbon is inebriated or not, a plumb bob will always allow Jack Daniels confirm where or not the very heavy barrels in which bourbon is stored and aged are evenly distributed, to prevent the foundation of the storage building for the barrels from settling.

Now we know another profession that uses the plumb bob.

As we knew it already:

PLUMB BOBS ARE USED EVERYWHERE.

If you’ve ever had the pleasure of visiting a barrelhouse here at the Jack Daniel Distillery, you know they’re pretty basic affairs. Nothing but floor after floor of whiskey barrels stretching off into the distance and patiently waiting for that happy day when they’re finally ready to fulfill their noble destiny in glasses everywhere.

In fact, the only thing that sets most visitors to wondering is a bright orange string that hangs straight down from the ceiling and then passes through a small hole in each floor until it reaches all the way to the bottom, where a weight is tied to the other end of it. It’s a rare guest who doesn’t pause at that string and ask, “What the heck’s that?”

Well, it’s called a plumb line. And the well-being of all that whiskey utterly depends on it.

You see, a Jack Daniel’s barrelhouse could easily hold 20,000 barrels, with each one weighing over five hundred pounds. If the barrels are placed in their ricks without evenly distributing that tremendous amount of weight, the entire building might start to shift. And we’d rather not imagine what could happen next. As long as that plumb line is pretty much in the center of the small hole it passes through in the floor, we know everything’s good. But should it start to move toward the edge of that hole, that means the building is shifting and we’ve got to move some barrels around real quick. (So why isn’t that bright orange? Simply because it’s a very easy thing to walk right into, particularly when you’re distracted by those barrels full of whiskey.

Now, we like our plumb lines for a few reasons. The biggest one, of course, is that they keep our whiskey safe and secure through its long rest. The other reason, though, is because we think it’s a good reflection of some things we believe here in Lynchburg, Tennessee: That simpler things are probably better. That when something works, you stick with it until it doesn’t. And that change is fine as long as there’s a good reason for it. So while we’re sure there’s some digital something or other that’s waiting to replace our trusty old plumb lines, we’d advise it not to hold its breath. When those orange strings stop doing the trick, we can talk. But in over 150 years, we haven’t lost a barrelhouse yet.
10. FREEMASON GLASSES and TILES

Masonic "fire" is an old custom which may be derived from that of firing after toasts. The original practice was modified by our masonic ancestors to suit their needs. Below a glass from my collection.

Some tiles from my collection:
11. SEARCH IN MOROCCO for plumb bobs

From a good friend who travelled around the world I got this story from his visit in Morocco:

“Hello Wolfgang, last week in northern Morocco near Tangier, I discovered two plumb bobs for me, surely you already have something comparable in your collection. They are new to me. That's why it took so long, and required three attempts respectively three travels to Morocco. Our tour guide did not know what the word “plumb bob” means and did not know the Arabic word for it. Then he has googled it on my request. We were at that time on a street market and I showed the pictures. And I found some - after 30 seconds !!!!! The next day in a bazaar in Tetouan, I found a similar and on a construction site in Assilah, I asked, and the worker showed me the same at work, a real hit. .......
Greetings Georg”

It is always very helpful if you know the special terms.
Thank you Georg for the story and the pictures.

12. 4 LBS UNUSUAL SHAPE GB

A uniquely shaped plumb bob I encountered for sale on eBay! Now in a collection in North Carolina. Is anyone familiar with other plumb bobs with a similar shape?
13. **23 POUNDS 16 INCHES PB and other heavy weights.**

This huge plumb bob, which weighs 23 pounds and is 16 inches long, was purchased from a David Stanley auction in 2014 by my American friend, Greg, who lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina (home of the University of North Carolina Tar Heels!). Don’t ask for the price - Greg is still feeling guilty about his purchase, even three years later! 😊

By the way, the large measurement device behind the plumb bob is not a large common ruler - it is a demonstration slide rule by Post which was made in the early 1950s and was used from 1951-1971 for college instruction purposes at Yale University. Following the introduction of electronic calculators, which were introduced during the early 1970s, slide rules rapidly became obsolete and disappeared from scientific/academic use!

Greg also has a very common plumb bob in his collection like the KEEN KUTTER K80 below. It is the biggest in the catalogue from 1921 with 17 oz.

Another **9 inch 3 pound iron plumb bob**
Greg won on eBay in England!

His comment: **"It may be home made, but they did a good "home made job", as the case was lined with a very high grade felt and it almost appears that a seasoned upholsterer lined the wooden box."**

**It feels good in the hand!**

**Pretty cool, eh?**
14. HORTUS DELICIARUM

From a French friend I received a much better photo of an EARLY black and white historical drawing depicting French construction workers employing a plumb bob with a spacer to build a tower.

Excerpt from the "Hortus Deliciarum" (luxury garden) written and drawn by the abbess Herade von Landsberg in the Monastery of Mont Sainte-Odile in Alsace in the 12th century.

Now we have one in color with additional text. Because the picture and description was made in France, the masons in Babel/Babylon use French plumb bobs. 😊
15. RUSSIAN PLUMB BOBS

In 2007 I published a Patent News 2007-40 about Russian plumb bob patents. From my friend Riccardo which I highlighted in my publication was this one silver colored with a spool inside.

I was able to locate a Russian plumb bob almost identic, although this one was painted black. The seller told me it came from Schytomyr (ukrainisch Житомир; russisch Житомир/ Schitomir), in the norther part of the Ukraine, (former part of the Sowjet-Union) 120 km west of the capital Kiev. It was used to build rockets. Several famous Russian rocket engineers lived in this area, which spurred the development of the famous Sergiy Korolyov Astronautics Museum. The photo to the right shows the complete line of the plumb bob. Although I do not know why it was painted black, it possibly was done to enhance visibility or for additional corrosion protection. The six-sided plastic handle you can press out of the body to rewind the very thin cord by turning it right. The symbol on the handle shows the direction.

To use the plumb bob, you can pull out the line from the spool inside of the body. There is also no special brake stop, however the black spring provides enough friction sufficient to stop the plumb bob in any desired position. I am not familiar with the text on the other side of the handle in Cyrillic letters. The metal tip usually falls down when the plumb bob is vertical. There is no friction to fix it in the upper or lower position. The two parts of the body are fixed by two snap rings on both ends.

I think this plumb bob is relatively new. It seems to be a combination of 2 Russian patents from 1983 and 1992.

Do you know more about this Russian plumb bob? Please let me know.

plumbbobwolf@t-online.de
16. **TRENCH ART from GB**
From my collection and from eBay a mixture of plumb bobs made from trench art by World War I soldiers.
17. ANATOLIAN PLUMB BOB COLLECTION

I recently received some extremely interesting information from a friend who encountered 40 Anatolian plumb bobs for sale. Fortunately, I was able to react in time to purchase them. Until now, my collection only contained a few Anatolian/Ottoman plumb bobs. In my newsletter 2009-08 I presented the different types of plumb bobs from the Turkish region. All “type 1” are complete with the head. In the group “type 5” (triangle) are also 2 with small plumb bobs.
PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS OF PLUMB BOBS in Istanbul

Kept Light Photography
PHOTOGRAPHY AND WRITING BY A. CEMAL ERIN

Plumb Bobs
November 6, 2017 by Cemal Erin

Most readers will have at least heard of plumb bobs as a kind of weight at the end of a string. That’s exactly how much I knew about them until I met Mr. Doğan Başak in Istanbul last October. The sitting area of his office looked like a museum and in the Persian room hung hundreds of plumb bobs of many shapes and sizes along with other related measurement instruments. They all looked very interesting but some were almost life pieces of art created to show off the skills of the artisans making it rather than a utilitarian tool we all think off. Some looked perfectly functional set others offered meditative qualities.

I asked for his permission to photograph them, and in about 10 minutes I photographed as much of the collection as I could. My main interest was obviously the photographic results and I took frames that had photographic qualities that I liked. Since the collection was presented in an office environment, other objects in the background forced me to cut off some of the frames at unusual places possibly losing an important part of the display out.

As I sat down to write this post I realized I had nothing to say about the elements in the collection other than my interaction with them. I did some research online and discovered there are many collectors of plumb bobs, a few sites dedicated to them, and some very interesting documents. During my research, I stumbled on a site, International Plumb Bob Collectors with a wealth of information. I dug in and tried to learn a little more about the utilitarian or the gorgeous collectible plumb bobs. After reading many pages, a collection writings in a PDF publication Plumb Line Continuum, and looking at many photographs I decided to write to the site owner Wolfgang Ruecker. In the meantime, I have learned of an editor who continued publishing the Plumb Line Continuum, Nelson Denmy and later on, about his passing in 2012. A 10-minute photo opportunity made me learn about an obscure hobby and some of its adherents in very unexpected ways. Live and learn!

This morning I got a reply from Wolfgang who knew Doğan as a fellow collector and told his message that they had the first meeting and exhibit of the association in Istanbul. RTworld! When I sat down to write this post, I wanted to include some information about the plumb bobs, but I am going to leave that to the experts. I will simply share my photographs and documents that I will share with the permission of Wolfgang Ruecker. I leave with one final thought about plumb bobs:

All plumb bobs on earth point to the same spot!

For more information:
Visit the International Plumb Bob Collectors web site.
Read the brief report of the Istanbul meeting in 2016.
Read Wolfgang’s 20 frequently asked questions and answers about plumb bobs.
Download and read the Plumb Line Continuum (click on the second link on the page for the document).
Thank you Doğan bey for allowing me to photograph your collection, thank you, Wolfgang providing a wealth of information on plumb bobs, and now, enjoy the photographs of Doğan Başak collection, quite possibly a part of a larger collection.

https://www.keptlight.com/plumb-bobs/

The next photo of a personal collection of plumb bobs is from an excited photographer from the USA who encountered them on his web site. (see above) He wrote the description of the plumb bobs beneath the photo. Needless to say, he was surprised when I informed him that the collection was owned by a very good friend of mine when he asked me for information about these plumb bobs.

Enjoy the excellent photos on his web site.
19. **MY X-MAS CARD 2017**

So sorry I have not had time to develop my annual Christmas card with a plumb bob theme. Hopefully I can complete and send it before December 24, 2017. (Last minute I managed to build one. See next page. 😊) But here are some from the last years.

20. **SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT**

Finally, I received this A-Level from Ali in Istanbul this past Easter - an early Christmas present to myself! 😊 Looks great. See figure right

**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](http://www.plumbbobcollectors.info) on subpage “NEWSLETTER ENGLISH”.

Remarks and contact by email: [plumbbobwolf@t-online.de](mailto:plumbbobwolf@t-online.de)

Enjoy it

Wolf Ruecker

*PS. This NEWSLETTER is also available in GERMAN /DEUTSCH.*
Last minute I finished my Christmas card for all plumb bob collectors and their families.

This is a fountain shaped like a plumb bob in the garden in front of my house. On top is a plastic sphere with a plumb bob inside. (Actually not visible very well) The coordinates are written on a piece of slate from the near mountains called Hunsrück.

Merry Christmas to you and your family &
a Happy, Healthy and PEACEFUL New Year 2018

Wolfgang Ruecker
www.plumbbobcollectors.info