

It's Much More Than A Teacup

By Peter Porrazzo
With Great Thanks to Robyn Cox

There we are, sitting around the dinner table at the home of friends, with two other couples, all eight of us Shelley collectors. We are finishing our dessert and coffee, and our plentiful after dinner drinks, at the culmination of a superb meal and evening. We are admiring the fantastic Shelley and Wileman collection of our host and hostess. We are all sharing our many Shelley stories and feeling very good!! Then, my friend Robyn abruptly makes a simple, meaningful and very caring statement, "you know, it's much more than a teacup." There is a moment of silence as we all stop and realize what she is saying, and then we listen even more closely. She shares how she feels about Shelley people, about us and how her remembrances of her collection all center around others. It meant a lot to me and got me thinking.

So, I would like to share with you what "it's much more than a teacup" means to me, and perhaps, after reading this, you might do the same.

It is, as Robyn said, first and foremost the people I and my wife have met in our Shelley collecting and travels. It's sharing a hobby and passion with your spouse, and seeing the joy in her face when looking at or listening about Shelley. It's the friendships we have made and the Shelley family we have. It's reconnecting with people at Shelley gatherings, and even though it may have been a long time calendar wise, it feels like our last chat was just yesterday. It's being helped by or helping Shelley friends. It's Shelley friends doing something special, just for you ... like giving you a gift of a Shelley something right out of their collection, because you got very excited about it. It's Shelley friends hosting you for an evening or a day or a weekend or even longer. It's giving an unexpected gift to a Shelley friend and seeing the smile on their face. It's a non-Shelley friend who knows how much you enjoy Shelley, who looks and finds Shelley at antique stores, for you. It's a shared meal with Shelley friends at their home or yours, served on Shelley. It's sharing the joy and enthusiasm with people that have the same interests and feelings as you.

It's being invited to visit someone's collection. Then visiting that Shelley collection and appreciating what others have decided to seek and find and display. It's observing their pride and joy. It's sharing their love of the works of art. It's seeing Shelley in their home that you've never seen before or only seen in pictures.

It's about the people who made and marketed the Shelley. It's watching the Shelley video that takes you through the manufacturing and decorating processes, and being in awe of the hard work, skill and commitment of the Shelley employees to consistently produce such fine wares. It's listening to Ray Reynolds' narration of that video and better yet, hearing Ray give a talk or having a conversation with him.

It's the history of a company that took pride in their craftsmanship and had such a wide range of products. It's the art and the technology of what seems like a bygone industry and craft. It's the thrill of seeing the Pattern Books, up close and personal. It's the Shelley club members around the world, expanding the collective knowledge of Shelley and its predecessor companies, by their many hours of research, and their willingness to share what they've learned, and taking the time to answer all of your questions. It's the well thought out and presented articles and books about Shelley, with something new to learn from each one. It's what is learned at Regionals and Conferences, via the formal presentations or informal conversations. It's feeling good about contributing to the talks, the magazines and the learning process.

These are just some of the Shelley experiences and feelings I have had personally, and I look forward to many more. Indeed, it is much more than a teacup.