



# THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower  
Montreal, Canada H4Z 1K2

## MINUTES of the meeting of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION August 7, 2008

### Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on  
Thursday, October 2nd, at 6:30 p.m. at:  
The Westmount Public Library  
(Westmount Room)  
4574 Sherbrooke Street West  
Westmount, Quebec

### The Quiz at the next meeting

**"The Adventure of the  
Cardboard Box"**  
prepared by Roger Burrows.  
This meeting's quiz: "The  
Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle"  
prepared by Carol Abramson.

**Minutes** of the MEETING of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION held on Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the Westmount Library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, Quebec.

**Present:** Jack Anderson, Stanley Baker, Mac Belfer, Paul Billette, Andrew Burlone, Marie Burrows, Roger Burrows, Geoff Dowd, Sarah Dowd, David Dowse, Judy Glass, Bruce Holmes, David Kellett, Wayne Larsen, Anita Miller, Elliott Newman, Dorothy Ormsby, Maureen Peters, Kathryn Radford, Arlene Scher, Fiona Sorel, Heather Wileman-Brown, Ronnie Zilman.

**Regrets:** Carol Abramson, Wilfrid de Freitas.

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called promptly to order at 6:31 by Jack Anderson. This beat last meeting's record by one minute.

### **ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND GENTLE TRANSACTION**

(Incorporating Show and Tell, Hither and Thither, Abbott and Costello, Over and Out.)

1. **A League of Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**  
There were many new faces around the golden oak tables in the Westmount Library Reading Room on the memorable evening of August 7. The first clue handed to your Lowly Scribe to this effect were the many signatures that did not look familiar on the attendance sheet. Delving further, your L.S. attempted, through a process of elimination and reverse Arithmetic Progression, to assign faces to the signatures. This worked extremely well, and your L.S. was quite proud of himself, until only two names of the gentler persuasion were left over, yet the two remaining faces were of the less gentle persuasion. What was to be done? Elementary, dear people. Throw caution to the winds, and listen to each new person announce their name and relate what was their favorite S.H. story, and why.
2. **What Oft Was Thought Yet Ne'er So Well Express'd**  
One of the new faces was attached to the Editor of the *Westmount Examiner*. His name is Wayne Larsen. Wayne announced that five years ago he had sent a reporter to cover a meeting of the BmQ. It came out that the reporter honestly believed that S.H. was a real-life personality whose exploits were a matter of record, ably handed down by his biographer Dr. John Watson. We find it no stretch of the imagination that the reporter, by virtue of challenging discernment and judgment issues, has since presumably found a sinecure reviewing movies for the *Montreal Gazette* where we have observed the primary requirement seems to be a broad disconnect between what is observed and what actually is.
3. **Go Know**  
Anita Miller observed that S.H.'s father was Jewish. She wondered if this fact could in some way explain TWGCD's complexities. We might want to send the reporter referred to in #2 above, through the time/credulity warp to conduct an in-depth interview.
4. **Into Whom Did I Stick That Kitchen Knife?**  
Heather Wileman-Brown gave away an intriguing book, *Plots and Pans*, a collection of recipes by mystery writers. Your L.S. was impressed first and foremost with Heather's generosity and kindness, then the allure of the publication itself, and finally, with the extremely good manners of those at the meeting who exercised restraint at the offer. The various responses of "No, I couldn't possibly" eventually segued into "Well, if I must" and finally became "I'll take it if no one else will." Many pairs of eyes followed the book to its new owner as we would trace the course of a cherished family heirloom disappearing over the edge of Victoria Falls.
5. **Stranded Again**  
Geoff Dowd shared with us several volumes of *Strand* magazine from the 1890s. One of them was signed by Wyndham Lewis, co-founder of the Vorticist movement. Vorticism was sometimes known as the British version of cubism. We feel that Monty Python might have something to say about this, so your L.S. will step aside at this time.
6. **221B All Laid Out**  
Paul Billette showed us a layout of S.H. rooms at 221B Baker Street, downloaded from the internet.



7. **If You Were Absent, You Missed This**  
Paul Billette showed us an annual of the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, purchased from The Mysterious Bookstore in New York, down the street from The Fountain Pen Hospital.
8. **Carded Again**  
Jack Anderson distributed 21 S.H. business cards. We should give one to that reporter from the *Westmount Examiner* in order to arrange his interview with S.H. (See #2 above)
9. **Booked Again**  
Jack Anderson showed us a copy of his *Sherlock Holmes in London: A photographic record of Conan Doyle's stories*. Your L.S.'s copy is published by Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1989. All pix are suitably sepia'd. A full-page portrait of Jeremy Brett looking intensely insane shows him dangling one leg off Westminster Bridge.
10. **Another RR Dick**  
Jack introduced us to Edward Marsden's railway detective series, set in the 1850s in England. No buffalo. No Indians. It'll bomb in New Haven.
11. **More Literature**  
Another book from Jack was Lisa Picard's tome on street life in Victorian London in the 1890s.
12. **If You Can't Read, Read This**  
Marie Burrows, who drives in with her husband Roger from Ottawa, pointed us to an article in the *Westmount Examiner* regarding the library's summer reading program.
13. **Love When the Nights Are Cold**  
Marie Burrows also informed us about the auctioning of Queen Victoria's bloomers to Canadian Barbara Rusch for £4,500. We were apprised of our departed monarch's broad girth in the bloomers area which may have been up to 50 inches, or 2.54 times that amount if your are hoping to bust (I know, I know) a metric record. We do not find it surprising that a Canadian woman with the name of an 81-year-old movie star would pay this amount of money for a roomy pair of bloomers. In the first place, the price of oil is driving everything up. Next, we assume no queen would tolerate itchy bloomers, so this pair must be nice and smooth, probably no-iron. Last of all, and related our first reasoning: with the increasing price of oil, a large pair of bloomers should be able to accommodate two people at the same time for purposes related to the sub-title of this section, and should be able to contain the heat generated by such close contact, for some time after the expending of such energy. Furthermore, the purchase of this item should pay for itself through the amount of money saved on heating the house, say amortized over 20 years. If the home heated is supplement by solar panels, we consider that an extended factor of 2.54 times the number of years with a fossil-fuel system, would take us easily into the third quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After that, you're laughing, Ms Rusch.

#### 14. **First Toast – To the Master**

By David Dowse

Read from *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes*, ed. Ellery Queen

(Please note: Since Ellery Queen was actually two people, shouldn't they be Ellery Queens? We don't know. Because of the great length of this segment of the Introduction to the book, your L.S. has expunged, reshaped, massaged, bridged, paraphrased, and opined the material to a shameless degree.)

"To think of S.H. by any other name (in China, he is Fu-erh-mo-hsi) ... He is (1944) invariably treated as a great popular hero who wages deadly combat with ghosts, fox-women, tiger-men, and other supernatural horrors so dear to the heart of the Chinese masses."

Doyle's first choice of a name for his detective was Sherrington Hope in "A Study in Scarlet." Next, came Sherrinford Hope which according to Vincent Starrett, was ACD's first choice. This contradicts ACD's own testimony in his autobiography which identifies Sherringford Holmes as the first name. Somewhere the name lost a "g," however.

ACD is reputed to have chosen, finally, the surname of Holmes because of his great admiration for the American essayist, poet, and physician, Oliver Wendell Holmes, "and 'Sherlock' because he once made thirty runs against a bowler of that name and thereafter had a kindly feeling for it."

Variations of the WGCD's name, when in hands of burlesque-minded authors have been:

"Sherlaw Kombs, Picklock Holes, Thinlock Bones, Shylock Homes, Hemlock Jones, Purlock Hone, Holmlock Shears, Herlock Sholmes, Shamrock Jolnes, Solar Pons, Shirley Holmes."

We empathize with the dyslexics among the S.H. following, for nowhere have we found the Herlock Sholmes variation. We all waited patiently, however, until Andy Griffith showed upon television as Matlock. We are uncertain as to this name's connection with "flintlock" and "fetlock," but we wouldn't be surprised if there were one.

#### 15. **S.H. Spaced Out**

David Kellett provided us with take-home copies of an S.H. pastiche, "The Adventure of the Extraterrestrial. David also discovered a number of S.H. societies focusing on science fiction. Titles of interest are:

*The Best Untold Tales of Sherlock Holmes* by Randall Stock

*Sherlockian Scion Societies* by Bill Vande Water (For more on this Google the James Phillimore Society)

#### 16. **Second Toast – To Dr. Watson**

by Roger Burrows

Dr. Watson is primarily known to us from his own writing which reveals only obliquely the character of the man. Thanks to extensive research (a polite word for plagiarism), I can share part of the Last Will & Testament of Sherlock Holmes (as discovered by Nathan L. Bengis of New York in 1955, and reproduced in A



*Sherlock Holmes Companion*, ed. Peter Haining), in which Holmes paints a word picture of his long-time companion:

"... my devoted friend and associate, Dr. John H. Watson, often tried, sometimes trying, but never found wanting in loyalty; my well-intentioned though unavailing mentor against the blandishments of vice; my indispensable foil and whetstone; the perfect sop to my wounded vanity and too tactful to whisper 'Norbury' in my ear when necessary; the ideal listener and the audience par excellence for those little tricks which others more discerning might well have deemed meretricious\*; the faithful Boswell to whose literary efforts – despite my occasional unkindly gibes – I owe whatever little fame I have enjoyed; in short ... the one true friend I ever had ..."

So please raise your glasses to that one true friend, Dr. Watson!

\* For a definition of "meretricious," please see our previous minutes.

**17. Third Toast – To the Woman**  
by Paul Billette

We have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind. He was the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world had seen, but as a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions save with a gibe and a sneer. And yet, there was but one woman for him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory. She was the woman who outsmarted him. Here's to Irene Adler who epitomized lovers who play the great game.

**18. In a Shaded Grove**

We all signed a card of condolence, to be sent to the family of Doug Grove. Doug was a familiar face at our annual dinners. He was unstintingly generous, and on many occasions had offered us his country home for Sherlockian afternoons.

**19. Senior Moment. Again.**

Your L.S. has a note that Bruce Holmes had lunch with Evelyn Bernard. We wholeheartedly support this. It must have been memorable. Now who was Evelyn Bernard? Google didn't help, beyond listing an Evelyn Bernard who died in 1979 at the age of 19. Bruce, was it that long ago? Sorry, people. You know your L.S. likes to throw in the kitchen sink plus plus plus. But this proved to be beyond his limited powers.

**20. Quiz – Results**

"The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle" prepared by Carol Abramson.

Possible total: 65

Winners were:

Rank	Name	Score	Prize
1.	Roger Burrows	57	SH book: The Man and His World
2.	Marie Burrows	55	Book on Jack the um – uh – gee ...
3.	David Kellett	54	SH book: The Man and His World

The next quiz will be based on "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" prepared by Roger Burrows.

**21. Beeton to a Pulp**

Patrick Campbell showed us *The Beeton Book of Household Management*. It's about how a proper Victorian lady should run a household. Do we suppose ACD consulted this as a model for Mrs. Hudson?

**22. Fourth Toast – To Mrs. Hudson**

Read by Maureen Peters - Source from the Internet

[http://www.livejournal.com/go.bml?journal=ru\\_sherlockiana&itemid=128397&dir=prev](http://www.livejournal.com/go.bml?journal=ru_sherlockiana&itemid=128397&dir=prev)

**A TOAST TO MRS. HUDSON**

by John McDonnell

based on "The Adventure of the Dying Detective"  
(1913)

As guests entered to find their places,  
Their names and titles were loudly intoned,  
Respect for each other beamed on faces.  
Hands applauded, though stomachs groaned.

The spicy scents from steaming dishes  
Were almost overpowering.  
At last some hope for postponed wishes,  
The last guests entering were finally seen!

"Who's Mrs. Hudson?" one guest grumbled,  
"This buxom landlady from Baker Street?"  
As some of the noble peerage mumbled,  
The duke bade all to sit down and eat.

Amidst their cheer of celebration  
The stately duke stood up to say:  
"Dear guests, I sensed some consternation  
"At one who dines with us today.

"Mrs. Hudson is now most famous  
"For housing London's very worst  
"Tenant. Her long-suffering would shame us.  
"At what she endures our tempers would burst.  
"Sherlock Holmes, the consulting detective,  
"Without Mrs. Hudson, where would he live?  
"But why should I now wax reflective?  
"His landlady the true account can give."

"My famous lodger's most untidy.  
"Plays music at the oddest hours,  
"Fired bullets indoors just last Friday.  
"Yet I'm in awe of his thinking powers.

"Since he's a chemist, I'm often treated

"To some malodorous experiment.

"Perhaps so that I won't feel cheated,

"His payments make a princely rent.

"Although he tries my patience often,

"I have become quite fond of him.

"His overbearing ways can soften

"Toward womankind, though he dislikes them.

"His famous 221 B dwelling

"Attracts the worst and best of men.

"What stories climb up stairs for telling,

"Then clomp their way back down again!"

"But were it not for my dear tenant,

I would not have been invited here.

My family bears no noble pennant,

But I love this company and cheer."

The one who had begun the muttering

Then stood, somewhat shamefaced, to say:

"I'm guilty of malicious uttering.

"Forgive me, Mrs. Hudson, I pray.

"Your patience is a noble offering.

"Perhaps this sounds absurd, but I'm

"Thinking, but for your long-suffering,

"Your tenant might have turned to crime!"

As this set off considerable laughing,

The duke had brandy poured out neat,

Proposing a toast for general quaffing:

"To Mrs. Hudson of Baker Street!"



**23. The Canon of the Canon: A Request to Members**  
by Patrick Campbell

*"... It is an error to argue in front of your data."*

You may be aware that our member, David Kellett, has generously provided several members with a pristine set of DVDs that include all forty-two episodes of the splendid Granada Television Production's programs that featured Peter Jeremy William Huggins (better known as Jeremy Brett) in the role of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's (or was it Dr. Watson's?) stirring tales of the fascinating cases involving the incomparable Sherlock Holmes.

I would also like to propose a research program involving any and all of you that involves your borrowing one or more of David's DVDs, and watching as many of the programs as you have time for.

Immediately after viewing each episode, I would like you to give a rating for the episode, not based on the merit of the story as written by ACD or Dr. W., but on the merit of the Granada Television version of the episode. You need only write down the title of the story and the mark (see below) that you have awarded. If there are two or more of you, let each viewer submit their own evaluation.

My suggested marking system would be to award a value between 0 and 10, with this list as a guide:

- |    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 0  | Didn't like it, turned it off |
| 1  | Watched reluctantly           |
| 2  | Not particularly interesting  |
| 3  | Not bad                       |
| 4  | Moderately entertaining       |
| 5  | Entertaining                  |
| 6  | Very entertaining             |
| 7  | Most enjoyable                |
| 8  | Very good entertainment       |
| 9  | Excellent                     |
| 10 | Absolutely splendid           |

In between each number you can award numbers 1 to 9 as a further refinement, for example:

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 7.1 | is just above "most enjoyable"                                   |
| 7.5 | is midway between "most enjoyable" and "very good entertainment" |
| 7.9 | is just below "very good entertainment"                          |

It's your choice.

When all the results are collected, I plan to do a statistical analysis of the data (but as Holmes cautioned in STUD, SCAN, SPEC, COPP, VALL and TWIS: "... never theorize without data.") individually and collectively and evaluate the data in several ways, which I will not disclose yet as it could slant the analysis, and influence the conclusions ("... it is dangerous to reason from insufficient data.).

Let us plan to have all results in by the end of September if possible, with a possibility of a month's extension. And yes, I realize that my first sentence ran on for sixty-seven words, but Carlyle was even more expansive and look where he is now!

**24. Future Toasts**

To The Master	-	Fiona Sorel
To Dr. Watson	-	Patrick Campbell
To The Woman	-	Carol Abramson
To Mrs. Hudson	-	Stanley Baker
To The Society	-	David Dowse

**25. Counting**

Patrick Campbell wondered if this meeting had recorded a record attendance, since there were 24 people.

**26. Fifth Toast – To the Society**

by Rachel Alkallay

Another marvel of conciseness, since Rachel could not attend the meeting. We toasted anyway, in order not to let any of the port or sherry go to waste. David Kellett said, "This was the best meeting in a long time." What a great society!

**Our dear friends**, you would confer a great flavour upon us by joining us at the next meeting of "THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION" which is being held on Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, at 6:30 p.m.

For the latest society news or updates on our history, please go to [www.bimetallicquestion.org](http://www.bimetallicquestion.org)

*Please turn over for a special treat →→→→→→→* **J**



## **The Poet As Hero**

Feeling isolated, alone, bereft, and underfed, your L.S. has long been urging kindred spirit Mac Belfer to render unto Erato that which is Erato's. After many months of perfecting his poems, Mac has gracefully offered us a selection from which we are reproducing one here, with more to follow.

### **The Mask of Terror**

by Mac Belfer

The faces of the soldiers  
We see on television  
Are unlined and unlined  
Their future torn from them  
By violent explosions  
Their vicious foes dealing death  
For ideas contrary to ours  
Taught to them by evil men  
Whose cruelty they emulate  
By brutal slaying of the innocent  
Fomenting hatred is a goal  
We must resist  
For our foes are captive to it  
And brutality has become  
Their way of life  
Yet we cannot be diminished  
Or intimidated by the fierceness  
Of their misguided faith  
For this struggle will be long and hard  
And a testing ground  
For our western civilization

