



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
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Welcome

The Vesta

In the canon there is a vesta,
not the kind of thing I am usta.
Can it scratch my nose
or - perhaps - tickle my toes?
I'll find out at the next Bimetallic Questa!

Date of next meeting

Moriarty notwithstanding, the next meeting will take place on Thursday, August 7th at 6:30 p.m. at:

The Westmount Public Library
(Westmount Room)
4574 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec

Those of you with or without reading glasses will notice a marked increase in the quality, import, and substance of this edition of the *Minutes of the Bimetallic Question Meeting*. This improvement is due entirely to the talent, perspicacity, inspiration, and - yea, dare we say exceptional insight - of Stanley Baker who gathered notes on the meeting in Elliott Newman's absence. Stanley, thank you once again for yet another contribution to the many you have already made to the BMQ, dedicated, of course, to the honour, memory, exploits, and sterling role-modelling of the WGCD.

Remember to pay close attention to parking signs while parking.

Keep feeding the meters. Westmount continues to love us. There may, of course, arise difficulties in this relationship if we forget to pop in those quarters and loonies.

If you are arriving by bus, August promises to provide a firmer and safer footing upon descent than early and late springtime. We believe that our last two meetings would have been better attended, but for those who arrived by bus had been swallowed up by the morass of muck near both bus stops.

We have noticed that the library and park grounds have been cleared, swept over, seeded in places, and devoid of all but the most recent canine contributions. This ensures there will be little, if any, skidding as we rush to our next meeting of the BMQ. And no, despite the wading pond at the northeast corner of the park, we do not have a seagull problem, so brollies on sunny days will not be required.

The Next Quiz: "The Problem of Thor Bridge," prepared by David Kellett.

Minutes of the MEETING of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION held on Thursday, June 12, 2003 at the Westmount Library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec, this meeting having taken place one week later than scheduled due to more Moriarties beyond our control.

Present: Rachel Alkally, Jack Anderson, Jeanette Betanyos, Paul Billette, Patrick Campbell, David Dowse, David Kellett, Lawrence Reich, Karin Winkler, Nancy Walkling.

Also present for part of the evening was a crew from Global T.V. filming part of our proceedings for their mystery series, to be shown next fall.

Regrets: Wilfrid De Freitas, Leigh Lerner, Elliott Newman.

CALL TO ORDER: Sovereign David Dowse opened the meeting at 6:40 p.m. and welcomed those present.

1. In the absence of Elliott and Maureen, near panic seized the attendees of this most auspicious gathering as a *volunteer* (sic) was sought to write the minutes. In the true spirit of cooperation and togetherness, all eyes fell upon Stanley Baker who, having come to the meeting with his usual unassuming joviality and trust, was locked into a checkmate of paralyzing persuasion and not-so-veiled threats, the nature of which we dare not repeat here. Suffice to say that Stanley agreed to scribe the minutiae of the minutes, doing a wonderful job, and presenting them to David Dowse all neatly typed, organized, structured, and illustrated (we dare not repeat those here either!).
2. Elliott was given a vote of thanks *in absentia* "for his excellent minutes on our last meeting. The vote was 11 to 0 in favour, with no abstentions." Had Elliott actually been at the vote, he would have exercised his veto option. But then, had he been there this would have rescinded his *in absentia* status, turning all of this into a hopeless philosophical muddle. Therefore, Elliott thank you for your kind attentions. Elliott will also prevail upon the PTB (Powers That Be) to include answers to last meeting's *Maureen's Merriment* in this Minutes/Newsletter.

3. Those present gave information as to why they joined the society. The prevailing reason was the fascination with Holmes' powers of deduction, as well as the social aspect of meeting others with similar interest. (The proper study of Mankind is Man. - Alexander Pope)
4. The factual and spelling errors on the Society's recently created web site were discussed. The spelling errors could only be detected through careful reading. Similarly, we became more aware of the factual error concerning "Moriarty's expertise" which was more obvious when the text on the site was closely scrutinized. (Marginal notes by David to Stanley's minutes include the comment, "You see, but you do not perceive." Who said it? To whom was it said and under what circumstances? Identify the story from the canon. Clue: This was not uttered by Mike Hammer in London as Scotland Yard was going through his luggage in search of drugs.)
5. David reported how Wilfrid and he had formed the Society more than 20 years ago, with a small ad in a newspaper. There were reminiscences about the various locations occupied by the Society over the years and the interest in joining by all age groups, including youngsters.
6. There was a discussion on how to increase our membership with more publicity.
7. David suggested that the Society publish a book in honour of its 25th anniversary, with contributions from present and past members. This will receive serious consideration.
8. In the "Show and Tell" part of the evening, a book, *Murder in Baker Street* and pamphlets from The Sherlock Holmes Society of London were handed out. Patrick showed a photo of the Sherlock Holmes statue in Edinburgh and explained that Conan Doyle was born close by.
9. There was discussion as to whether the writer's name is hyphenated, but it was agreed despite Rachel's hypothesis, that it is not. One of the team from Global T.V. commented that Doyle is an Irish name and he, though a Québécois, had Irish ancestors.
10. Suggested answers of the last "Pun Quiz" were: kneaded, repossessed, developed, and insane (a polite way of saying weird, which some have commented, according to Stanley's perception, applies to our members). Visit: **MAUREEN'S MERRIMENT** for the answers.
11. The usual toasts were proposed and we now stand for these (also this looked impressive for the T.V. crew).

12. The quiz on "The Naval Treaty" was imposed by Stanley. The winners in descending order were David Kellett, Patrick, Paul, and Lawrence, who all received magnificent prizes. There was the usual acrimony concerning the answers (You know, 10 Sherlockians, 11 opinions.) Many hairs were split over accepting "Forbes" as opposed to "Mr. Forbes." Rather than risking further hair loss, Stanley graciously capitulated (an appropriate word when related to any hair discussion). However, Stanley maintains that his yielding on this vital point was due, rather to his understanding and generous nature and so, he accepted just "Forbes." In another embarrassing point: In the answer describing Annie's appearance, Stanley had omitted the "n" in "rich tints," when describing her hair. Somewhat red in the face, Stanley apologized to all assembled with or without tints for the mistake, insisting it was not Freudian. (Vot denn, Stanley? Jungian? A little Gestalt, perhaps?)
13. Then, with great aplomb (and other assorted fruit), various members read Act 2, Scene 1 of the *Tides of the Wight* by Patrick.
14. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

THE MYSTERIOUS BOOKSHELF - A taste of fiction obviously inspired by the WGCD.

This month's selection is brought to you courtesy of Otto Penzler, proprietor of The Mysterious Bookshop on W. 56th Street in New York, across from Carnegie Hall. Billed as "the world's finest mystery specialty store," it is neatly tucked into the basement and first floor of one of the thousands of staid brownstone former homes for which New York City is famous. The façade of the store is deceptively simple and unpretentious; walking by, you might miss it. This is a must-see destination, on the grand scale for which New York is justly famous. Inside, the cavernous area is large and quaintly packed, on two floors, with new and used mystery books. A knowledgeable and friendly staff is ever ready to help you zero in on new and exciting authors. Having climbed the spiral steel staircase, you will burst upon upon the Sherlock Holmes specialty section upstairs, with new and standard Sherlock-related books and periodicals.

Another delectable feature of the store is its monthly showcasing of a current mystery novel, autographed by the author who has also appeared at the store that month for the signing session. One of my prized contemporary possessions is an anthology of detective fiction edited and autographed by Tony Hillerman.

If a business can be viewed as a palpable, organic entity, The Mysterious Bookshop breathes and moves and expands and contracts with the coming and going of people and the shelving and unshelving of every single volume. The life and spirit of the store is Otto Penzler himself, prize-winning author of an encyclopedia of mystery fiction and its writers. Mr. Penzler was very helpful to Elliott in a recent telephone conversation by allowing the Bimetallic Question to reproduce segments of "Penzler's Picks" in its newsletter. The following is from the store's online newsletter and may be of more than some little interest. Find the bookshop in the comfort of your own home by logging on to: www.mysteriousbookshop.com If you are planning to visit the physical bookstore on West 56th, please note they do not open before 11:00 a.m.

Levin, Ira. *A Kiss Before Dying*. Carroll & Graf.

Reviewed by Otto Penzler.

I was recently asked to write an introduction to this first novel by Ira Levin (who, incidentally, will be given the Grand Master Award by the Mystery Writers of America next month) and accepted with relish. I'm often asked for my list of 10 greatest or favorite all-time mysteries, and this one, which won the Edgar for Best First Mystery, is always on the list. Try to ignore the two wan movies that were made from this masterpiece. It's the story of an ambitious young man and the lovely girl who falls in love with him and becomes pregnant which he knows will enrage her father, head of the powerful company for which he wants to work and which he'd seen as his future fortune. Unless he can do something about his problem, his dreams will be smashed. He takes care of his girl friend, and then proceeds to woo her sister. Ordinary, decent people are caught up in a vile web, not of their making, and the tension mounts as they attempt to return to their lives — and fail. One of the great mystery stories of all time, in a new trade paperback edition. \$12.00

MRS. HUDSON'S CORNER:

Almond Pudding Recipe

(For our Internet Sleuth's Recipe available at the following address: <http://www.freerecipe.org>)

1/2 cup bread crumbs
3 eggs
2 cups milk, scalded
1/2 cup sugar
2 teaspoons almond extract

Mix eggs, sugar, bread crumbs and almond extract. Add the milk gradually. Turn into a pudding dish. Set pudding dish in a pan of water. Bake in moderate oven for about 35 minutes.

Simply divine, unless Moriarty is at work. Beware of Almond flavour substitutes and suspicious looking chefs!

MAUREEN'S MERRIMENT: Non-stop groaners from, about, or near the WGCD's inexhaustible supply of puns, pranks, jokes, and puzzles.

The MYSTERIOUS CRYPTIC PUZZLE

(Provided by David Dowse)

Your task, should you decide to accept it, is to find the hidden locale in this puzzle, which some may judge a trial, and others a judgement.

1								1 - A long-nosed fish in the U.S. intelligence?
2								2 - Shire on an old French king?
3								3 - Lord Harringby's abode.
4								4 - Sir George or (11)
5								5 - Occupant of High Gable.
6								6 - J.B. Williams' Old Hall.
7								7 - Enter the lodging house in this street, and leave via rectangular (14)
8								8 - Place for a shotgun?
9								9 - The door opener.
10								10 - A burnt cross?
11								11 - Common, towers, or mystery
12								12 - A stone that need not be turned.
13								13 - Is this don a striped cat?
14								14 - A square exit.
15								15 - Melville's Mansion.
16								16 - 12's lower village.

SANITY REGAINED: Answers to last newsletter's quiz: Knead-to-know basis, Repossessed, Developed and Seine.

SANITY RELOST: Just when you thought you'd memorized all the Cockney colloquialisms you'd ever need to get you through the canon over a long Arctic winter, along comes a Trinidadian tangle of tormenting tarankies as published in the June 8 edition of Montreal's *Gazette* newspaper, and attributed to Lise Winer who has reputedly spent almost 25 years writing a dictionary on the dialect of Trinidad and Tobago (why?). We present, for your edification, the words and their definitions as they appeared in the *Gazette*. Parenthetical remarks should shed a little more light on the matter.

Tea - any hot drink. Hence, coffee tea, cocoa tea and green tea, which is really black tea. (Of course. Those of us with grandparents from Lithuania already knew that!)

Mauvais langue - malicious gossip, to bad-mouth someone. As in "You too *mauvais langue*," or "They only talk *mauvais langue* around here." (Not to be confused with Sartre's "*mauvais foi*" which has been translated literally in some publications as "bad faith." However, one of my favourite philosophers, Walter Kaufman, prefers to interpret it as "self-deception" which stands up a lot more consistently throughout Sartre's body of work. I'm sure you would agree.)

Bad mind - mean, selfish, untrustworthy, someone who wants to see you suffer or fail. Example: "I come here with my good, good self and you come with your bad mind." (Brad Pitt could wreak wonders delivering this line provided he's all sweaty and wearing only a bathing suit. Come to think of it, Jennifer Lopez would deliver it even better. Bathing suit optional.)

Early o'clock - for a long time. "I know that from early o'clock." (This is rooster lingo for the sooner in the roasting pan, the better. We will discuss this at some future date in Mrs. Hudson's Corner.)

Pennypiece - a tree whose leaves smell like gingerbread. Derived from the French *pain d'epices*. (We believe, rather, that this originated in *Hansel and Gretel*, by Humperdink, I tink.)

Broughtupsy - manners, knowing when to do or say the right thing. "She have no broughtupsy at all." (Actually, this refers to when the family Angora cat presents you with a large, moist hairball on your expensive Chinese rug.)

Tabanca - emotional heartbreak, a painful feeling of unrequited love. (We agree. But don't forget the tabasco.)

Skating tranky - passion, a debilitating crush. "Oh God, he have a skating tranky for that woman." (We disagree emphatically. Nothing could be less conducive to sustaining passion than the image of a skate and its razor-sharp blade. Those of the male persuasion will understand. We will cut off further comment now.)

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 7th, 2003, at 6:30 p.m.

