

WOLF'S PLUMBOB NEWS 2009

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VISIT IN THE PLANE MUSEUM SCHMITZ

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www.plumbbob.de

„PLUMB BOB meets PLANE“ THE PLANE MUSEUM Gerhard Schmitz in Langenfeld/Germany

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A INTRODUCTION:

Dear Reader, Fellow Collector,

In 2005, as I searched for plumb bob collectors in Germany, Hans-Tewes Schadwinkel, coauthor of the famous book „Das Werkzeug des Zimmermanns“ ISBN 3-88746-070-7 (TOOL OF CARPENTERS), put me onto the name of a private museum, “HOBELMUSEUM” (PLANE MUSEUM), located in Langenfeld, Germany . Gerhard Schmitz, the owner has an enormous collection of woodworking tools including, my favorite, plumb bobs.

Since viewing the collection is by appointment only, with Schmitz as a personal guide, I called to set up a date and to arrange a time to make a two hour visit. Langenfeld is some 100 miles from my home.

Gerhard Schmitz, 70 years old, with a maniacal passion for tools, gave me my money's worth, showing me many of the thousands of tools in his grade level gallery. At one point he mentioned a couple of boxes of plumb bobs he had in the basement; subsequently (actually some years later), I found out, the “basement” was actually a ten room gallery with thousands of additional tools.

Concentrating on plumb bobs and plumb levels, Gerhard fetched a white table cloth from the depths of the gallery, laid it on the floor and set out many of his dearest pieces taken from his display cabinets; he then allowed me to photograph the items on a monochromatic background. These are a cherished souvenir of this adventure.

Lost in time in my visit and engrossed in our animated conversation, two hours stretched to six! At this point, the telephone rang bringing us to our senses. It was Gerhard's, "housekeeper", shall we say, because he had that twinkle in his eye, calling to check up on him, to make sure he hadn't been kidnapped! Things like this, when it comes to men talking about their collections and women who are compelled to take care of them, are the same all over the world! ☺

The tool exhibition in the upper floor was much more than I ever expected.

Exactly 3 years later Gerhard phoned me to inquire about a special plumb bob. I told him, that since my first visit I had been starting to write on the subject of plumb bobs and sent him some of my articles.

3 days later the phone rang at 8 am and he asked me for a visit in my “small one room plumb bob museum”. I was happy to show him and his best friend Heinz Vogel my tool collection.

Since that time we have become great friends. I have made two additional trips to visit Schmitz Plane Museum, first with a group of EAIA members on their Tool Tour 2008 and then again with an American fellow collector on a private “Tool Tour of Germany.”

This experience gave me the idea to write this NEWSLETTER about this unique museum.

This museum will also be a part of our 3. International Plumb Bob Collectors Meeting 2010 in Cologne.

Al right, let's start on a sightseeing tour to Langenfeld, 10 miles north of Cologne, Germany. In this town's industrial area, Gerhard put an additional story on top of his business. So he had 200 square meters (2200 square feet) as exhibition area.



Displayed in the stairway is a huge oak timber from c.310 AD, that was a part of a Roman bridge crossing the river Rhine.



Entrance of the PLANEMUSEUM



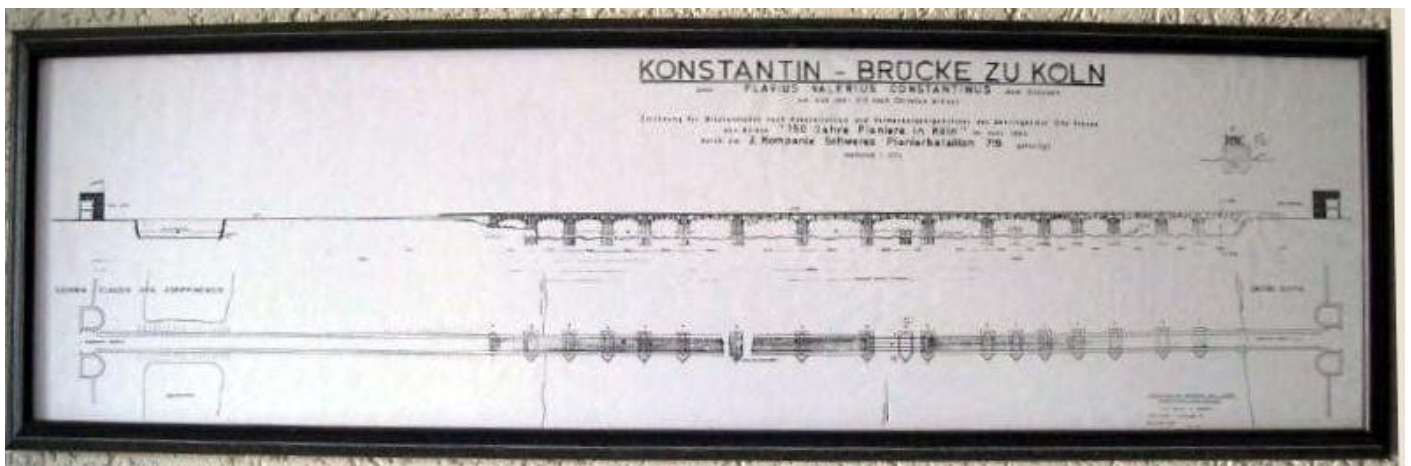
Original tree of the first Roman Bridge, built in 310 AD
Used for the foundation.



Museum (upper floor) with my motor home



Reinforcement iron of the tip



Drawing of the first Roman bridge in Cologne in 310 AD

B 1 WELCOME

Let's pass the word to Gerhard Schmitz:

Ladies and gentlemen, Fellow Collectors,

I warmly welcome you to my PLANE MUSEUM here in *40764 LANGENFELD Hansastr. 11*

Before we visit the collection, I want to say that this museum includes not only planes, but also **all woodworking tools, such as saws, braces, axes, measuring tools and much more.**

The Schmitz family members were **in the woodworking trades for 5 generations** as carpenters, joiners, cabinet makers and general builders.

My grandfather, Karl Schmitz, received from his father a large quantity of preindustrial hand tools. These hand tools were no longer needed because they were replaced before 1910 by machines. By tradition these tools were kept but unused for decades and so they survived.

My father Paul Schmitz was a civil engineer and carpenter. He was missing in action since 1943 after the battle of Stalingrad in Russia.

My grandfather Karl Schmitz died in 1945. Then my grandmother wanted to be sure that the business survived, so she continued to run the business until 1953.

After 1953 a part of the carpentry was leased to other people.

I learned the carpentry trade between 1954 and 1957. While I was cleaning up the workshop in 1956 I found many tools including 130 different hand planes such as profiles or moulding planes and tongue and groove planes.

I stored these planes in the attic over the workshop because I wanted to display them later. In 1958/59 I ran my own business of constructing the staging on various buildings for other companies. The early years were difficult and time consuming and I had little or no time to pursue my hobby.

In 1966 the carpentry shop was destroyed by a lightning strike. The planes and all other wooden tools were completely destroyed. Only some broad axes and other iron tools did survive the heat of the fire. It was only in 1969 that I could buy 30 old planes at Düsseldorf to continue my hobby.

During this period it was nearly impossible to buy old tools. They were not on the market. With the growing number of flea markets and antique markets in the second half of the 1970s and especially in the 1980s, tools became more numerous.

At first I began with carpenter and jointer tools only, then later expanded to tools of all woodworking trades and from all countries. Now the collection includes tools from more than 60 trades that are connected to woodworking.

Meanwhile I store over 40.000 items in my showcases and storage rooms. In my library are a large number of special books to improve my knowledge about tools and the use of tools.

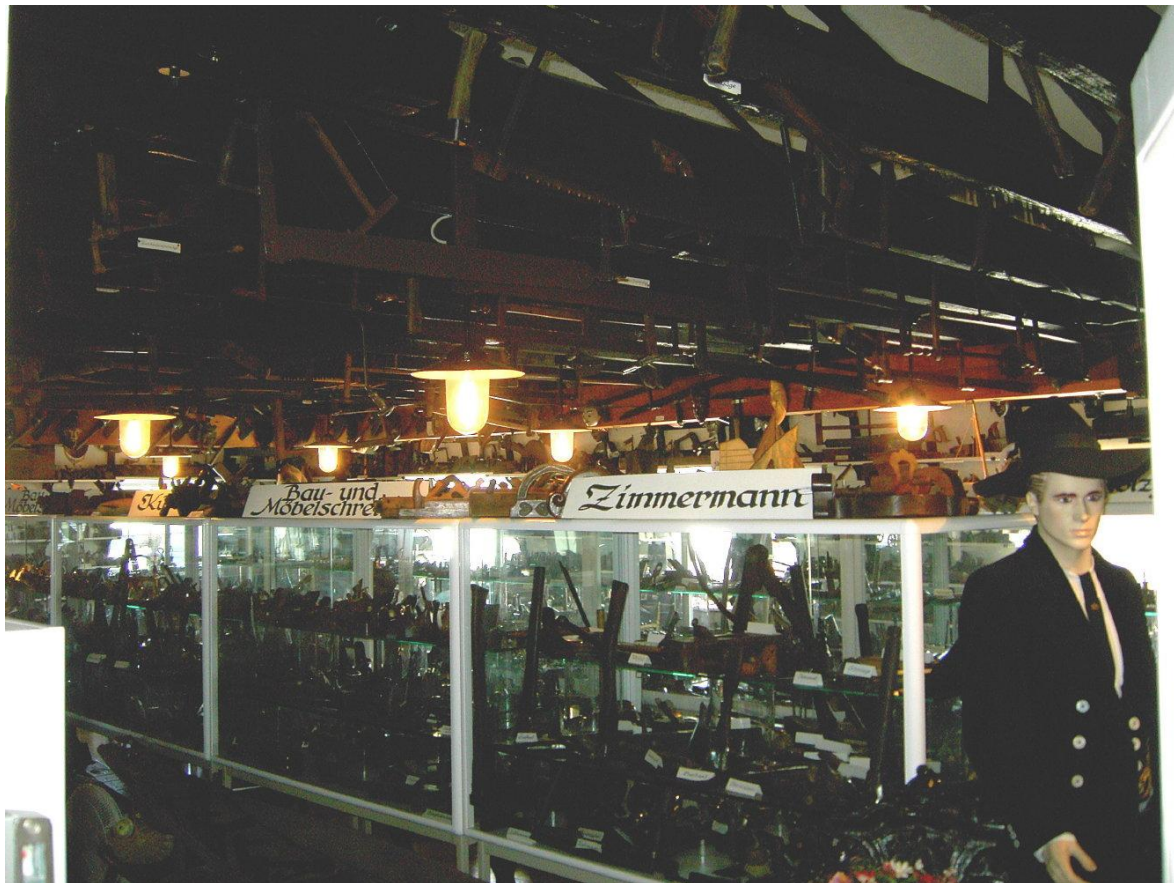
The collection contains 2 films from the "Amt für Landeskunde" (department of historical preservation) made 40 years ago that explain how to make a large wooden wheel, how to use the pit saw to cut boards from a log and how to square a log with an axe. These films are now in video tape form. Also we have 30 video tapes about trades not practiced for many years.

In addition there are over 70 engravings, lithographs and pictures about tools and workshops and there are over 300 historic stock share papers on which are printed elaborate scenes related to woodworking companies.



Gerhard with his original carpenter's clothes

The first impression entering the showroom is imposing. Tools, tools, tools, on the ceiling, at the walls, in the showcases, on the bottom, e v e r y w h e r e.



First impression

Some showcases with woodworking tools.



Stair builder tools



Coach-, violin- und instrument builder tools

B 2 VISITORS

This private museum is not open for the public.

Visits are possible after appointment by phone 02173-13018 (8 am to 4 pm German time. German language only). Visits are done by Gerhard Schmitz in person.

Contact by **email:** hobelmuseum-schmitz@t-online.de

Mail address

Hobelmuseum Schmitz

Hansastraße 11

40764 LANGENFLED

Germany

Actually no website available.

If you have any questions, you can also contact me:

plumbbobwolf@t-online.de



Gerhard explains to guests from the EAIA- TOOL TOUR 2008, how matches were produced in former times. His brother helped him as a translator.



Quentin Schwartz from Eugene Oregon USA with a 3 iron ogee plane (Profilhobel /Karnieshobel).

In the background you see Heinz Vogel, a very good friend of the museum.



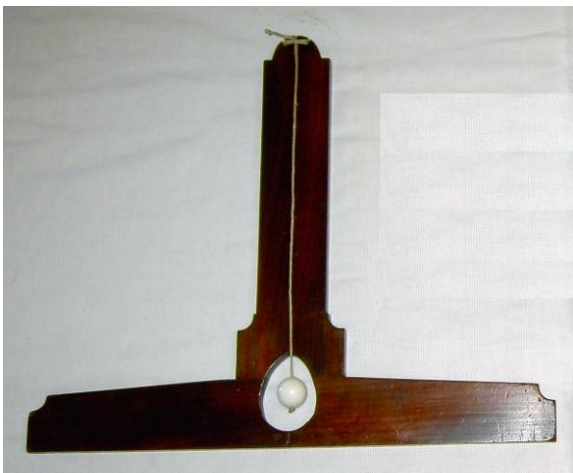
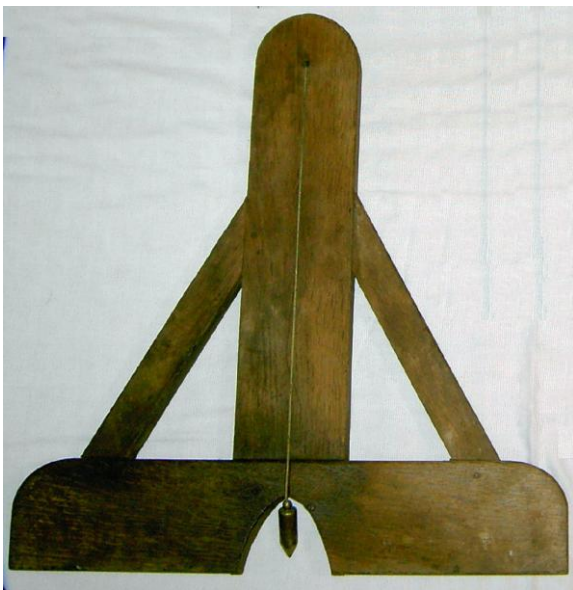
That's Gerhard in action:
„with this iron wooden shoes were caved“



Elton Hall (EAIA Executive Director & Treasurer) and Wolf Ruecker (left) on a Rhine-Ship near the famous Mouse tower of Bingen during the travel to the museum.

B 3 PLUMB LEVELS

Some plumb levels (grandparents of the levels with vials). More see „WOLF’S PLUMB BOB News 2009-01 plumb levels”. These plumb levels with (plumb bob / weight) were used up to 1930 in Germany.



Wooden plumb levels indifferent shapes.

B 4 PLUMB BOBS

The show cases.



Plumb bobs of different material



Brass plumb bobs



Plumb bobs from Portugal and England



Lead and brass bobs



Portugal, Ottoman, Netherlands, England etc.



Ivory, Stanley 1874, England, Germany



Ornated plumb bobs

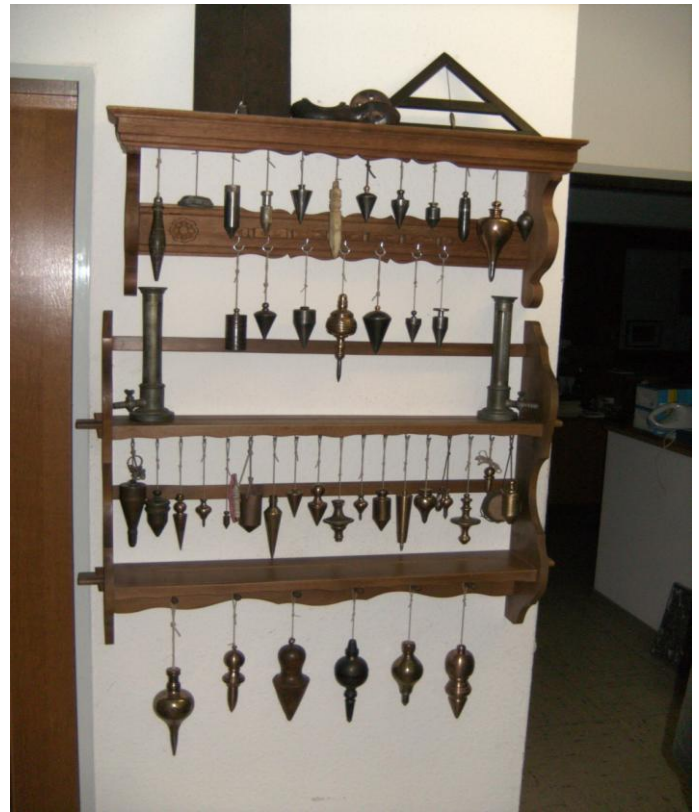


WIG & SON England

That box of plumb bobs from the “basement” emerged after my first visit, to hang under this old wooden cupboard, their sojourn in the dark boxes in the basement now over for these plumb bobs. ☺



Plumb level, chalk line, plumb bobs and walking-sticks



In the middle: Water level



Old wooden cup boards to display plumb bobs



Stairway to the basement

B 5 CHALK LINES

There are also chalk lines from all over the world in the collection. (more see in WOLF'S PLUMB BOB NEWS 2008-11 „History of the chalk lines“)



Pot with a red color (Rötel). In Austria the chalk line is also called „Rötelschnur“



Line, spool and holder. The holder very often is missing, because nobody knows for what this handle with the ring was used.



Chinese chalk line (sumitsubo)



Chinese chalk line (sumitsubo)



Chinese chalk line (sumitsubo)



Wooden ornated chalk line

B 6 WOODWORKING TOOLS

Plumb levels and plumb bobs are a very small part of the shown items in this museum. The focus is on the woodworking tools from nearly 60 professions. This short newsletter unfortunately can't show them all. These pictures below are but a sampling of this vast collection.



Do you have a tool box for these big planes?
2 men planes (4 ½ feet).for planks / floor and
planes for coopers



Very long, these two men pit saws (up to 8 feet)



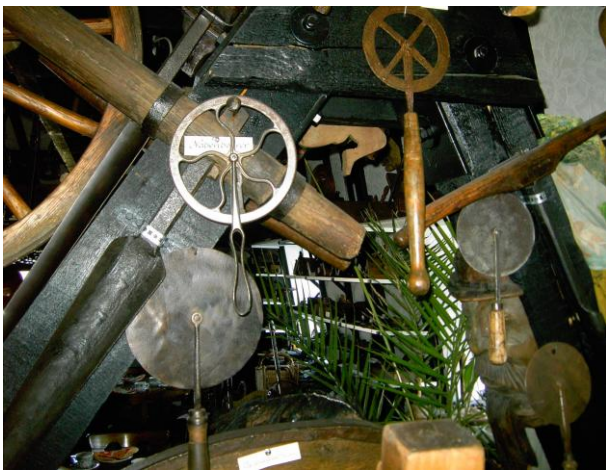
Planes, planes, planes,
each more beautiful than the next!



To make wooden shoes (clogs)



Cork plane from Spain



Wheel hub drill and measuring tools for wheelwrights



Japanese jack saw 200 years old



Reproduction of a wooden „running machine“ from Karl Drais. (1817). Basic for the later bicycle.
More see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Drais



Also more woodworking machines.
This is the #77 “dowel and rod turning machine” from Stanley Rule & Level Co (produced 1911 to 1969).
More see www.woodmagazine.com



Hundreds of masks from all over the world



Hundreds of pictures and drawings of old tools



The ceiling with more and more saws!



Joinery tools



Willow/wicker planes for basket plaiter, match planes etc.

B 7 BASEMENT / STORAGE

In the basement are stored some ten thousand tools. They are checked and get a cleaning, before they are stored in the shelves. Permanent examination for wood worms is carried out, and humidity is a concern. Below you find a view of some rooms. The pictures tell you all.



A



B



C



D



E



F

C 1 LOOK FORWARD

As I mentioned in my newsletters often, we will have our next

“3rd International Plumb Bob Collectors Meeting 2010” in COLOGNE / Germany.

After the meetings in Istanbul 2006 and Paris 2008, COLOGNE 2010 is a very suitable place.

We choose Cologne, because it is a city founded by the Roman Empire with good airline connections and a good background for historical sightseeing tours for the family members. The Plane Museum of Gerhard Schmitz will be an important part of the meeting. Langenfeld is only 10 miles from Cologne.

Also we try to get contact to the civil engineer of the Cologne Cathedral for a visit of the stonemason workshop etc.

The date is not yet fixed, but it will be in autumn 2010, that means, we have still 12 months to go.

In January we get the dates of the big antique markets in Cologne and perhaps we can combine our meeting with a big fair.

Do we meet you 2010 in COLOGNE, GERMANY?



Proposal by Jose Asturias from Guatemala for a **commemorative Plumb Bob** TERTIVS PLVMBIA ORBIS CONGREGATIONVM SYMPOSIVM GERMANIAE COLONIA CLAVDIA ARA AGRIPPINENSIVM* MMX



Roman plumb bob (Coll. Hans-Teves Schadwinkel)



COLOGNE CATHEDRAL



German Plumb bob. Coll. H-T Schadwinkel

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

You can see all former publication on the website www.plumbbob.de.

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