



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
Montreal, Canada H4Z 1K2

If the name Sherlock Holmes brightens your mind, if it brings images of hansom cabs, gaslights, fog-shrouded Victorian London, then you have been captured by the greatest detective that never lived. My dear friend, you would confer a great favour upon me by joining us at the next meeting of **"THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION"** which is being held on Thursday, February 6th, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. SHARP at the Westmount Library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec. All members, and those who desire membership, are encouraged to attend and be recognized.

Members and attendees will reminisce, resurrect, and re-enjoy the adventures of the world's greatest Consulting Detective. Our purpose is to gather and celebrate the Great Detective with discussions, lectures, films, quizzes and any other method we can deduce.

Remember to pay close attention to parking signs while parking.

The Next Quiz: The Return of Sherlock Holmes: **"The Sign of Four"** prepared by David Kellett. I think that your time will not be misspent, for there are points about the case, which promise to make it an absolutely unique one. "The Sign of the Four" was written for the Lippincott's Magazine. The story collects a colorful group of people together, among them Jonathan Small who has a wooden leg and his companion, a dwarf from Tonga islands.

Minutes of the MEETING of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION held on Thursday, December 5th, 2002 at the Westmount library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec:

Present: Rachal Alkallay, Elliott Newman, Karin Winkler, Mac Belfer, David Kellett, Stanley Baker, Paul Billette, David Dowse, Colin Semel, Shigeko Betts, Francis Lalumière, Wilfrid de Freitas, Lin Watson and Maureen Anderson

Guests: Doris Branscombe, Leigh Lerner, Philippe Mathieu and Mark from the Westmount Examiner.

Regrets: Patrick Campbell

CALL TO ORDER: David Dowse opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed those present. A quick introduction by each member and guest then followed.

REMINDER:

Cheques for 2003 Membership (January-December 2003) are now due.
Please note, if you have not paid your annual dues (\$18.00 to cover correspondence, etc.) to the Society, these minutes will be the last you will receive until renewal.

SHOW/TELL:

David Dowse read several Whodunits, which somehow developed into a debate on why men and women button their garments on different sides. The results of my investigation uncovered the following which, by the way, I'm prone to agree with as it makes a lot of sense.

Buttoning Convention

In the use of buttons and other closures, modern apparel appears to be strongly influenced by custom. The differing placement of buttons is an old custom and may be explained as follows:

Men: Buttons are placed on the right side of men's clothing. When a man's right hand was occupied with implements or weapons, buttons on the right side could best be adjusted with the left hand, thus leaving the right hand free to continue its work or fight, as the case might be. A reader reports that he read in an unidentified costume book that originally everything wrapped right over left because this is the easiest way for right handed people to work buttons and other fasteners. However in the Renaissance, or perhaps the Cavalier period, when dueling was fashionable for men, a gentleman would remove his shirt to duel. Of course he would use his left hand so he could keep his sword hand free to defend himself should his adversary try a sneak attack while he was undressing. Hence men's garments began to be fastened left over right. According to *Compton's Encyclopedia*, men have buttoned their clothes left over right since the Middle Ages. The buttons on the right allowed a man to reach under the flap of his topcoat with his right hand to get to his sword easily, which was hung on his left side. He could do this quickly without the sword becoming entangled with his clothing.

Nowadays instead of reaching for weapons they're reaching for cell-phones.

Women: Buttons are placed on the left side on women's clothing. This may be due to the fact that women, from time immemorial, have usually carried their babies on their left arms while working with their right hands. This custom made it more convenient to use the right hand rather than the left when buttoning or unbuttoning their garments. Similarly, buttons on wrist and skirt bands are placed on the thumb side for men and on the little finger side for women. One observer points out that women rode horseback by sitting sidesaddle. It was preferable that their clothes fastened right over left. They rode with both legs on the left side of the horse. With the new placement of the buttons, the breeze would not catch their clothing and open their jackets.

Attending members of the December 5th meeting requested that the next minutes contain a Christmas Goose recipe with regards to The Blue Carbunkle. Don't forget to visit Mrs. Hudson's corner!

TOASTS

This evening's toasts were impromptu.

QUIZ:. Colin Semel provided a summary of the rules. It was a quiz to define the levels of knowledge our fellow sleuths held with regards to "The Adventures of Silver Blaze." Of those present,

The top three winners of the quiz were:

1st Prize: David Kellett (Horseshoe frame with Silver Blaze print)

2nd Prize: Francis Lalumière (Silver framed B&W print of the murdered victim John Straker)

3rd Prize: Elliott Newman (Silver Candles which, when lit, will provide a silver blaze)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting closed promptly at 8:59 p.m.

MRS HUDSONS CORNER:

The Blue Carbunkle Christmas Goose

Goose was a traditional part of the Victorian Christmas dinner for centuries until the cheaper turkey usurped it. This traditional method of roast goose is delicious. A ten to twelve pound young goose should yield about 6 to 8 servings.

Wash the goose inside and out with hot water. Dry carefully. Remove giblets and loose fat. Sprinkle goose inside and out with salt and pepper. Rub with orange rind.

Stuff the goose with Chestnut Stuffing. **(Do not stuff goose until it is ready to be roasted.)**

Truss, tying the legs loosely to the tail. Place goose breast side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Roast in a preheated 350-degree F oven for 25 minutes per pound.

If the goose is very fat, you may need to drain off the accumulated fat several times during roasting. For the first hour of roasting, have the goose with its breast up. Thereafter, turn the goose every half-hour being sure the goose is roasting once again on its back for the last 15 minutes.

Test for doneness by moving legs up and down; they should move easily.

Place goose on Blue Carbunkle serving platter. Garnish with pine sprigs, sliced blood oranges and roasted chestnuts.

Chestnut Stuffing

- Fry bacon in a skillet until crisp. Add onion, celery, and parsley, and sauté for 5 minutes.
- Stir in peeled roasted chopped chestnuts, rice, and your choice of herbs. Season to taste with salt.

Source: Bits and Bobs from several Christmas enthusiasts and adventurous minds.

Varia: Reminder, there is a vacancy in The Bimetallic Question's governing committee. Anyone interested in securing the position of secretary should contact David Dowse.

The Bimetallic Schedule Meeting Calendar for 2003

| Scheduled for: | Next Quiz |
|------------------|--|
| February 6, 2003 | The Sign of Four |
| April 3, 2003 | To be decided at Feb. 6 th , meeting. |
| June 5, 2003 | To be decided at April 3 rd , meeting |
| August 7, 2003 | To be decided at June 5 th , meeting |
| October 2, 2003 | To be decided at August 7 th , meeting |
| December 4, 2003 | To be decided at October 2 th , meeting |
| January 17, 2004 | 150 th Birthday Celebration |

Reports on Past Events:

On the occasion of the 149th Anniversary Celebration of the Master's Birthday, the members celebrated in high style at the Montefiore Club on January 18, 2003. Members attended what would best be described as a monumentally enjoyable event. Twenty-seven people representing members, friends, guests and the merely curious ate, drank and conspired.

Several members dressed for the occasion in Victorian costume.

The Montefiore's staff tempted us with tantalizing Hors d'Oeuvres which included: Montefiore Chips, Speckled Smoked Salmon on Black Bread, Banded Cocktail Weiners and Helen's Purses with Wild Mushrooms.

The evenings toasts were presented by: David Dowse To Charles Purdon, David Kellett To The Master, To Dr. Watson, Rachal Alkallay To The Woman, Paul Billette To Mrs. Hudson and culminating in Elliott Newman's, To The Society. (Elliott your toast touched many hearts).

The dinner, what can I say accept exceptional! Dinner choices ranged from: Broiled Orange Roughy with Mango Coulis a la India, Roast Striploin of Beef Stoke Moran-style and Crane Water Chicken scaloppini with Marsala.

If any of our fellow sleuths know a means of locating the recipe to the Bengal Artillery Butternut Squash Soup I would be most grateful.

Upon the meal's completion events progressed toward the evening's educational entertainment.

Our Sovereign, David Dowse, with eloquent and heartfelt introductory words, presented our guest speaker, "The Honourable George Springate", a member of the Order of Canada, and a tenured professor in criminal and civil law at John Abbott College. Early in life, Mr. Springate joined the Montreal Police Department where he became "the voice" of the force and was seen frequently on CFCF-TV for eight years. He has been appointed as a Citizenship Judge in the province of Quebec. In addition, for our sports fan members, he was a kicker for the Montreal Allouettes.

George, as we were instructed to call him provided a provoking presentation covering the topic of "Evidence". He was extremely entertaining. He furnished examples from the Victorian era to today. He demonstrated reasoning capacity that would baffle the criminal mind. It was a thought-provoking presentation that scored a touchdown and won the game. Albeit with a slight limp from his kicking days, never has there been a better illustration of The Game is Afoot!

George would welcome sponsorship for his weight loss and pole-sitting endeavours to raise funds for a children's camp. All interested members can contact me at (514) 696-2603 for further details.

George recommended two speakers for our future birthday celebrations.

We were then transported to an earlier era by a melodic medley of bygone days provided by Colin Semel. They included old standards such as: Daisey Bell, Daddy wouldn't buy me a Bow Wow, The Man Who Broke the Bank At Monte Carlo! ending with The Galloping Major. Bravo, Colin!

There was a brief revisit on the subject of membership dues and a friendly reminder regarding the next meeting and its content. The only blight on the otherwise glorious event of January was the discovery that the evening had to come to an end.

After the courtesy of a proper "thank you", the evening ended with attendees filing out to awaiting hansom cabs, quickly disappearing into a luminous Montreal night. The full moon was glowing with mystery.

Rachal we are indebted to you for welcoming us into the timelessly handsome and elegant atmosphere of the Montefiore Club with its outstanding cuisine and flawless service.

All that remains is to end the minutes by challenging you with the **Puzzler**. This is what awaits those with the courage to complete the following statements:

- 1) After all Watson, I am not _____ (8) by the police to supply their _____ (12)
- 2) What is the use of having _____ (6) in our profession?
- 3) My dear _____ (6), you shall keep watch in the street. I'll do the _____ (8) part.

Answers to last month's Puzzler: 1) morally guilty 2) criminals 3) to uphold the law.

We hope to see you at the next meeting. Must dash! This closes my last adventure as Secretary to "The Bimetallic Question". Please contact David Dowse or Wilfrid de Freitas with your articles, comments, suggestions until the new secretary is appointed.

Must dash ----- the bees are buzzing!

Maureen

The Blue Carbunkle Christmas Suggestions

Cranberry and Blueberry Port Sauce

Serve this with the grilled goose for a beautiful presentation and delicious taste sensation.

INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ cup Dried Blueberries & ¼ cup Dried Cranberries
- 2 cups good quality Port, divided
- 1½ cups rich, reduced homemade Chicken Stock
- 1 small Garlic clove, crushed
- 5 whole Black peppercorns
- Salt and freshly ground Black Pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons Unsalted Butter (optional, but definitely recommended)

GARNISH:

Fresh raspberries and blueberries

Place the berries in a small non-reactive bowl. Soak berries in one cup of the Port until soft.

Reheat the Homemade Chicken Stock, into the same pot, add the remaining 1 cup of Port, and reduce again, to 1½ cups. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and pepper as desired.

Once goose is cooked; reheat the sauce. When ready to serve, remove from the heat and whisk in 2 tablespoons port from the fruit, (If no Port remains with the fruit, add an additional 2 tablespoons Port here) and the butter to the warm sauce at the very last minute. *Do not boil* the sauce after the butter is added, or it will melt out of the sauce.

- Serve warm. Reheat carefully, if necessary. I recommend storing it in a thermos if there is a delay in serving it.

PRESENTATION SUGGESTIONS: Serve from a Blue Carbunkle glass pitcher to show off the beautiful jewel-like colors of the sauce.

Source: *FoodStyles*, March 22, 2002 recipe found at <http://www.foodstyles.com>

An Epergne using Blue Carbunkle Goblets



The following sketch shows how to make an Epergne by taking a large platter, round or oval, setting an inverted saucer on it, a glass fruit dish over that, and into this two goblets with their feet firmly bound together with ribbon. Tape the goblets together, first; then cover with ribbon. The lower end is inverted, and the upper one stands upright. If preferred, a tall slender, glass vase may be used in place of the upper goblet. This forms an extemporary epergne.

To fill the epergne, lay ferns and large leaves around the edge of the platter, slipping the stems under the saucer to keep them in place. Heap the plate with fruit, mingling a few flowers in, for color. Over the edge of the top hang ferns, ivy, or smilax, to trail gracefully down and fill in with grapes, or any other fruit. Fill the upper goblet with water and set in it a bouquet from which droops smilax, or some other graceful green, to conceal the glasses. Wet sand may be used to hold the flowers in place and keep them fresh. When grapes are too expensive or unobtainable, bright red and yellow apples, mixed with bittersweet, holly berries, or cranberries will do very well. The berries may be strung on fine wire and made into little loops.

It is stressed that light, feathery foliage is important. Ferns solve this problem nicely but consider the leaves of carrots, parsley and ivy.

Source: *The Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1844, p. 16; December 1888, p. 11

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

RENEWAL: ? NEW APPLICATION: ?

PLEASE PRINT: Mr. ? Mrs. ? Ms. ? Other:

LAST NAME: _____ FIRST NAME _____

ADDRESS: _____

Street App.

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

TEL. NOS.: Home Business _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

OCCUPATION:

Annual fees are \$18.00 per person and cover the period from January 1st, 2003 to December 31st, 2003. Please make your cheque payable to “**The Bimetallic Question**”. Please forward cheques to the following address:

The Bimetallic Question
c/o Wilfrid de Freitas
369 Kitchener Avenue
Westmount, Québec H3Z 2G1

If new application please complete the following:

FIRST INTRODUCTION TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

How?

When?

HOW DID YOU YEAR ABOUT THE SOCIETY?
