

# NSCC National Conference goes viral and goes big!

by Leigh Clark

**N**ovember 7-8, 2020 marked an important day in the history of the National Shelley China Collectors' Club. Owing to the COVID-19 virus, the national meeting, originally scheduled to be held in Prescott, AZ in May was cancelled, thus opening the door to a virtual convention for which some 82 people attended from their homes in the United States, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. While the conference suffered the inevitable glitches of any first-time event, the post-event survey of participants indicated that the conference was a great success, thanks to the efforts of the planning committee, headed by Lynn Smith, along with Lyle Keating, Rocky Chen, Donna Gapen, Leigh Clark and Irene Shelley.

Highlights included informative talks by very well-prepared speakers on topics of interest to Shelley collectors. On Saturday, the first day of the conference, President Irene Shelley welcomed everyone to the history-making weekend event; her talk was followed by gracious remarks from Gerry Pearce, Chairman of the UK's Shelley Group, and Helen Douglas, head of the Australasian Shelley Collectors' Club.

Marcus Shelley was the first presenter. His topic was "Revisiting Shelley Scenics," that is, those pieces sold as souvenirs or those depicting woodlands, meadows, forests, and other natural settings. His photos prompted some participants to show their own scenic pieces and to discuss the variations found among them.

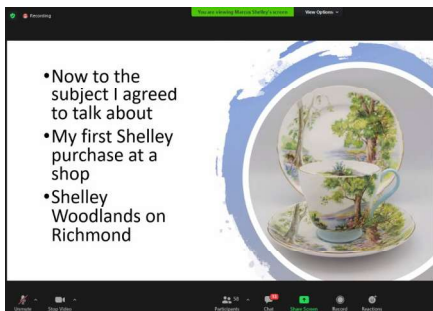
After Marcus' excellent talk, Olwen Dudgeon, from England, offered attendees a chance to get to know one another through a quiz which tied Shelley china to famous personalities, landmarks and places. Using breakout rooms, attendees got to work together to guess the answers to the quiz questions and to chat about their mutual interests in Shelley china.

Speaker Dick Gapen followed the quiz with a presentation on a subject close to his heart—Wileman Victoria Heraldic Variations. He educated

the attendees on the reign of Queen Victoria and how the Wileman factory recorded major events of her reign on the china pieces.

The day ended with the announcement by Carolyn Keating of the winners of the pot show: First Place--Carolyn Keating for A Wee Cup of Tea; Second Place--Shelley Wilson for Honey Pot, and Third Place--Jeanne and Frank Speizer for On the Way to Grandma's House.

Sunday morning began with Irene Shelley presiding over the Annual General Meeting. She was pleased to announce the winners of several awards given by the NSCC. Barbara Gooding, who had successfully negotiated the Prescott conference, only to have it cancelled by the pandemic, and who digitized the scrapbook maintained by Betty Shelley over many years so that it could be put on the website and made accessible to all members, was awarded a special recognition called, "Step Up and Serve." The actual award was designed from an authentic Shelley souvenir piece from Helensburgh, England of a tennis racquet and tennis balls.



Next, Irene announced Ron Hoffman as the winner of the Leiser Award engraved pen for outstanding magazine or literary contributions over many years on behalf of the club. He has authored and given to the club a masterful work describing Shelley miniatures which currently appears on the website. Not



only does it include explanatory texts, but also pictures and an extensive index which he up-

# The wave of the future with historical fine china

dates periodically. No other club has such a collection of material, and his work has clearly contributed to the pool of Shelley knowledge that benefits us all.

The last presentation, The Douglass Award, was presented posthumously to the late Past-President Helen Siegelin. Helen helped organize four NSCC conferences: 2016 Charleston, 2017 Albuquerque, 2018 Tampa and 2020 Prescott. She took it upon herself to design, produce and sell the NSCC notecards as a fundraiser to the club. She hosted regional meetings for her region of the US and gave a talk at conferences. Helen's sister Jean Brasseur accepted the award.



In other business, the slate of the Board of Directors was approved in a vote, electing Rochelle Hart, Lynn Porrazzo, Rocky Chen, Leigh Clark, Nance Carpenter and Donna Bicknese to the Board.

Following the AGM, Olwen Dudgeon announced the answers to her anagram quiz, which centered on states and landmarks of the US. Thanks, Olwen, for your stimulating and fun activities!

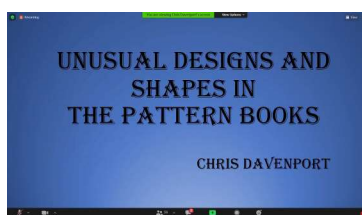
The next conference speaker was Carolyn Keating, who spoke of her favorite Shelley china, "Nantgarw Style." The photos of her collection were stunning, and they enlightened the conference participants of this delightful floral decorative motif.



After a break, Helen Douglas, President of the Australasian Shelley Collectors' Club, spoke on the topic of Jardinieres and Plant Pots. Her interesting talk educated viewers on the varied designs from

fanciful to art deco fashioned by Shelley for plant pots.

The final speaker was Chris Davenport, from the United Kingdom. Chris, who has spent the last five years painstakingly photographing and cataloguing all



the Wileman and Shelley pattern books (with just a couple of books left to photograph), has organized thousands of Shelley patterns into usable information, which he generously shared with us in his presentation. (You will recall that the pattern books were saved from destruction upon the close of the Shelley factory and, thankfully, are being preserved for posterity.)

Finally, Donna Gapen served as host to the final event of the day, the Shelley Sale, which gave participants a chance to purchase pieces of china in a "one bid and done" auction. Bidding was enthusiastic and resulted in many satisfied collectors.

While the world has been harshly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, it could not dampen the spirits of those Shelley china collectors who gathered via ZOOM to share their love for Wileman/Shelley china. Thank you to all who organized the conference, gave talks as guest speakers, stayed up past your bedtime or got up at dawn to be part of the first worldwide National Shelley China Collectors' Club conference 2020.

