

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

WOODEN PLUMB BOBS and SPINNING TOPS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Fellow Collector,
today I have something not only for plumb bob collectors, but also for woodworking tool collectors.

Usually we know as material for the plumb bobs stone, lead, iron, brass, etc., or possibly even filled with lead or mercury, a material with a high density. The plumb bob is supposed to provide resistance to wind forces and keep the line tight. There is also a material that we do not expect at the first view, namely WOOD. However, the use of wooden plumb bobs is limited (no wind), but they are there. In addition, there are wooden plumb bobs, which are specially made for collectors or for

ceremonial use. On the other hand, many pieces are made of wood and offered (and sold/bought) as a plumb bob. But they are not plumb bobs; they are spinning tops, which we know from our childhood. Today I would like to add some information about the “wooden plumb bob family”. I am sure every collector has some of these in his collection.

Figure above: Wooden plumb bob 5 feet high by the German artist Björn Borgmann (details see below)

2. PLUMB BOBS FROM WOOD

From Australia, I got a wooden plumb bob, which is composed of two parts put together very complex (see detail photo). At first I thought it was broken or damaged before I took it apart.



Wallpapering PLUMB BOBS

In the U.S. there are two special bobs for wallpaper hangers or tile setters. One of them is made of a flat iron sheet, so that it lies close to the wall and you can mark the position along the line without offset.



The second plumb bob is made of WOOD, but is shaped like a plumb bob cut in half. It is the only wooden plumb bob - that I know - made for workers. Here, the hole for the cord is positioned so that it still hangs exactly vertical. Purpose is that there is no damage to the tiles by the material (wood), if it falls down accidentally. Secondly the cord is close to the wall. You can draw an accurate marker along the line. In a bath or a room usually you have no big influence of the wind. ☺



3. WOODEN SPINNING TOPS

Often, especially in the U.S., spinning tops (whip or throwing tops) are offered as a plumb bob. They have the shape of a conical plumb bob, but they do not have an essential part, namely the attachment point for the cord. The spinning top requires the string "around the waist" and not on top of the head. Sometimes an eye or hook is attached later, sometimes it is not even available and sometimes there is an existing patented portion that was converted to attach the string.



Why are offered spinning tops as plumb bobs?

The sellers expect more money for a plumb bob.

One seller answered me, when I told him that it is a spinning top and not a plumb bob: *"Hi and thank you for your interest in our item. Someone else suggested that it is indeed a plumb bob. I guess we will let everyone weigh in and see where it ends. Thanks again."*

Sometimes it is incognizance of the tool. Some of the patented spinning tops, especially in the U.S. have a piece/part above where a line can be mounted. But it is not for putting string on. It is for keeping the spinning top under control with a line by the child. See more about it in Chapter PATENTS of spinning tops.



Below some spinning tops from my collection.



4. PATENTS OF SPINNING TOPS

The original patents you can get by using the US-GOOGLE PATENT SEARCH with the following link:

http://www.google.com/advanced_patent_search

You only have to put in the patent number.

Especially in the U.S.A we find a lot of patented spinning tops.

Below some details from these interesting patents:

US 346037 G. S. GOLD spinning top from 1886

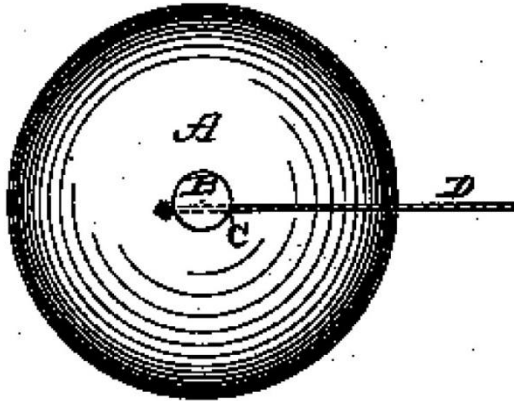
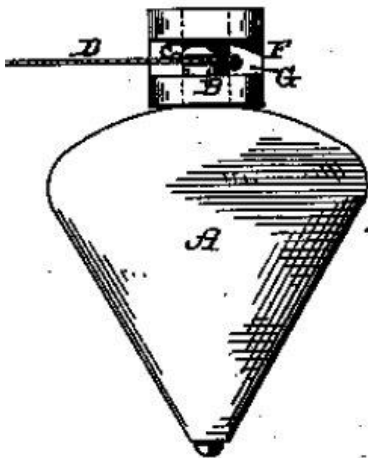


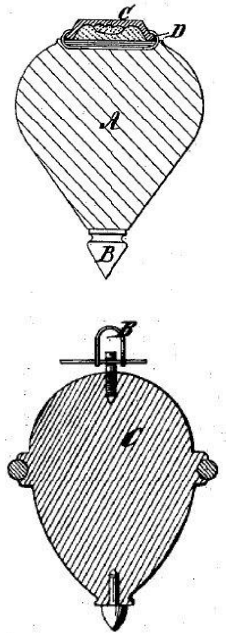
Fig. 1



The spinning top in US patent 178979 by Vetter 1876 looks like a plumb bob and has an iron tip, but on the top there is no hook, but a plate from glass. The patent US 190421 DAVIS from 1877 and reissued 1879 has all important parts to be a plumb bob, but the part to fix the line is made for another reason.

This invention consists in a top having its body constructed to receive a cord wound upon it to effect its spinning, and a cord employed to spin the same, and attached so as to support it while spinning without becoming wound upon any part of the top or twisted by the spinning of the top; also, in the combination of a top and a cord serving to spin it and to support it while spinning, and having a swiveling connection with the top, so as to allow of the spinning of the top without the cord becoming wound upon the top or twisted; also, in the combination of a top, a cord serving to spin the top and support it while spinning, and means for connecting the cord to the top, so as to allow the spinning of the top without occasioning the winding or twisting of the cord; also, in the combination of a top, a swivel permanently attached thereto, and a cord attached to said swivel, whereby the top may be spun by the cord and supported by the cord while spinning; also, in the combination of a top and a swivel attached thereto, and provided with means for connecting to said top a cord, whereby the same may be spun and supported while spinning; also, in the combination of a cord and a device attached thereto, and adapted to be permanently connected with a top, so as to allow the spinning of the top without detachment from the cord; also, in details of construction, to be hereinafter explained.

Fig. II.



A. J. DAVIS,
Assignor, by mesne assignments, to IVES, BLAKESLEE & Co.
Spinning-Top.

No. 8,768.

Reissued June 24, 1879.

Fig. 3.



Fig. 2.

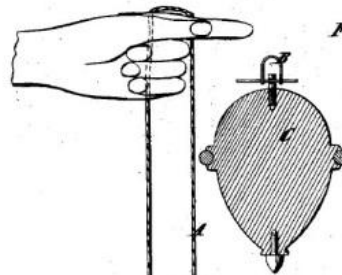
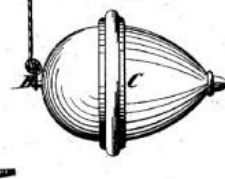


Fig. 1.



Witnesses:

Thomas E. Birch
Chaadler Hall

Inventor:
Andrew J. Davis
by his Attorney,
Edwin H. Brown.

5. SPINNING TOP (GYROS/GIMBAL) patented as a PLUMB BOB.

By the way, as I already mentioned in my NEWS about English plumb bobs part 2 and also in the WR PATENTS NEWS 2007-47 (both for download on my website) exists a real plumb bob in the shape of a spinning top. See figure below.

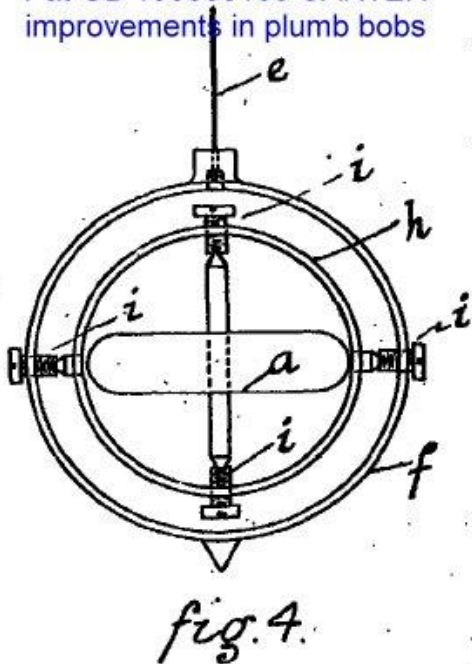
It was invented in England by Carter in 1908 as patent GB 190800163 "IMPROVEMENTS IN PLUMB-BOBS".

The only known example of this plumb bob we can find in the collection of N.D.

He bought it on eBay in Australia in 2006.



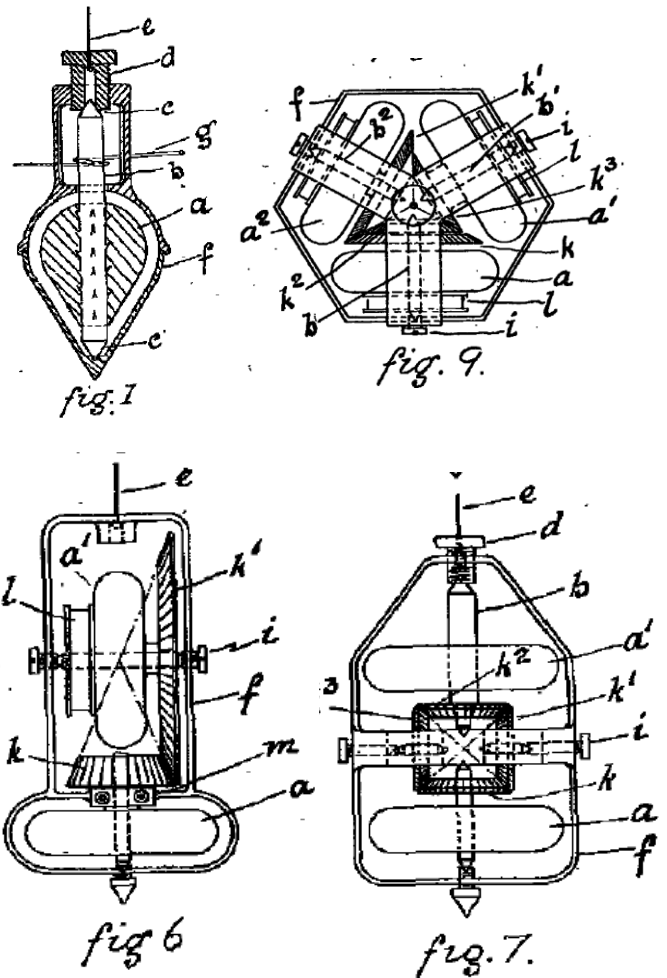
Pat GB 190800163 CARTER improvements in plumb bobs



It was no surprise that it did not work as a "stabilized hanging plumb bob". This is because of the unstable swinging and turning of a gyroscope at the end of a string.

Not every invention wins fight against the reality.

Below some other propositions (drawings from the patent) of the inventor for his "spinning top plumb bob".



The shape of this plumb bob you can buy in our days as a toy for children as spinning top or gyroscope.

I tried to let it spin, but the result was ☹️

6. MAKING A WOODEN PLUMB BOB

My friend Ulrich Biber produced especially for the readers of the NEWS a wooden plumb bob on his simple lathe and made photos of the different steps. Many thanks!

1. Block of wood, Honduras Jacaranda, the sides are dipped in wax by the supplier in order to prevent cracks in the wood



2. Marking the centering point on both sides



3. Lathe equipment
left: live spindle (carrier) in the center the tool support right: live center with ball bearings



4. Clamped scantling



5. Turning



6. Turning and preforming



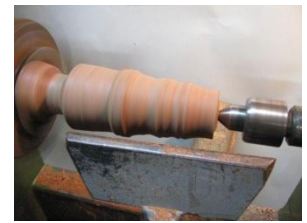
7. Forming



8. Drilling the holes for the head and top (with matching drills)



9. Further removal of wood



10. Grinding with abrasive paper with increasingly finer grades, finally with steel wool



11. Treatment with grinding material (yellow earth size) and then rubbing with bees-wax



12. Grinding the tip with abrasive paper with increasingly finer grades, finally with steel wool



13. Brass rod as raw material and perfect the tip



14. Assembly:
The screw cuts its own threads into the hole of the timber.
The tip is glued in.
Finally you only have to attach the cord.

READY, WELL DONE!

Ulrich also bought some original spare parts such as screws and spikes/tips. Now he can equip his beautiful wooden plumb bobs with these original parts.

Do you also want to produce wooden plumb bobs?

**Here you go
and
GOOD LUCK!**



Below some other nice wooden plumb bobs from his production.
They are looking great, isn't it?
Some are hanging now in my collection. ☺



7. WOODEN PLUMB BOBS FOR COLLECTORS OR CEREMONIES

Jan. 2012 EBay England sold for 333 GBP
10" (250mm) Brass & Lignum-Vitae Plumb Bob.
Text in the EBay auction:

"This is rare Brass and Lignum Vitae bodied Plumb Bob it is probably of a Display or Masonic origin. I could not see this fine Plumb Bob being used by a builder. It is 10" high x 5" wide and has



a small manufacturers stamp with the letters LMSD 2 in the center. Condition for its age is very good. It does not appear to have had much use if any; the Lignum has some very minor surface shrinkage cracks due to drying. The brass parts are well machined as is the steel point".

Below some wooden plumb bobs marked LMSD from England



Prof. John Wittersheim from Siena Heights University who produced a lot of plumb bobs also made some from wood.



More of his plumb bobs see on:

http://www.johnwittersheim.com/sample_funnel.html

On EBay I found:

Boxwood and Brass Plumb bob, 4" long



In Wales my friend Dick Jones produced this huge (14 1/2 in) and heavy (3lbs 11/2 oz.) plumb bob in memory to his late wife Dorothy, using different coloured woods as symbols. Details see his remarks on the plate above.

Just before time of going to press with my NEWS I found THE BIGGEST WOODEN PLUMB BOB I ever saw.

It was designed and made by the German artist Björn Borgmann in 2007. It is 5 feet high and 3 feet in diameter. It is made of laminated wooden boards. The photo below is from a newspaper reporting upon an exhibition of several artists in a limestone quarry in Wuppertal, Germany.



Actually it is hanging in a museums building in the limestone quarry Kalksteingrube Oetelshofen in Wuppertal, Germany

If you know a bigger one, please let me know.



8. DIVERS

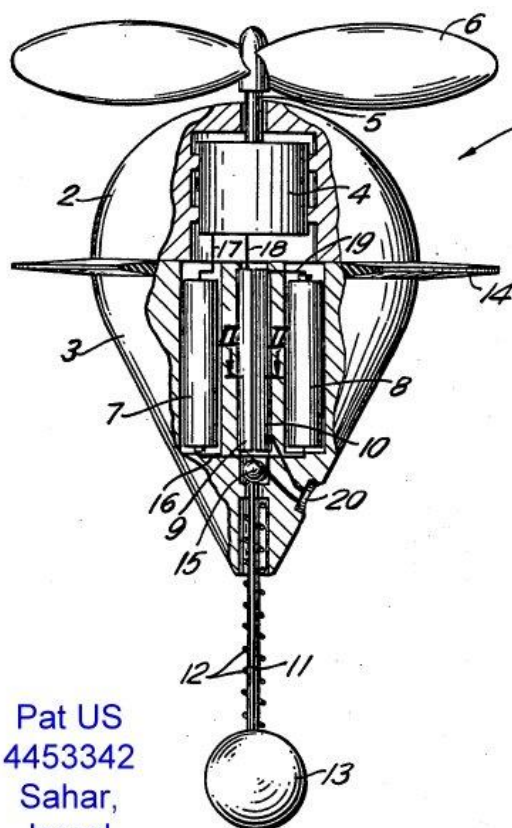
Since a very long time I am searching for such a HELI-PLUMB BOB (see figure right). I got this photo some years ago.

Searching for patents of spinning tops for this NEWS I found the patent US 4453342 from 1984 for a *battery operated spinning top*.



The inventor lives in Israel. I would not be astonished if we could get such a spinning top – if it was really produced – in the future offered as a plumb bob on EBay. ☺

For such a propeller driven plumb bob you don't need any line! If you have a proposition for the use as plumb bob, please let me know. ☺



Pat US
4453342
Sahar,
Israel
1984

FIG. 1

[57]

ABSTRACT

A spinning top comprises a casing of pear shaped appearance. From the lower (pointed) end of the casing extends a stem which is springly urged out of the casing and which - when hit by a racket - moves inwardly, and closes the circuit of a small electrical motor (fed with current by dry batteries within the casing). The motor sets into rotative movement a propeller, the shaft of which extends out of the casing.

The new plaything is used in the following manner: By means of a ping-pong racket and after having thrown the top into the air, it is hit at the sphere 13. According to the force of the stroke the sphere 15 touches the two semicircular members 9 and 10 or penetrates into the gap between them, closing the circuit. Under bias of the spring 12, the stem 11 slides outwardly and dependent on the depth of its penetration into the body 1 it will take a longer or shorter time until contact by sphere 15 is broken. During all the time that the circuit is closed, the propeller rotates and causes the top to hover and return slowly to earth.

Damage to the propeller is prevented - when the top drops to the ground, by the ring 14 the diameter of which is somewhat larger than the disc of the propeller.

There may be provided a switch 20 by means of which the circuit can be permanently closed.

9. UPDATE

After the publication of this NEWS I got an interesting feedback from Bruce Cynar. He sent me a page from a Fairbanks 1906 catalog with TURN PINS from „Dogwood“ in the shape of top spins or tapered plumb bobs.

Bruce wrote: *“There is another wooden item often seen in this country (tools shows and eBay) that is often identified as a plumb bob, which it is not. That is a **plumber's turn pin**. Originally a turn pin is any plug for stopping the flow from the end of a pipe. Plumbers who worked with lead pipe would use a turn pin to flare one end of a pipe to accept another pipe before soldering them together. Later on the phone company, who in the cities buried most of their lines, would also use lead pipe to shield the wire from the rats in the sewers who seem to enjoy eating the wire insulation.”*



1906 Fairbanks

TURN PINS.

Sizes, No. 1, 2 1/4 inches; No. 2, 2 1/2 inches; No. 3, 2 3/4 inches.

PRICES, FIG. 9823.

Dogwood, assorted, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, per dozen \$1.60

Best, assorted, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, per dozen 2.50

I searched in my catalogs and found there also these wooden „BOBS“.

Nr. 207 B Bleirohr-Auftreiber aus Chinaholz.

		Form a	Form b	Form c	Form d
Form a	Länge	70	90	100	110
	Durchmesser	40	45	50	55
	Preis für 1 Stück	0.75	0.85	1.00	1.15
Form b	Länge	45	55	65	75
	Durchmesser	35	40	45	50
	Preis für 1 Stück	0.50	0.60	0.75	0.90
Form c	Länge	140	150	160	170
	Durchmesser	40	45	50	55
	Preis für 1 Stück	1.00	1.15	1.40	1.60
Form d	Länge	115	125	135	145
	Durchmesser	40	45	50	55
	Preis für 1 Stück	0.85	1.00	1.25	1.45

From the collection of Ulrich Biber see below some photos of these „wooden plumb bobs“ from the U.S.A.



Nr. 201 Greifzangen, mit auswechselbaren Gummi-Schutzböcken.

Zum Fassen von polierten und vernickelten Gegenständen, besonders als Montagezangen bei sanitären Wasserleitungsanlagen geeignet.

Länge mm 290

Für Armaturen bis mm 50

Preis für 1 Stück RM. 1.90

Preis für 1 Paar Ersatz-Gummiböcken RM. 1.90

Nr. 202 Bleihrabschneider.

Länge mm 270 420

Für Rohre, lichte Weite von Zoll 1/4-1 3/4-2

Für Rohre, lichte Weite von mm 6-25 19-50

Preis für 1 Stück RM. 1.90 3.75

Ersatzmesser/Preis für 1 Stück RM. 0.52 0.70

Nr. 203 Bleirohr-Aufweitern aus Stahlblech.

Etwa 280 mm lang, für Rohre von 1/2-2 Zoll = 13-50 mm

Preis für 1 Stück RM. 5.25

Nr. 204 Kombinierte Bleirohr-Aufweitern D.R.P. a.

Für Hartbleirohr 40 und 50 mm. Stauchen der Rohre ausgeschlossen. Platten oder Reiben der Rohre unmöglich. Vorbeulen der Bogen fällt fort. Schnelles und müheloses Arbeiten.

Preis für 1 Stück RM. 7.50

Nr. 0204 Fliesenschneid-Apparat D.R.G.M. Der Apparat dient zum Anschneiden von Flur- und Wandplatten jeder Größe und Stärke.

Länge 280 mm. Gleitbahn 110 mm. Preis 1 Stück RM. 11.50

Die Einstellvorrichtung, durch welche die beiden Schenkel hindurchführen, dient mit der oberen präzise geschliffenen Fläche als Gleitbahn für die zu schneidenden Platten. Zur genaueren Einstellung ist auf dem oberen Schenkel eine Fläche als Gleitbahn für die zu schneidenden Platten. Beim Gebrauch wird die Gleitbahn so eingestellt, daß das Maß gleich der Breite des zu schneidenden Plattenstückes ist. Beim Schneiden der Platte wird diese durch die Druckrolle, welche aus Gummi gefertigt ist, gegen das Schneidmesser, mittels der Schraube so fest gedrückt, sodaß beim Durchziehen der Platte durch den Apparat die Glastschicht durchgeschnitten wird.

Nachdem wird das angeschnittene Stück auf einer festen Unterlage einfach mit einem leichten Hammer glatt abgeschlagen.

Nr. 205 Gasbrennerbohrer, fein poliert und brüniert.

Nr. 1 Gewindebohrer, gefräste Reibhahle und Schraubenzieher
Preis für 1 Stück RM. 2.15

Nr. 2 Gewindebohrer, Reibhahle, Schraubenzieher und Schneidisen
Preis für 1 Stück RM. 4.15

Nr. 3 Reibhahle, Schraubenzieher, Gewindebohrer
Preis für 1 Stück RM. 3.75

Nr. 206 Bleihraufreiber.

Für Rohre, lichte Weite von Zoll 1/4-1

Für Rohre, lichte Weite von mm 6-25

Preis für 1 Stück RM. 1.75

Nr. 207 Bleihraufreiber.

Für Rohre, lichte Weite von Zoll 1/4-1 3/4-2

Für Rohre, lichte Weite von mm 6-25 19-50

Nr. 207 aus Eisen, Preis für 1 Stück RM. 1.80

Nr. 207A aus Buchenholz, Preis f. 1 St. RM. 0.50 0.60

BAUMANN 1937

64

For the same reason the plumbers also used a special tong that you find sometimes on the antique markets. See page from the German catalog Baumann 1937.

10.REMARKS

Something to smile at the end: In remembrance on your childhood.



**Please join us for the
4th PLUMB BOB COLLECTORS MEETING
Autumn 2012 in ATHENS, Greece.
Oct. 5, to Oct. 7, 2012**



If you are interested, please let me know.

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

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

Thank you for your interest

Wolf