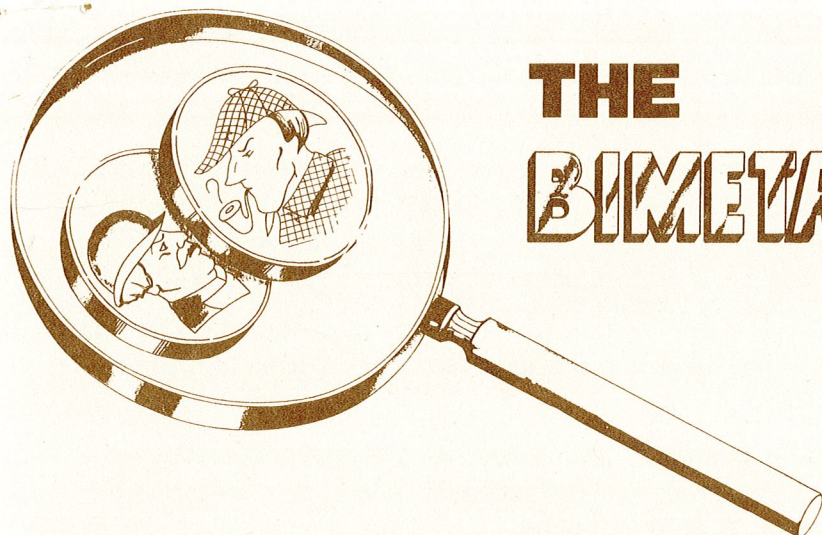


6 JUNE 2002



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
Montreal, Canada H4Z 1K2

A tip of the deerstalker cap to Elliott Newman for his superb chronicling of this month's minutes.

The next meeting of the **BIMETALLIC QUESTION** will be held on Thursday, August 1, 2002 at 6:30 p.m. SHARP at the Westmount Library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec. *Caveat lector:* Time has not dulled Inspector Lestrade's penchant for papering the windscreens of our Hansoms and Diligences with notices of amends and punishments for those who do not keep the parking meters ringing with the sounds of falling moose, loons, and tunes.

The NEXT QUIZ: David Kellett will prepare "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client," found in *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*.

Minutes of the MEETING of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION held on Thursday, April 6th, 2002 at the Westmount library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec:

Present: Rachel Alkallay, Stanley Baker, Mac Balfer, Shigeko Betts, Paul Billette, Bernie Brodtkin, David Dowse, David Kellett, Elliott Newman, Nick Rakic, Lawrence Reich, Colin Semel

Absent: All those who weren't there.

CALL TO ORDER: David Dowse opened the meeting promptly at 6:34 p.m. and welcomed those present. David delivered a lively and informative résumé of the origins of the Bimetallic Question. We infer that due to the selfless commitment to preserve our petroleum resources, David and co-founder Wilfrid de Freitas gave up on the drive along the scenic and awe-inspiring 401 highway to Toronto where they headed regularly to that city's Sherlock Holmes meetings, in favour of establishing this province's first—and only—society devoted to the study and appreciation of things Sherlockian.

SHOW/TELL

Paul Billette shared a Mycroft Holmes novel, *Embassy Row*, available in paperback, and written by Quinn Fawcett. From Paul's spirited and detailed description of the plot, we were clued in to much of the fascinating story of international intrigue with more twists than a New York pretzel. Thank you, Paul for so splendid a summary. The consensus was that those privileged to hear it do not need to read the novel.

Stanley Baker repeated questions from a quiz he had participated in on a cruise last Christmas. Only the Shadow knew all the answers.

Colin Semel showed us memorabilia and photos from his recent trip to the Baker Street Sherlock Holmes Museum in London. He promises more photos to come once the films are developed. Colin loves the museum and the city, hailing from a suburb of London. He also deplores the near-criminal increase in the price of everything in and around the city. We are considering asking S.H. to look into this conspiracy to ward off tourists.

That was the end of Show & Tell, except for two newcomers who showed themselves to us and told us a bit about their interest in Sherlockiana.

Shigeko Betts is a native of Japan, now in Montreal. She described widespread interest in Sherlock Holmes in her native country, and expressed satisfaction at having discovered our secret den in the Westmount Library. We hope to see more of her!

Mac Belfer, also a first-timer, revealed a lifelong interest in Sherlock Holmes. With Mac's look-alike Vincent Price moustache, we are reserving choice parts for him when next we perform dramatic readings from the canon (and from Patrick Campbell's canon too!).

GENERAL BUSINESS

David reiterated the Goose Club of Vermont's invitation to our society to join them atop Mount Philo in Charlotte, VT on June 15. David and Maureen Anderson had telephoned those of our members who had attended it last year, to see if they would be interested in going again. Of those who did attend, it appeared at our meeting that only Paul and Raj Billette were fairly certain of making the trip down. Towards that end, David charged Paul with the duty of carrying down the "Silver Blaze" game as our contribution to the day's festivities. The deadline for receiving the \$10 (US) cheque was extended. It was agreed that if there were to be a caravan of more than one car heading to Vermont, all vehicles would meet in front of the library at 7:00 a.m.

Reciprocation of the Goose Club's hospitality will be the subject of a committee's study and recommendations. David Kellett generously offered his house as a venue and even promised to cut the grass (on his lawn).

QUIZ: Elliott distributed his quiz on "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax" and counted 4,037 holes in the ceiling while the membership grappled with the questions. Mercy was granted after about 20 minutes, and a rollicking time was had by almost everybody during the scoring segment. The unrelenting groans of the hapless victims of the quiz during the marking of the "Holmesamania" part only gave Elliott more encouragement. Since no one realized that a "moving telecommunication" was a "Carfax", Elliott realized then and there that he would have to devote his life to explaining the canon to the Bimetallic Question according to his personal vision.

Winners of the Quiz (out of 87 possible points) were:

David Kellet - 57½ (he declined to add the 1/3 point he had been granted, thereby missing being the first Bimetallica to get a score of 57-5/6). David's prize was a rather comprehensive gift basket of crackers, cheese, and other consumables in colored tin foil.

Rachel Alkallay - 36½. She chose a CD of music from the soundtrack of the movie *Michael*, starring John Travolta. She said the dog on the jacket was what made up her mind for her.

Stanley Baker - 35. Stanley chose a jazz CD by Thelonius Monk.

CONTINUATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Rachel gave us distressing news that our friend and staunch Sherlockian devotee Linda Watson had suffered a compound fracture of her leg in a fall.

We are still discussing the possibility of inundating Grove Manor in the Laurentians for a day of swimming, basking, eating, and chasing flies this summer.

David Dowse again mentioned that he would like to disburse the treasure trove of Sherlockiana that has taken over his bedroom. The plan is to bring all items to our October meeting at which time and after much thought they will find new owners in a manner as yet unresolved. Maureen Anderson has agreed to design bookplates that will be affixed to books identifying the origin of these volumes and thereby adding immensely to their value.

FILM NIGHT AT THE LIBRARY

Our August meeting will be devoted almost entirely to a viewing of *Young Sherlock Holmes*. Colin Semel will reserve the video, and the necessary equipment will appear in the Westmount room of the Library. David Kellett has promised to make the quiz brief to accommodate this tight schedule.

TOASTS

This evening's toasts were presented by David Dowse.

TO THE MASTER - SHERLOCK HOLMES

I do so enjoy when reading detective stories to find references to Sherlock Holmes which the author has used to utmost advantage in the text. As many of you know a favourite detective writer of mine is Dorothy L. Sayers and in her novel *Strong Poison* she uses an especially significant reference:

In a small apartment usually devoted to Bunter's photographic work, and furnished with a sink, a bench, and a Bunsen burner stood the apparatus necessary for making Marsh's test of arsenic. The distilled water was already bubbling gently in the flask, and Bunter lifted the little glass tube which lay across the flame of the burner.

"You will perceive, my lord," he observed, "that the apparatus is free from contamination."

"I see nothing at all," said Freddy.

"That, as Sherlock Holmes would say, is what you may expect to see when there is nothing there," said Wimsey kindly.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you a man who sees and perceives: Sherlock Holmes

TO DR. JOHN WATSON

Watson said of himself, "I am a whetstone for his mind, I stimulate him." Of him, Holmes said, "Good old Watson! You are the one fixed point in a changing age."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Dr. Watson.

TO THE WOMAN, IRENE ADLER

The daintiest thing under a bonnet on this planet.

I give you Irene Adler.

TO MRS. HUDSON

"... her cuisine is a little limited, but she has as good an idea of breakfast as a Scotchwoman."

I give you Mrs. Hudson.

TO OUR SOCIETY, THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

ADDITIONAL:

David read a poem by Jack Brooks, written at Lac Cloutier, Quebec, 1983.

Baker Street

Take the favoured volume down.

Read a while then walk again

through foggy London Town

listening for the muted clip-clop

of horses' hooves, the rattling sound

of carriage wheels on cobblestones.

Gaslight flares in Baker Street.

A hansom cab creaks and groans,

stops in front of 221

and in a pale blue light a shadow

moves quickly up the steps.

In a cluttered upper room,

two old friends are seated

near the crackling fire.

Wrapped in a dressing gown

scarred by acid stains and burns,

the thin man fills his curving pipe

with shag tobacco from a slipper.

The plump man keeps the gasogene

handy on the table. His glass

is filled; the tantalus unlocked.

This quiet scene is interrupted

by running feet upon the stair ---

a thunderous knocking on the door:

"My dear Sherlock," the stout man cries.

The other rises swiftly.

"Come, Watson --- the game's afoot!"

And side by side they pass

through that door in Baker Street,

the magic portal to adventure.

The mantle clock has stopped

and time is standing still.

TO THE QUEEN

Stanley Baker proposed a toast to The Queen

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting closed at 8:45 p.m.

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We are deeply indebted to Elliott for the preceding minutes.

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VARIA

It is with a heavy heart that I take up my pen to inform all members that our honorable Treasurer and dear friend, Charles Purdon has resigned from the Executive Board for health reasons. Charles' enthusiasm, dedication and organizational genius have been a driving force behind our organization, enriching our assemblage and making him a most valued and esteemed colleague. We look forward to his speedy return to our midst as a treasured member of our society.

MRS HUDSON'S CORNER:

As a foretaste of our next story: "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client", we present a recipe from Mrs. Hudson for "Scrambled Eggs".

Ingredients:

Mere jars in yards
Range or burn
Slim dim elite revolves

They say you can't put the genie back in the bottle but can you put these scrambled eggs back in their shells? Remember to add a dash of patience, a pinch of keen observation, a splash of spirits and a modicum of talent.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Thurston's Billiard Night at the McGill Faculty Club will be held September 4th, 2002. More details to follow by phone.

All that remains is to provide the responses to last month's **Puzzler**, which are:

1. Karl Marx. 2. Pall Mall & 3. Treatise on the Binomial Theorem

We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the August 1st meeting.

Must dash! The next adventure awaits.

Your humble servant,

Maureen