

WOLF'S PLUMB BOB NEWS 2013

Issue 04 April 1, 2013

THE NELSON DENNY † COLLECTION

Author: Wolf Ruecker

www.plumbbobcollectors.info

Dear Fellow Collector,

Dear reader of the PLUMB BOB NEWS,

Please, as always I am in search of new photos, catalogs, articles or personal stories about any aspect of PLUMB BOBS from you. Any help is appreciated.

If you have any information or pictures for these themes, please let me know.

Thank you, looking forward to hearing from you

Wolf

THE NELSON DENNY † COLLECTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	44
2. MARTIN DONNELLY AUCTIONS in 2012 + 2013.....	45
3. MECHANICAL PLUMB BOBS.....	48
4. SETS OF PLUMB BOBS.....	50
5. IRON PLUMB BOBS.....	51
6. IVORY PLUMB BOBS.....	52
7. HAMBURG PLUMB BOBS.....	53
8. TECHNICAL AND PATENTED PLUMB BOBS.....	54
9. MILLWRIGHT +COMMON SENSE.....	56
10. SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT.....	56
11. REMARKS.....	56



Nelson Denny's BOB ROOM

1. INTRODUCTION

One year ago NELSON DENNY from Hadlyme CT, a well-known collector of plumb bobs died at the age of 65 years. See my newsletter WOLF'S PLUMB BOB NEWS 2012-05 NELSON DENNY¹ with emails and photos from Nelson talking about

- Special plumb bobs
- Displaying and inventory
- Worldwide communication
- His collection
- The Leistner & Heimbach Story
- The Plumb Line Continuum
- His work and the future

With the help of his nephew Kevin I got a file with a lot of beautiful photos that Nelson made from his collection. To remember my friend Nelson and his collection I will show you some special plumb bobs from his collection. I is a very small part only.

Nearly all items of his collection – except some of the LEISTNER plumb bobs that remained in the possession of the family - were sold in several Martin Donnelly auctions last year and will be offered this year. Most of them are bought by one single bidder (for relatively high prices). Unfortunately not many collectors had the chance to buy one of his very interesting plumb bobs. But I think it is good that big parts of his huge collection now are in one hand. He worked hard to get them all together.

To know more about Nelson, here are some ideas from 2004 of his strategy in collecting plumb bobs.

We discussed about prices and asked him why he spent so much money for a relatively modern plumb bob.

Here is his answer:

“... YOU EUROPEAN DON'T UNDERSTAND THE AMERICAN MARKET ECONOMY AND THE PROTECTIONS OF AUCTION RULES.

¹ Available for DOWNLOAD on my web site www.plumbbobcollectors.info on page „DOWNLOAD PUBLICTATIONS“

THE WORTH OF SOMETHING IS ENTIRELY DEPENDANT ON WHAT SOMEONE IS WILLING TO PAY FOR IT. IT IS NOT AN ARBITRARY VALUE BASED ON WHAT IS IN MY WALLET AT ANY GIVEN POINT OF TIME. THE BEAUTY OF AN AUCTION WITH BID INCREMENTS IS THAT THE WORST CASE SCENEREO IS THAT THERE IS AT LEAST ONE IF NOT MORE FOOLS THAT ARE WILLING TO FORK UP THAT AMOUNT FOR EITHER AN OLD OR A RECENT WELL CRAFTED ITEM. THE AGE OF AN ITEM HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH THE PROFITABILITY.

AT THE CLOSE OF THE AUCTION THERE WERE TWO OTHER BIDDERS THAT WERE WILLING TO SPEND WITHIN 5 TO 10 DOLLARS OF WHAT I SPENT.

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS ALLOW A PERIOD OF TIME TO ELAPSE FOR AN ITEM TO APPRECIATE.

IN ONE CASE I BOUGHT A MINT BUFF PLUMMET AT AUCTION FOR \$1700; BOUGHT A SECOND ONE FROM A PRIVATE SELLER FOR \$1200, AND THEN SOLD JUST ONE OF THE TWO FOR \$3700.00.

I DO NOT RE-SELL ANYTHING ON EBAY; I HAVE DEVELOPED A PRIVATE LIST OF COLLECTORS THAT I EMAIL WHEN I HAVE ITEMS FOR SALE. AT THE BEGINNING SOMONE TOLD ME SOMETHING THAT HAS PROVEN TO BE ABSOLUTELY TRUE; **BUY THE BEST THAT YOU CAN AFFORD.**

IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS I'VE INVESTED JUST A BIT MORE THAN \$ xx US DOLLARS IN PLUMB BOBS. ABOUT 40% WERE BOBS THAT I HAVE NO PARTICULAR LONG LASTING INTEREST IN, UN-NAMED SHAPES BUT NICELY DESIGNED AND PROPORTIONED. THOSE I SELL ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AND HAVE AVERAGED ALMOST A 17% PROFIT OVER AND ABOVE ALL MY EXPENSES FOR MARKETING AND TRAVEL. THE REST HAS BEEN INVESTED IN EXTRAORDINARLY RARE PIECES. SOME OF THOSE WERE THE LAST 150 PIECES OF BRUCE CYNARS COLLECTION, INCLUDING SOME OLD AND RARE IVORIES, SEVERAL DOZEN MECHANICAL PLUMB BOBS (MANY PATENTED), A DOZEN OR SO PLUMMETS IN SETS INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL CARRYING CASES, A COMPLETE SET OF VAJENS IN BRASS AND A COMPLETE SET NICKLE PLATED, TWO COMPLETE SETS OF PERFECTIONS, ONE COMPLETE SET OF COMMON SENSE NUMBERED, JUST TO LIST A FEW ITEMS.

I HAVE MADE TWO OTHER MAJOR INVESTMENTS IN WHOLE COLLECTIONS OTHER THAN CYNARS. MOST OF THESE I WILL HOLD ON TO; IN SEVERAL CASES HAVE BEEN OFFERED DOUBLE MY COST WITHOUT EVER LOOKING FOR A BUYER.

MY PLUMB BOB EXPERIENCE HAS ACTUALLY YIELDED A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER RATE OF RETURN THAN MY INVESTMENTS IN THE STOCK MARKET.

...
I HAVE BEEN MAKING SOME MOVES RECENTLY TO DEVELOP A SCHEME TO KEEP THE BEST PART OF THE COLLECTION TOGETHER. HERE, I CAN DONATE THE COLLECTION TO CERTAIN NON- PROFIT INSTITUTIONS OR MUSEUMS THAT WOULD GIVE ME SOME INCREDIBLE INCOME TAX ADVANTAGES, MUCH MORE THAN THE DOLLAR VALUE OF MY INVESTMENT."

2. MARTIN DONNELLY AUCTIONS in 2012 + 2013

Nearly the complete collection of Nelson is (will be) sold by Martin Donnelly in 2012 and 2013

<https://www.mjdtools.com>

If you need special overviews of these plumb bobs in the different auctions, please email me or visit my web site <http://www.plumbbobcollectors.info> on page "NELSON DENNY"

I will update the information on this site soon.

Below you find some plumb bobs from the MJD Auctions in 2012 + 2013 with the description from Martin Donnelly and some remarks from me or from Nelson Denny's inventory sheets:

Lot-223

A FANCY TURNED BRASS PLUMB BOB by **L.M.S.D.** It has elaborate turnings and a knurled cap and spindle. From the Collection of Nelson Denny, Hadlyme, Connecticut (ND# 63)

Weight: 45 oz

Length: 7.500in.

Maker: L.M.S.D.

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$250.00 - \$500.00
realized \$920.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



Lot-3

A miniature ebony & brass plumb bob with german silver pins. very well made. (ND# 739)

Length: 1.500in.

Maker:

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$50.00 - \$100.00
realized \$258.00

Auction: October 26, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



A FANCY NINETEENTH CENTURY PLUMB BOB having a turned brass "keeper" reel. Only some minor toolbox wear merits mention as an "apology" on this artfully turned and very well preserved bob (ND# 513)

Estimate: \$125.00 - \$250.00

Auction: March 22 and March 23, 2013 -

Indianapolis , IN

Lot:IC13-610

What they did not know is shown on the photos from Nelson: Hallmark of the city of HAMBURG; Germany²



#513 REEL & HANDLE
W/HAMBURG GATE
CARTOUCHE



Lot-130

An unusual double cone plumb bob with keeper case. integral wind reel. Floral pattern on top of case cap.

Length: 5.250in.

Maker:

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$125.00 - \$250.00

realized \$230.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



Lot-195

An unusual ivory body plumb bob with floral pattern. ceramic inlay. silver plated tip (ND# 661)

Length: 3.500in.

Maker:

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$250.00 - \$500.00

realized \$258.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



ND#661 ENGLISH IVORY W/BUE
RED AND SILVER GEOMETRIC
DETAILING AND SILVER TIP



Lot-163

A rare English clock maker's plumb bob. long vertical axis. ornate turnings. (ND# 573)

Length: 8.750in.

Maker:

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$175.00 - \$350.00

realized \$402.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis



Lot-547

A nickel plated millwrts. plumb bob. carved wooden case. 80% of the original nickel plating remains.(ND #586)

Length: 6.500in.

Maker:

Condition: GOOD+

Estimate: \$300.00 - \$600.00

realized \$402.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



Lot-700

Two miner's "Plummet" plumb bob by W. & L.E. Gurley, Troy, New York. original wood case. original paper label. ND#15

Length: 7.000in.

Maker: W. & L.E. Gurley, Troy, New York

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$2000.00 - \$4000.00

Realized \$1725.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN

Note in Nelson's inventory sheet for ND# 15:
WERE USED BY MINE ENGINEERS FOR SURVEYING
DARK MINE SHAFTS.

Matched set of 2 in mahogany box. These were probably my favorites for their sweet little size and shape. Only 5 1/4" tall and 1 pound 7 ounces. The box, which shows great age and character is 7" long and 6" tall. There is a label on the inside lid, that has been cut up--"Surveyor Trapped In Cave In, Spends Days Destroying Equipment", but enough remains that Garcelon was able to identify it as Gurley, the remaining letters and spacings dovetail with Gurley's logo. Original hangers and perhaps original chains, if not original, then quite old; and two different lengths.

Two extra small holes in shelf that allow chains to be stored in bottom of the box. Remnants of original leather strap. One of the caps still has the original chain, connected to the body, chain is missing on the other one.



Lot-753

A fancy decorated brass plumb bob. turned steel tip. acorn pattern cap. (ND# 22)

Length: 7.000in. **Weight:** 4 lbs 10 oz

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$200.00 - \$400.00 **\$431.00**

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



Lot-313

A TURNED LIGNUM & BRASS PLUMB BOB, an extra large form in superb condition. It has a turned steel tip. From the Collection of Nelson Denny, Hadlyme, Connecticut (ND# 294)

Length: 12.000in.

Maker:

Condition: FINE

Estimate: \$300.00 -

\$600.00

Realized

\$258.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



Lot-249

A griffin's patent lighted plumb bob by Griffin Industries, Ontario, California, patented December 2, 1986. in new condition in its original box. The plumb bob has been signed on the body by the patentee G.E. Griffin. (ND# 748)

Length: 9.000in.

Condition: FINE

U.S. Patent No.: [4625428](#)

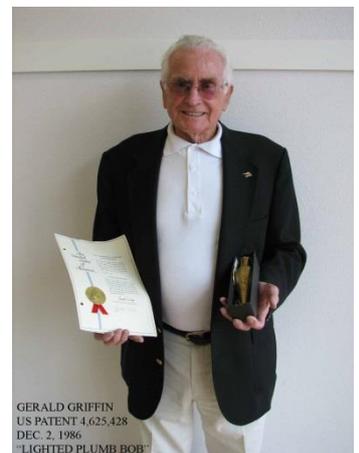
Estimate: \$125.00 - \$250.00

\$149.00

Auction: October 27, 2012 in Indianapolis , IN



FROM THE INVENTORY SHEET TWO PHOTOS OF THE INVENTOR GRIFFIN SIGNING THE PLUMB BOB



GERALD GRIFFIN
US PATENT 4.625.428
DEC. 2, 1986
"LIGHTED PLUMB BOB"



3. MECHANICAL PLUMB BOBS

Below photos shot by Nelson Denny from excellent pieces of his collection.



ND # 463 CLOCKWORKS MECHANISM, "LALLIE" WITH BRAKE; 4.5 x 1.6 in 10.1 oz FINE, LIGHT USE, MECHANISM WORKS



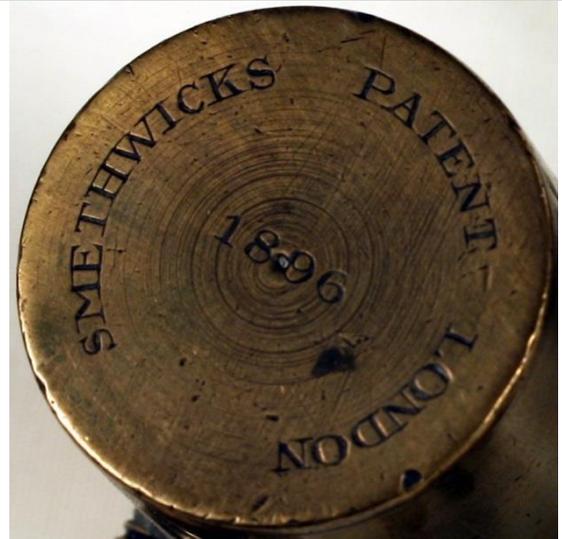
ND # 481
RARE HEXAGONAL W/ "CLOCKWORKS"
INTERNAL WINDING MECHANISM AND KEY
2lbs, 6.1 by 1.5 in
FOUR OTHER EXAMPLES KNOWN, ONLY
TWO W/ KEYS.



ND #533 CONTEMPORARY MACHINIST'S
TWO POINT INTERIOR REEL PLUMB BOB



ND #456 SMETHWICKS PATENT 1896,
ENCLOSED CRANK REEL W/ SMALL
TURNIP BOB. MANUFACTURERS MARK
APPEARS ON END OF REEL CASING.
DATE 1896 ALSO APPEARS ON TURNIP
PLUMB BOB. SMETHWICK PATENT,
LONDON, 1896

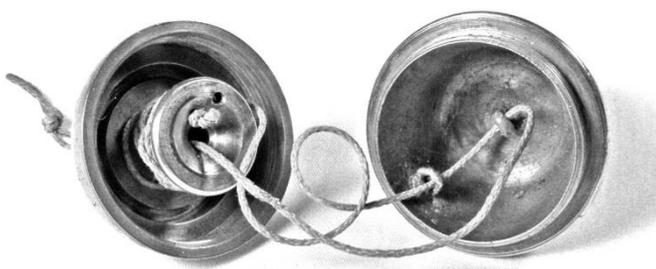


4. SETS OF PLUMB BOBS



ND# 265 THREE GRADUATED LION TOOL, LTD. PLUMB BOBS, ORIGINAL BOX, MINT BOX LABEL, " Made in England: THE LION TOOL COMPANY LIMITED, Swindon, England. (LARGE) DIMENSIONS ABOVE (MEDIUM) 2 OZ., 2.5" LONG, .5 DIA. (SMALL) .65 OZ., 1.8" LONG, .32 DIA. STRINGS STILL COILED AS FROM FACTORY sold in the auction October 2012 for \$86.00

ND# 554 SET OF THREE, A,B,C, KEUFFEL AND ESSER INTERNAL REEL PLUMB BOBS #6487, BOXED



ND# 322 RARE CHROME 3 SIZE INTERCHANGEABLE BODY P. B. IN TRADESMAN BOX



REMARK BY NELSON TO ND# 554 (figure left) IN THE INVENTORY SHEET:
 THREE POINT SYSTEM USED AS EARLY AS 1898. TWO POINT SYSTEM CONSIDERED TO BE AN IMPROVEMENT APPEARING IN K&E CATALOGUE 1913. BOUGHT FROM RETIRED CANADIAN MOUNTY WHO WORKED FOR HIS FATHER AS A TEENAGER AS A SURVEYOR'S STAKE MAN. IT WAS A SILVER MINING OPERATION IN NORTHERN ONTARIO KNOWN AS THE GOWGANDA DISTRICT. IN 1962 PURE SILVER VEINS WERE REMOVED BY HAND FROM A DEEP PIT MINING OPERATION THAT WENT OUT OF BUSINESS SOON AFTER

5. IRON PLUMB BOBS

ND# 492 ANTIQUE CAST IRON PLAIN CHALICE WITH GLOBULAR CAP



ND#125 UNIQUE AND WONDERFUL SHAPE WITH 3 BANDS OF KNURLING



ND#140 STEEL BOB, LAMP W/ PENCIL POINT TIP, NICE METALIC PATINA



ND# 717 MECHANICAL STEEL



ND# 309 UNUSUAL ONE PIECE STYLIZED INVERTED LAMP STEEL PLUMB BOB



6. IVORY PLUMB BOBS

More ivory plumb bobs you can see on my web site on page PICTURE GALLERY 1

ND# 581 ENGLISH IVORY SPHEROID
W/ BRASS COVE BAND AT EQUATOR



IVORY PLUMB BOB WITH CHECKERING
MARKED: "A.J. TELL" (IN SCRIPT)
UNITED STATES
4.6"X2"
5.75 OZ.
#448 DENNY



ND# 449 WHALE IVORY BARREL WITH IVORY
REEL FROM SAN FRANCISCO, SCRIMSHAW



ND#531 OLD ENGLISH IVORY FINIAL
W/ FINE SCORING PATTERN
AROUND BODY

ND# 721 IVORY HEART
ND# 722 MINI CERAMIC BOB



7. HAMBURG PLUMB BOBS

ND# 36, 454, 455, CARTOUCHE HAMBURG CITY
GATES W/TOWERS, GERMANY



WHALE BONE PLUMB BOB
UNITED STATES
2.5" X 1.1"
2 OZ.
#450 DENNY



8. TECHNICAL AND PATENTED PLUMB BOBS³



A. A. SNEBOLD
U. S. PATENT NO. 632,286
SEPT. 5, 1899
(MISSING LINE COLLET BRAKE AND CAP)

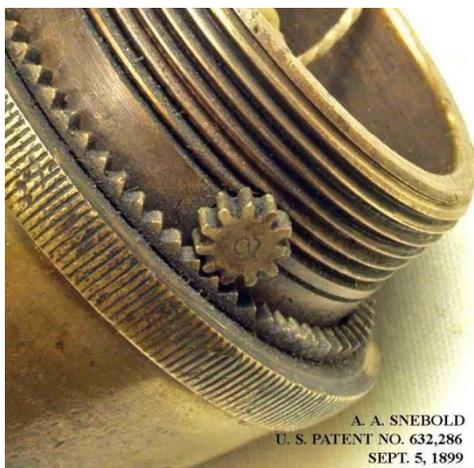


RARE STANLEY TRAUT PATENT,
PAT'D APRIL 28, 1874
REEL IN NECK, PROTOTYPE SHAPE,
NOT IN PRODUCTION ND# 665



ND# 693

A. A. SNEBOLD
U. S. PATENT NO. 632,286
SEPT. 5, 1899



A. A. SNEBOLD
U. S. PATENT NO. 632,286
SEPT. 5, 1899

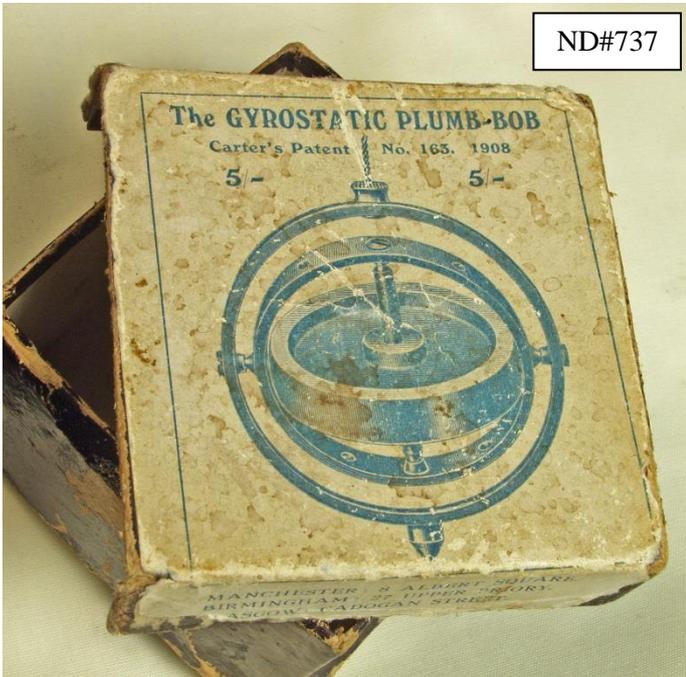


³ More you find on my web site on page „PATENTS OF
PLUMB BOBS“

<http://www.plumbbobcollectors.info/42041.html>

plumbbobwolf@t-online.de

ND#737



ND# 258 PATENTED 266,671
W. L. BERGEN PLUMB BOB AND
HOLDER - 1882-NICKLE PLATED



9. MILLWRIGHT +COMMON SENSE

ND# 228 UNUSUALLY
PROPORTIONED REVERSIBLE
PLUMB BOB W/ ACORN CAP



ND# 255



And finally some
HEIMBACHS:

ND# 281 #6 COMMON SENSE PLUMB
BOB WITH CARVED BOX 4lbs 3 oz



10.SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT



This HELICOPTER PLUMB BOB (offered in the Martin Donnelly auction July 25, 26 & 27, 2013 in Avoca , NY has no hole to fix the line (but why should a helicopter plumb bob need a line) ☺

11.REMARKS

This is an article of the monthly published WOLF'S PLUMB BOB NEWS that is sent on demand as PDF-file attachment by email. FREE.

You can see all former publications on the website

www.plumbbobcollectors.info

on page "download publications".

or on page "WHAT'S NEW?"

Remarks and contact by email: plumbbobwolf@t-online.de

Enjoy it

Wolf

Ps. For the members of our group the whole world turns around the plumb bob as shown in our logo right. ☺



Logo of the International Plumb Bob Collectors Association IPBCA