



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
Montreal, Canada H4Z 1K2

Minutes of the Meeting of The Bimetallic Question June 4th 2015

Date of our next meeting: Due to a scheduling change at the library our next meeting will be on Thursday August 13th 2015 at 6:30pm at the Westmount Public Library, Westmount Room, 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, QC

The quiz at the next meeting: *A Case of Identity* - prepared by Carol Abramson.

Next meeting's toast presenters: The Master: Paul Billette; Dr. Watson: Bruno Paul Stenson; The Woman: Rebecca Stacey; Mrs. Hudson: Ron Zilman; The Society: Chris Herten-Greaven.

Minutes of the meeting of the Bimetallic Question held on Thursday June 4th 2015 at the Westmount Public Library, Westmount Room, 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, QC

Present: David Dowse, Louise Corda, Ronnie Zilman, Jack Anderson, Patrick Campbell, Jean Paul Rainville, Elliott Newman, Bruno Paul Stenson, Carol Abramson, Maureen Anderson, Paul Billette, Susan Fitch, Karl J. Raudsepp, Chris Herten-Greaven, Rachel Alkallay.

Regrets: Raf Jans, Wilfrid de Freitas, Kevin Chappell, Derek Chappell, Nancy Walkling, Erica Penner, Mark Altosaar.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Sovereign Carol Abramson at 6:30pm

Welcome to guests: Miyako, Nathalie Ellis, and Claude J. Pelletier

Miyako is from Japan and has lived in Canada for some time. She has read all the Sherlock Holmes stories and is fascinated with the Victorian era and culture. She noted that there is a very large Japanese Sherlock Holmes Society and that many Japanese are generally in love with the Victorian period in English history.

She read the Gazette article on the Bimetallic Question and came to our meeting to find out more.

A little background on the love of the Master in Japan:

Japan Sherlock Holmes Club.
Founded by Akane Higashiyama with her husband Dr. Kobayashi in 1977 and has more than 1200 active members.

From: *Sherlock Holmes in Japan* by Tsukasa Kobayashi:

"He stands for more than the deerstalker and the Inverness cape.
He provides an outstanding example of justice and fair play and teaches us the nature of detection and induction. His stories are part of the "textbook for logic" which is used in the senior high schools of Japan."

ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND GENTLE TRANSACTION

1. Our Sovereign announced that Susan Fitch has resigned for personal reasons the role of recording secretary of the Society and that David Dowse has accepted the challenge and will be our new recording secretary.

Thank you Susan for the work that you have done and we know that should David need your assistance you will be on hand.

We are all very glad that you have decided to maintain your membership and attend our meetings and we feel confident that you will continue to contribute in a significant way to the richness of our Society.

2. All who have copies of and have read the Bill Brownstein article in the Gazette of April 11th 2015 are of the opinion that it was a splendid piece that is sure to enhance awareness of the Society in Montreal.

Recalling conversations at the April 2nd meeting of the Bimetallic Question, members noted how Mr. Brownstein found the activities of our Society a "Little Mad", or rather eccentric. This touched off a flurry of anecdotes on other varieties of eccentric individuals, for example collectors of antique barbed wire, of marbles and fire engines, of bus tickets, of fountain pens, and miniature crested pottery, to name but a few.

Members are free to bring out of the closet their secret passions for collectibles and memberships if they so choose and they will be noted in the next minutes.

3. On a personal note, as a result of this Gazette piece on the Bimetallic Question and the accompanying photos taken by Peter McCabe, a very old friend of mine from the days that I worked for Dominion Textile in Valleyfield, Mr. Jean Paul Rainville, recognized me and blew me away by his presence at our meeting. It must be close to 30 years since I have seen Jean Paul and it honestly took me a couple of minutes before he registered in my memory. During the quiz we sat together outside to catch up on old times and family developments. Thank you to the Gazette and Mr. Brownstein for making this joyous reunion possible.

4. Carol Abramson reminded all present of the need to pay our Society dues for 2015. It is \$25.00 for single membership and \$35.00 for couples. Please make out your cheques to The Bimetallic Question marked 2015 dues and send them to Paul Billette: 220 Redfern Apt.26, Westmount, QC H3Z 2G3.

5. Show and Tell:

Jack Anderson treated us to a display of Sherlock Holmes miniature lead figures. Hand painted and in exquisite detail they included Holmes, Watson, Lestrade, Moriarty and a London Bobby, and were a gift from his "The Woman".

Paul Billette visited the Sherlock Holmes Pub in Bordeaux , France and brought back a decorative coaster and the meal and beer menus . Paul tells us there is a large English community living in the region. They have a Sherlock Holmes Quiz night at the pub once a month.

In our round table discussion we learned that beer is sometimes drunk at breakfast. A "small beer" or "petite bierre" is a watered down version and the French term "la petite bierre" refers to something that is of little consequence.

In olden times it was healthier to drink beer than it was to drink the local water.

On a hunting theme, Louise Corda tickled our fancies with a *Bizarro* cartoon showing 2 hunters festooned with over a dozen ducks and the caption read, "We need to find a place with less friendly ducks." Ha !

Chris Herten-Greaven showed us a book entitled *The Triumph of Unarmed Forces 1914-1918* by Rear Admiral M.W.W.P.Consett C.M.G. The book exposed the undercover trade of arms and supplies between the allies, neutral countries and Germany that was pivotal in allowing Germany to continue the conflict even when she was economically bankrupt.

The international "Banksters" made fortunes in aiding and prolonging the war and millions suffered. One of the best examples of this profiteering was how English coal was legally sold to Swedish steel makers who used it to make arms and they in turn then sold them to the German war machine. It is said that today there are 20 if not more wars going on in the world and arms manufacturers, yes even Canadian arms makers, are reaping the rewards.

Chris also brought a book on the *History of New York* dated 1899 and he will ask Wilfrid if he knows an expert in book restoration and repair. Louise mentioned that Concordia University offers a service in book repair.

A French book by Preston and Child entitled "*Tempete Blanche*" *Une Enquete de l' Inspecteur Pendergast* has been touted in the press as - Un nouveau binome.....Sherlock Holmes ! We shall see.

6. Karl Raudsepp arrived to offer his toast to the Master:

Toast to the Master

M Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the Master of solving mysteries and murders, the musician (violin)

A Art of deduction, abstractions are intriguing, answers, approach (nothing is discounted), ardor, addiction, authority (on any number of subjects), accomplished

S Suspicions, suspects, searching, solving, surprising solutions (conclusions) smoking pipe, no one's servant, skillful (boxer, etc.)

T Trade (quick at observing) thinker, thoughtful, theories, tools (Dr. Watson to bounce ideas off), triumphs (over evil)

E Eyes & ears (nothing goes unnoticed) enthusiasm for his work, excellence, experienced

R Reputation, reasoning, right man for the job, relaxing with violin or pipe

Please raise your glass to the Master.... to Sherlock Holmes

Since Karl Raudsepp so Masterly was able to persuade Gazette cartoonist Aislin to be our guest speaker at our last birthday dinner, perhaps he could discreetly inquire of said cartoonist when we could expect to see the Sherlock Holmes image that he promised for the editorial page of the Gazette.

7. Maureen Anderson proposed a toast to Dr. Watson:

What is in a name? Well, if you check the Internet you would find the following:

John

A very passionate person who lives with force and devotion. In a relationship, whether it is love or friendship, they insist very much on TRUST and RESPECT. They are a profound being and know how to appreciate the simplest things in life too. John has many dreams, and always follows his path with ambition and perseverance. He knows how to keep a secret and his friends often admire his loyalty and sincerity.

Hamish

A very lovely person, who likes to have quality friends and celebrates together beautiful moments. He likes to learn new things, to constantly rediscover himself and lives diverse and interesting experiences. He fights for a relationship and would do anything in order to make his loved ones feel special. A friendly, polite person, with solid values which most of the time he strictly respects.

Watson!

A curious person and rarely says no to new experiences. His family is very important to him. Courageous by nature, he is not afraid to make a stand or to defend a friend. He does not like to lie or to be lied to. A generous person and likes to help those around him. When he gets involved in something, he does it with commitment and seriousness. He does not like half-done things.

I wonder how did Sherlock Holmes deduce the character of Watson; was his deduction similar to the internet? If so, how was it done. The fact he chose to become a doctor, he defended his country; what was it that helped Holmes select John Hamish Watson as his companion, dare I say FRIEND, to share 221B?

To Dr Watson!

In Yiddish, Hamish is an adjective describing someone possessing warmth, comfort, and also informally associated with someone's own home. Slang for cozy and homey.

8. Our Sovereign Carol Abramson challenged us once again with a Sherlock Holmes Puzzle Game: *The Adventure of the Murdered Druggist*. The Game was Afoot and Maureen Anderson won with the correct deductions of the Killer- Postman, Grant Evans, Weapon- the Letter Opener, Motive- Temporary Insanity. Her prize was a chocolate. We all look forward to Carol's next Sherlockian Puzzle.

9. Unfortunately Rebecca Stacey was not able to be at the meeting so Carol pulled from her treasure chest of toasts an appropriate one for Irene Adler, The Woman, and Chris Herten-Greaven presented it:

The Toast to the Woman

She is as a woman unique within the Canon: Irene Adler, the woman able to best Sherlock Holmes at his own game. Beautiful, clever, an accomplished actress and an opera diva, Irene was a woman wronged by a king and one determined to have her revenge. Adept at understanding human passions and vices, she used a little blackmail to remind the king of Bohemia what place she had held in his life. She owned an indiscreet photograph that could ruin his life and could ruin his intended society betrothal. Sherlock was put on the case. While Holmes managed to discover the hiding place of the photograph, he was unable to retrieve it at the time. In the interim, Irene followed him home in disguise, and uttered her infamous greeting, "Good night, Mr Sherlock Holmes". By the morning, when Sherlock and the King arrived at her home to remove the evidence, they discovered that Irene had flown the coop with her new husband, and left her own photo in the place of the one they were searching for. With it was a letter addressed to Sherlock advising him the king was safe from blackmail, as she had married "a better man than he". Sherlock retained her photograph as his reward and kept it in a place of honour in his home. And thus in his life she became - *The Woman*.

To Irene Adler, the Woman

10. Elliott Newman gave us a splendid toast to Mrs. Hudson.

Toast to Mrs. Hudson

In declaring that Mrs Hudson "has as good an idea of breakfast as any Scotswoman", our Bard of Baker Street's muse is obviously employing a transparent attempt to keep her all to himself. "As good as" does not signify overwhelming praise by any stretch of the imagination. It implies a resignation to the effect that, "Oh, well, things can't get any better, let's hope it doesn't get worse, it won't do any good to complain, so we might as well put up with the inconvenience, because that's just the way it is."

"As good as" may well deprecate Scottish cuisine and Scottish women in the kitchen. Holmes's left-handed compliment is made-to-order and Watson's readers can be forgiven for accepting it without issue. When one contemplates Scottish fare, one's gorge rises at the thought of haggis, that world-renowned concoction of things that should be left under a rock after a hunt, except that the heart, liver, and lungs at the root of this dish come from a sheep and not a deer or a fox. Is this the field upon which Mrs. Hudson is to play? Nae, nae, we say. This will never do.

Rather, Mrs Hudson's idea of breakfast includes, among other things, according to her gastronomic biographer William Bonnell, the Five Orange Pips Flapjack, a gourmet of mélange of unsalted butter, brown sugar, golden syrup, molasses, quick-cooking oatmeal, and cinnamon, baked to a judicious turn in a square pan so that the edges - four - and corners - four - are browned, from Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management, 1861. This does not involve the eyeball of an ox, and is, we assume, much tastier, being less in the realm of haggis, and more on the field of creative cuisine.

We should note that on mornings when Holmes is in fine fettle, Mrs Hudson does not serve him Baked Leaf Tea. The reasons for this are numerous, and are food for another discussion.

To Mrs. Hudson: closet epicure, capable domestic administrator, hardly-ever-grumbling landlady, servant extraordinaire!

11. The Quiz: *The Adventure of the Cardboard Box*, prepared by Bruno Paul Stenson and prizes provided by Raf Jans.

The Cardboard Box

1st Place:	27 out of 40	Carol Abramson	Sherlock Holmes notebook
2nd Place:	25.5 out of 40	Chris Henten-Greaven	Jack the Ripper book
3rd Place	21 out of 40	Karl Raudsepp	The <i>House of Silk</i> book

12. Patrick Campbell introduced our last toast for the evening, in fact two original sonnets he composed especially, to the Society!

"Tonight you are going to get two for the price of one! Both are sonnets, an Elizabethan sonnet and an Italian sonnet":

A Toast to the Society (Elizabethan)

I think that you will never see,
a group like our Society.
We read the stories with great care,
and hope the quiz will be quite fair.
We learn the places and the names
of all the guys and all the dames.
We scan the plot and all the clues
and all the streets and all the mews.
But when the quiz is on the table
our memory fails, we are not able,
to solve the puzzle that was set
except with help from Internet.
If Holmes were here it would be nice
for us to have his sage advice.
TO THE SOCIETY!

A Sonnet to the Society (Italian)

Let me only to our Society be true,
admit impediments, hoping all the while
to lay before our oh so motley crew
a glimpse of truth, or failing that a smile.

Oh no. it is an ever fixed rule,
that to the Canon all of us be true.
It is our single aim, how e'er so cruel,
To plumb its depths and see it all anew.

'Tis thus we spend an evening with our friends,
eliciting the truth from every tale,
assessing clues on which the plot depends,
solving the case that sends the thief to jail.

The game's afoot for all who wish to play
So welcome all who come to join the fray.

TO THE SOCIETY !

13. Gratefully received from Patrick Campbell is this contribution to the present minutes. It is in response to item 7 in the April 2nd minutes, which concerns Great Britain's Royal Mail 1993 Sherlock Holmes stamp issue. Karl Raudsepp had brought the set of stamps to the meeting and requested that if anyone had any more information about them to please get in touch:

Hidden Message in Stamps

In *A Scandal in Bohemia* Holmes says to Watson, "You see but you do not observe." Regarding the set of stamps discussed at our previous meeting there is a hidden puzzle which many people will see but they will not observe. Each of the five stamps has a hidden message.

Within *The Reigate Squire* stamp on the second shelf of the library behind Watson's shoulder there is the letter "e" on the spine of a book. In the stamp for the *Hound of the Baskervilles* there is the letter "d" above the eye of Sir Henry Baskerville. In *The Six Napoleons* a book on the table has the letter "l" in white on the black cover. In *The Greek Interpreter* there is the letter "y" under the legs of the man on the floor. In *The Final Problem*, showing the fight between Holmes and Moriarty, Holmes' cuff link has the letter "o".

Finally, these letters are an anagram which spells the word "Doyle".

You saw, but did you observe?

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 13th, 2015, at 6:30p.m.

If you detect any errors or omissions in these minutes please contact our recording secretary David Dowse at daviddowse@hotmail.com.

A tip of the deerstalker hat to our sergeant-at-arms Hudson, Raf Jans, for printing and mailing Society minutes to all members requesting the paper version.

