



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
Montreal, Canada H4Z 1K2

MINUTES of the meeting of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION June 1, 2006

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on
Thursday, August 3, at 6:30 p.m. at:
The Westmount Public Library
(Westmount Room)
4574 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec

The Quiz at the next meeting

“The Adventure of Black Peter”
prepared by Patrick Campbell.

Minutes of the MEETING of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION held on Thursday, June 1st, 2006
at the Westmount Library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount,
Quebec.

Present: Maureen Anderson, Jack Anderson, Mac Belfer, Paul Billette, Patrick Campbell,
Wilfrid deFreitas, David Kellett, Elliott Newman, Bernard Robaire, Arlene Scher

Regrets: Rachel Alkallay, Stanley Baker, Joan O'Malley, Erica Penner, Kathryn Radford

Graphic Detection Returns to the Bimetallic Question

Former BmQ Sovereign and noted graphologist
to deliver revealing assessments at next meeting

David Dowse, former Sovereign of the Bimetallic Question asked attendees at the February 2
meeting to provide a specific form of handwriting sample, which he was going to use as a basis
for analyzing their character.

Due to the vicissitudes of fate and the intervention of planned and unplanned events, David's
presentation has been delayed until our August meeting.

David informs us that he has made some “interesting” discoveries in the course of his
research. What can this mean? Are we safe? Come to the meeting and find out!

CALL TO ORDER:

Our Sovereign Paul Billette called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND GENTLE TRANSACTION:

- 1) **Buy, Buy**
Patrick Campbell showed the latest stock list from Rupert Books in Cambridge, England.
- 2) **Buy, Collect**
Wilfrid deFreitas, in his capacity as Florin of the Society, submitted the annual financial statement for the period January 1 – December 31, 2005.
Among the highlights:
 - Cash on hand \$3,016.09 (Jan. 1) and \$1,354.33 (Dec. 31)
 - Birthday dinner (annual banquet) income: \$1,485.50 + \$78 in advance
 - Birthday dinner expense \$1,587.00
 - Printing and binding of "Musings," our anniversary anthology: \$2,314.00
 - Revenues from 20 "Musings": \$823.66
 - 29 membership dues: \$522
 - Obituary for Colin Semel: \$322.07
 - Total expenditures for year: \$4,569.39
- 3) **'bye, 'bye**
Brief discussion on *The Montreal Gazette's* dismissal of Howard Richler (our speaker at the annual banquet) for not attributing his sources in his weekly column on language.
- 4) **BmQ Fossils**
Paul Billette delivered a synopsis and appreciation of our walking tour of fossils that began at Redpath Hall, McGill University. He referred to us as a "congenial group," and thanked Arlene Scher for her fine, sensitively-taken photos of the tour. Paul suggested that Arlene's pictures should be used to promote the tour.
- 5) **Rock, not Roll**
David Kellett brought in a sample of sedimentary rock, much younger than the vintage we saw on the tour, only about 50 million years old. His sample also revealed embedded crustaceans.
- 6) **I am the Rock**
Bernard Robaire pointed out that the house on the northeast corner of Dr. Penfield Avenue and Mountain Street was built from stones excavated from that lot. Patrick Campbell brought in stones excavated from the site of his home. The crustaceans were no longer wriggling.

7)

A subtle reflection

Paul Billette shared a reflection on the origin of reflecting pools, prompted by one of the venues on our fossil walk. He said that reflecting pools originated among the Arabs (Moors?) in Spain in the 18th century. The Arabs had come from the deserts of Africa. Water had special significance for them since there never seemed to be enough of it. The fountain was a sign of wealth.

Patrick Campbell added that since the Arabs could not show people in their art work (similar to the Judeo prohibition against graven images), they developed intricate forms of geometric expression through mosaics. We also assume that the flat topography of a reflecting pool was consistent with these beliefs.

Your scribe notes that sculpting with water has yet to be perfected. Even the famous avant-garde European artist, Hundertwasser, gave up after his 99th attempt.

8)

First Toast – To the Master

By Patrick Campbell

Once again Patrick enriches our knowledge of the canon and elicits our awe with his erudition, scholarship, and willingness to share these amazing gifts with us. What follows is far more than a toast. It is not only a key to understanding the canon, but also a glimpse into the wealth that Patrick continues to bring to our Pamplona of coursing events and knowledge at the BmQ.

The Toast

I have been asked to propose a toast to a man, so I must start with a brief description.

1. He was actively employed, or rather engaged in his chosen profession for 23 years.
2. He once said, "It is always awkward doing business with an alias." Yet he was known as Harris, Escott, Sigerson, Captain Basil, and Altamont.
3. It is said that the criminal world knew him, and he was variously described as Mr. Cocksure, Mr. Busybody, Mr. Theorist, Mr. Detective, Jack in Office, a magician, a meddler, a necromancer, a staghound, the master, and even as the worst tenant in London!
4. Some said he would have made an actor, and he played many parts: an accountant, a book collector, a clergyman, a fisherman, a groom, a loafer, a master mariner, an opium addict, a plumber, an Italian priest, a registration agent, a sailor, a sporting man, a burglar, a singlestick expert, a theatre-goer, a tourist, a workman, a French workman, and even an old woman.
5. Yet in all this time only two people called him by his first name: his brother and old Sherman.
6. What more can I say? You have probably already guessed that I am proposing a toast to that truly unique individual, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

Here is what takes the foregoing beyond a toast and into the realm of scholarship and generosity. Patrick now provides us with references to the stories in which his examples occur. You will note these story titles are abbreviated. For some of us, scribe included, these abbreviations are big news. Unworthy scribe apologizes for typos. A glossary of abbreviations is provided at the end of this collection of BmQ minutes.

The References

- | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Active 23 years | VEIL | | |
| 2. | Aliases: | | | |
| | Harris | STOC | Captain Basil | BLAC |
| | Escott | CHAS | Altamont | LAST |
| | Sigerson | EMPT | | |
| 3. | Professions and Personae: | | | |
| | Accountant | STOC | Plumber | CHAS |
| | Actor (potential) | SIGN,
SCAN,
MAZA | Priest | FINA |
| | Book Collector | EMRT | Regist'n Agent | CROO |
| | Burglar | RETI | Sailor | SIGN |
| | Clergyman | SCAN | Singlestitch Expert | STUD, ILLO |
| | Fisherman | SHOS | Sporting Man | MASA |
| | Groom | SCAN | Theatre Goer | CHAS |
| | Loafer | BERY | Tourist | HOUN |
| | Master Mariner | SIGN | Old Woman | MAZA |
| | Opium Addict | TWIS | Workman | CHAS, MAZA |
| | | | French Woman | LADY |
| 4. | Known to Criminal World: | | | |
| | Jack in Office | SPEC | Mr. Detective | MISS |
| | Magician | BERY | Mr. Theorist | SIGN |
| | Master | HOUN | Necromancer | STUD |
| | Meddler | BLAC | Staghound | STUD, SIGN,
FINA, SOLI |
| | Mr. Busybody | SPEC,
SOLI,
MAZA | Worst Tenant
in London | DYIN |
| | Mr. Cocksure | BLUE | | |
| 5. | Called "Sherlock" by: | | | |
| | Mycroft | GREE,
BROC | Old Sherman | SIGN |

9) **Let's B Cross**

Paul Billette showed a Sherlock Holmes crossword puzzle book.

10) **Dropping Acid**

A lively and experiential discussion on acid-free and acid-based paper was led by Wilfrid. In time, we are all doomed. Earth to earth, acid to acid. Traditional, acidic paper will fall apart fairly quickly. Nothing beats a good rock for getting across a message. Okay, tablet.

11) **Oh, What a Tangle Web We Weave ...**

Paul Billette congratulated Susan Ravdin for the fine job she's been doing on our web site.

- 12) **Transatlantic Cycling**
Bernard Robaire showed prints on "The Solitary Cyclist" he bought on Baker Street.
- 13) **Book Offering**
Wilfrid showed a book he received as a gift which duplicates one he already has. The book is looking for a new owner who will treat it with the care and attention it deserves, and it's reasonably priced. It's: *The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson*. It's fascinating, and if this is your cup of tea, dive in and give Wilfrid a call.
- 14) **Book Sought**
Bernard is trying to find a book entitled, *The Poisons in the Canon*, by George B. Koelle. Bernard teaches a course in toxicology at McGill, and would like to expose his students to some real forensic procedure.
- 15) **We Brook Exceptions**
David Kellett protested the exclusive use of the Baring-Gould edition for the last quiz on "The Yellow Face." Management may review this situation.
- 16) **Book Launching**
Patrick informed us of the launch of his latest book, *At the End of the Final Line*, a history of Canadian Vickers. The launch was to take place July 8, at 2:30 at Cleo Bookstore in the Pointe Claire Shopping Center.
- 17) **Book Sale**
The Society agreed to offer one copy of "Musings" on e-Bay at a reserve (minimal) price of \$40.
- 18) **Second Toast – To Dr. Watson**
By Arlene Scher
(excerpt)
He was the great detective's loyal companion whom Holmes truly appreciated, saying to him on one occasion: "it may be that you are not yourself luminous, but you are a conductor of light."
- 19) **Quiz - caveats**

"The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge"
Presented by: David Kellett
Possible Total: 87
Before beginning the quiz, members were told that the quiz was in two parts. David also noted that the first question was not numbered and was complex. A similar question would greet contestants halfway through. David warned the group not to attempt these questions until the end. He described them as "puzzles within puzzles." He said there were three types of questions: (a) fact; (b) fill-in-the-blank; and (c) direct quotation.

By Paul Billette
Paul acknowledged that this toast was taken directly from "A Scandal in Bohemia."
"To Sherlock Holmes, she was always *the woman* ..."

21) **Quiz - results**

Winners were:

Rank	Name	Score
1.	Patrick Campbell	60
2.	Wilfrid de Freitas	50
3.	Jack Anderson	36

All winners received Laura Secord chocolates.

Next quiz will be based on "The Adventure of Black Peter," prepared by Patrick Campbell.

.....
Please look for and complete the crossword puzzle based on this story, in these minutes.

22) **Fourth Toast – To Mrs. Hudson**

By Mac Belfer

While Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were away, an enterprising reporter from the *London Times* managed to get an interview with Mrs. Hudson.

"Thank you for seeing me, Mrs. Hudson. The *Times* is quite interested in Mr. Holmes' personal life and what better person to interview than the great man's housekeeper!"

Mrs. Hudson graciously responded, "You're welcome, I'm sure. You may have heard it said no man is a hero to his wife or his valet. Both see him, as it were, unadorned."

"Quite so," said the reporter. "Speaking of wives, I believe he never married, nor does he have a current lady friend?"

"That is correct," said Mrs. Hudson. "Nor is he likely to have one."

"Why not?" asked the reporter.

"He is not overly fond of the ladies, you know."

"Really!" exclaimed the reporter.

Mrs. Hudson quickly added, "There was one lady once of whom he spoke with great admiration. She was the only person who ever outsmarted him, and really impressed him. Her name was Mrs. Adler. I think it was more a case of admiration than adoration."

"That is really interesting," said the reporter writing furiously. "What about his personal habits?"

"Well," said Mrs. Hudson. "He is a bit messy and rather moody at times. He flings things about not caring where they land, unlike Dr. Watson who is kind and considerate and keeps things very neat."

"So you don't think Mr. Holmes is a kind man?"

"Oh, he is kind enough, but not too often. The thing I really can't stand is his fiddling."

"You mean he plays the violin."

"If you could call it playing."

"Tell me, Mrs. Hudson, what do you enjoy most about his being here?"

"I am ever so happy meeting the important people who come here seeking the master's help. How he solves their problems. How they regain their lives that at times seem shattered. It is good to see that."

"Mrs. Hudson, is he as clever as they say he is?"

"More so," said Mrs. Hudson with great conviction. "I haven't told you something you should also know."

"What is that, Mrs. Hudson?"

"Both gentlemen think I'm a great cook!"

"I have no doubt you are, Mrs. Hudson. You have been a great help. Thank you."

"You are welcome, I am sure."

23) **Police Procedural**

Paul Billette read from the Sherlock Holmes crossword puzzle book.

He read that Holmes' methods were used by various police forces in different countries.

24) **Fifth Toast – To the Society**

By Paul Billette

Our dear friends, you would confer a great favour upon us by joining us at the next meeting of "THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION" which is being held on Thursday, August 3rd, 2006, at 6:30 p.m.

For the latest society news or updates on our history, please go to www.bimetallicquestion.org

Abbreviations for the stories in the canon

(Ever mindful of public humiliation and academic envy, your dutiful scribe hereby declares he has taken in entirety and duly attributed the following from, www.hwslash.net/abbrev.html. Furthermore, scribe makes no claim as to the accuracy of said reference, and cautions its use in small doses. Following "furthermore," scribe humbly suggests that you keep this listing for your records and commit it to memory before it is too late. It will be increasingly important for your personal safety and to avoid being trampled as we course through our Pamplona of future meetings of the BmQ to be able to summon in a flash these abbreviations {not acronyms} and to distinguish them from each other in the canon and from works, street directions, file folder and computer software titles outside the canon. For example, "3GAB", the first reference below, is easy enough to grasp. One can easily discern that it does not refer to three talkative people or three turkeys. By extension, you wouldn't want to be caught off guard if one of our worthies – or even more delicately, a guest – just happened to throw in a "7GAB" or "7UP" which as anyone knows, are not from the canon. And what about that great New York-based novel, *W²*? What then? Another revolution? Chaos?)

These standard abbreviations (not acronyms) are used by Sherlockians as a shorthand for the titles of all the canon stories. The idea was originally thought up by Jay Finley Christ and proposed in 1947. The general rule is to take the first four letters of the first important word in the title, with some exceptions. If you practice learning these, they become second nature and greatly reduce the amount of typing you have to do during a discussion.

I have ordered this list alphabetically by abbreviation, and I also list the particular collection that contains each short story. If you have trouble finding a tricky story title, like "A Case of Identity", use your browser's Find feature to search this page for that story. "The Adv. of" stands for "The Adventure of."

Abbrev.	Story Title	Book Title
3GAB	The Adv. of the Three Gables	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
3GAR	The Adv. of the Three Garridebs	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
3STU	The Adv. of the Three Students	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
ABBE	The Adv. of the Abbey Grange	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
BERY	The Adv. of the Beryl Coronet	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
BLAC	The Adv. of Black Peter	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
BLAN	The Adv. of the Blanched Soldier	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
BLUE	The Adv. of the Blue Carbuncle	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
BOSC	The Boscombe Valley Mystery	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
BRUC	The Adv. of the Bruce-Partington Plans	<i>His Last Bow</i>

Abbrev.	Story Title	Book Title
CARD	The Adv. of the Cardboard Box	<i>His Last Bow</i>
CHAS	The Adv. of Charles Augustus Milverton	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
COPP	The Adv. of the Copper Beeches	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
CREE	The Adv. of the Creeping Man	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
CROO	The Crooked Man	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
DANC	The Adv. of the Dancing Men	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
DEVI	The Adv. of the Devil's Foot	<i>His Last Bow</i>
DYIN	The Adv. of the Dying Detective	<i>His Last Bow</i>
EMPT	The Adv. of the Empty House	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
ENGR	The Adv. of the Engineer's Thumb	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
FINA	The Final Problem	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
FIVE	The Five Orange Pips	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
GLOR	The Gloria Scott	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
GOLD	The Adv. of the Golden Pince-Nez	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
GREE	The Greek Interpreter	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
HOUN	---	<i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i>
IDEN	A Case of Identity	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
ILLU	The Adv. of the Illustrious Client	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
LADY	The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax	<i>His Last Bow</i>
LAST	His Last Bow	<i>His Last Bow</i>
LION	The Adv. of the Lion's Mane	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
MAZA	The Adv. of the Mazarin Stone	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
MISS	The Adv. of the Missing Three-Quarter	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
MUSG	The Musgrave Ritual	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
NAVA	The Naval Treaty	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>

Abbrev.	Story Title	Book Title
NOBL	The Adv. of the Noble Bachelor	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
NORW	The Adv. of the Norwood Builder	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
PRIO	The Adv. of the Priory School	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
REDC	The Adv. of the Red Circle	<i>His Last Bow</i>
REDH	The Red-headed League	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
REIG	The Reigate Puzzle (or The Reigate Squires)	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
RESI	The Resident Patient	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
RETI	The Adv. of the Retired Colourman	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
SCAN	A Scandal in Bohemia	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
SECO	The Adv. of the Second Stain	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
SHOS	The Adv. of Shoscombe Old Place	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
SIGN	---	<i>The Sign of Four (or The Sign of the Four)</i>
SILV	Silver Blaze	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
SIXN	The Adv. of the Six Napoleons	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
SOLI	The Adv. of the Solitary Cyclist	<i>The Return of Sherlock Holmes</i>
SPEC	The Adv. of the Speckled Band	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
STOC	The Stock-broker's Clerk	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>
STUD	---	<i>A Study in Scarlet</i>
SUSS	The Adv. of the Sussex Vampire	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
THOR	The Problem of Thor Bridge	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
TWIS	The Man with the Twisted Lip	<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>
VALL	---	<i>The Valley of Fear</i>
VEIL	The Adv. of the Veiled Lodger	<i>The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes</i>
WIST	The Adv. of Wisteria Lodge	<i>His Last Bow</i>
YELL	The Yellow Face	<i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>

An example of how to use these abbreviations would be something like this: "Of the four novels, HOUN is considered the best." Or you might say: "Did you ever notice the similarity in plot between REDH and STOC?"

This page is for our members who will be attending the next meeting and looking forward to a quiz that has not yet been experienced but is sure to delight. This is step one of the puzzle; please carry this on your person to the next meeting.

QUIZ: The Adventure of Black Peter

PUZZLE

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THE RULES

1. Each participant starts with 10 points.
2. Each of them draws a card and has two choices:
 - (1) to answer the question, and each correct answer gains one point, but each wrong answer forfeits a point, or
 - (2) the card can be returned to the pack without comment and no loss of points.
3. Correct answers are to be inserted in the puzzle.
4. Game continues until someone, based on the facts, deduces the nature of the case.
5. First prize goes to the master of deduction.
6. Second prize goes to participant with the lowest score.
7. Third prize goes to participant with highest score.
8. Judge's decisions are final and irrevocable.
9. Better luck next time.

