



Eldon House

Heritage Site and Gardens
Annual Report 2019



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Statement of Purpose

Eldon House is a community Museum dedicated to the preservation, presentation and interpretation of London Ontario's "oldest home," through the lens of four generations of the Harris Family. Eldon House has a commitment to acquiring, conserving, researching, interpreting, promoting and exhibiting material culture that best illustrates the history of Eldon House and London, the Harris family, and the people who worked in the house, from the period of 1834–1959. The unique Harris collection and accompanying archival material provide an authentic link to Canada's past, representing an irreplaceable legacy. The heritage resources of Eldon House are held in the public trust and aim to provide meaningful and enriching engagement, serving a diverse audience of visitors. As well as education and research, the Museum interprets and promotes local, regional, and national history.



A Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors, Mark Tovey



Chair Mark Tovey

I would like to express steadfast appreciation to our hard-working board, Mike Donachie, Rebecca Griesmayer, Louanne Henderson, Ron Koudys, Manosij Majumdar, Joe O'Neil, Theresa Regnier, and Maureen Spencer-Golovchenko.

We are delighted to welcome three new members of our staff team in 2019. Guilherme Neves was hired in December as our new Facility Maintenance Coordinator, Christi Hudson who is a new addition to our Historical Interpreter Team, and Brenna Ardiel another Historical Interpreter who is taking on the role of Program Coordinator during Danielle Costello's maternity leave.

Thanks to Danielle Costello's careful planning, our staple programs have gone from strength to strength. Eldon House had record-breaking attendance for Kids First Day and had our strongest year yet (both in attendance and revenues) for the Summer Tea Programme. This year also saw the development of innovative new programming, like the Gardens and Groundsman Tour and the Tea and Paint events. New programs were developed to capitalize on the popularity of Halloween. We hosted an Occult Workshop, offered Morbid and Macabre Tours, and conducted further outreach through our Woodland Cemetery tours. Thanks to our ever-capable historical interpreters, Kim Baker, Susan Butlin, Sarah Cowling, Andrew Moore and Cathy Luke, visitors to the Museum have a consistently engaging experience.

Thanks to the internet, and data-gathering, savvy of our Museum Coordinator Nikki Michienzi, we discovered that the past year saw many new visitors, hailing from over 30 countries. We learned that we were able to attract new demographics to one of our flagship fundraisers, the Lemon Yellow Party. We experienced an increase in our online viewership and social media engagement, and we were delighted to discover that 2019 has marked our highest attendance to date.

Eldon House continues to add tools to attract new and diverse audiences. A new professionally-produced accessibility video now enables visitors to experience the rooms on the second floor without having to climb the stairs. An updated design for the Eldon House website is being rolled out in 2020, which aims to be more modern and link to the museum's many events and fundraising needs. We now have five of



our artifacts ready to be featured on Google Cultural Institute as a partnership with London Heritage Council.

Thanks to the hard work of our staff team, especially our Curator Director, Tara Wittmann, and our Finance Manager, Bernie Keim, we were once again successful in receiving the Canadian Museums Operating Grant (CMOG). The Canada Summer Jobs program enabled us to hire three tea servers and a gardens assistant during the summer of 2019, enabling our best-organized and most financially successful summer tea season to date. We were once again funded through New Horizons for Seniors, allowing us to bring Eldon House outreach programming to seniors homes. Exhibits in the House, like "From Pottage to Pinperneau: The Eldon House Cookbooks", "The Servant Question", "A Man of Botany," "Taking Tea", and "The Harris Family Abroad" both delight and challenge our audience.

At the end of 2019, Eldon House began an ambitious new fundraising initiative: the Interpretive Centre Kitchen Renovation Project. Once its fundraising target is met, the expansion and improvements in the Eldon House kitchen will significantly expand our ability to allow the catering of events on-site, opening up new revenue streams. Significantly, 2020 will see the rolling out of a membership programme to give special opportunities to Eldon House enthusiasts, and to sustain, develop, and expand support for the museum over the long term.

A Message from the Curator Director, Tara Wittmann

2019 has been an exciting year for Eldon House. As ever, the Board of Directors and Staff at the Museum are motivated to engage diverse audiences to enjoy the site and stories of Eldon House, while preserving the collection for future generations. We have enhanced several areas of our services and operations in 2019 and further explored the needs and wants of the community that we serve. We have continued to strive to break down barriers for our visitors and have improved technological and physical elements of the site in reaching that goal.



**Tara Wittmann
with an
acquisition**

2019 saw a diverse mix of exhibitions, public programs, tours and activities that attracted varied audiences and added to the accessibility of the museums programs for diverse segments of the community. It also ushered in new programming and partnership initiatives and strengthened our existing relationships in the community.

I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to the many individuals and groups who have made this year such a success. This includes the members of the Eldon House Museum Board, Staff Team, Volunteers, and the Community for their extraordinary efforts over the past year.

A Message from the Program Coordinator, Danielle Costello



**Danielle Costello and
Charles MacPherson**

2019 was “the year of the servant” at Eldon House. Throughout 2019, Eldon House programming exhibited themes of Domestic Service in the 19th Century through to the present day. Various programs emphasized aspects of domestic service in areas such as cooking and food preparation, social etiquette between the servant and the served as well as gardening and grounds keeping at Eldon House. These themes were paired with accompanying exhibitions where possible. Other themes explored through programming include women’s history and suffrage as a carryover from the anniversary of the vote for women in Canada the previous year. Opportunities to explore this subject continue into our 2020 programming year.

A Message from the Interim Program Coordinator, Brenna Ardiel

While the Program Coordinator heads on a temporary leave of absence I will assume the role of Interim Program Coordinator until late spring of 2021. I am a student of Trent University and Fleming College with a background in Archaeology and Museum Management and Curatorship.

For over a decade I have worked at several local and distant museums and heritage sites. I came to know Eldon House as a Summer Tea Server in 2019, and was later hired as a Historical Interpreter. The placement for this position began at the end of November 2019 and has been a whirlwind, as it is one of Eldon House's busiest programming times. Thank you to the staff for assisting in a smooth and welcoming transition to the new member of the Eldon House team!



Brenna Ardiel at the Lemon Yellow Party

A Message from the Museum Coordinator, Nicoletta Michienzi



Nicoletta Michienzi at our Trivia Night

2019 was a fantastic year for Eldon House. We had a record breaking number of visitors, increasing by 1.65% from 2018. The increase in our numbers was due to the variety of exciting and interesting programs offered throughout the year. Information from our guest books shows that visitors came from over 40 countries and many patrons were first time visitors. Our social media presence was also stronger than ever in 2019 with Eldon House staff posting across three forms of social media. As our online presence expands, and Eldon House visitorship increases, the staff continue to work hard to ensure the best possible experience for our patrons, and

and preservation of this wonderful historic home. Our volunteers have also worked hard in 2019 to help with the delivery of our programs and ensured that our gardens looked beautiful. Thank you to our staff, Board, and amazing volunteers for continuing to make Eldon House a success. We are looking forward to an exciting new decade here at the museum.

Strategic Plan

In March 2017, the Eldon House Board of Directors undertook a strategic planning process with an objective facilitator, and in consultation with the Eldon House staff team, volunteers and community stakeholders. Through this comprehensive process, a four-year strategic plan (2017-2020) was developed with the following key components, which forms the foundation for all future planning and programming undertaken by the Board and staff. Through 2018 the Board and Staff teams worked toward implementing new strategies to further the vision of the strategic plan: our programming and outreach offerings were expanded in diverse ways, as was our staff team.

Vision: Knowing ourselves by experiencing our heritage

Mission: We are a distinctive community heritage destination, committed to empowering our visitors and participants to:

- a) Explore and preserve our local and Canadian history through the life and time of the Harris Family
- b) Escape to a unique oasis in downtown London
- c) Engage in learning, fun and lived experiences

Principles:

We believe in:

- a) Authentic visitor experiences
- b) Valuing our past
- c) Celebrating our diversity
- d) Honouring the Harris women
- e) Collaboration
- f) Innovation
- g) Accountability

Strategic Directions:

- a) Preserving our valued heritage resources
- b) Achieving visitor growth through diverse experiences
- c) Creating a year-round downtown oasis
- d) Building our capabilities to deliver

Exhibitions

As a Historic House Museum, Eldon House inhabits over 8000 square feet of permanent exhibition space, which is regularly refreshed and conserved. In addition to the historic home itself, there are four permanently mounted cases which display curated exhibitions that expand thematically on the “life and times” of the Harris Family as outlined in the Museum’s mandate.

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

Exhibit	January	May	September	December
A Man of Botany	[Bar chart showing duration from January to May]			
The Harris Family At Home	[Bar chart showing duration from January to December]			
1918	[Bar chart showing duration from January to February]			
And the Juno goes to...The Harris Family Songbook	[Bar chart showing duration from February to May]			
From Pottage to Pinperneau: The Eldon House Cookbooks	[Bar chart showing duration from May to September]			
The Servant Question	[Bar chart showing duration from September to December]			
Victorian Christmas	[Bar chart showing duration from December to January]			

A Man of Botany January through March 2019, Eldon House Second Floor



A page from the botanical collection

In the 1880s, the fortunes of the Harris Family of Eldon House improved with a substantial inheritance from the Ronalds Estate, when Lucy Harris became the sole heiress of her English family's fortune. The wealth that the Ronalds accrued over several generations is linked to the botanical trade and the nineteenth century's exploration of exotic and medical plants. Hugh Ronalds, Lucy's great-grandfather was considered a "Man of Botany" and immersed himself in the world of plants. Part of the inheritance that made its way to London, Ontario was a large cabinet housing 12 volumes of pressed and identified botanical specimens attributed to Hugh Ronalds. This exhibit explored the story behind the specimen volumes, how and where they were collected and why they are significant today.

Family Photos: The Harris Family at Home Through 2019, Eldon House Second Floor

Western Archives holds a huge collection of historic photographs attributed to the Harris family who lived at Eldon House. This exhibit illustrated an intimate view of the family, their home and their gardens, as they saw themselves through the lens of Milly Harris' camera.



Boating on the Thames



WWI Trench Art

1918 January 2019, Eldon House Interpretive Centre

One hundred years ago, the Western world experienced a massive upheaval. The devastating battles of the Somme and Amiens, Armistice and the end of World War I all occurred while at the same time the "Spanish" flu pandemic infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide. This exhibition aimed to give its viewers a detailed glimpse into the year 1918 both locally and internationally as well as exploring how that momentous year has effected life a century later.

And the Juno goes to...The Harris Family Songbook February through June 2019, Eldon House Interpretive Centre

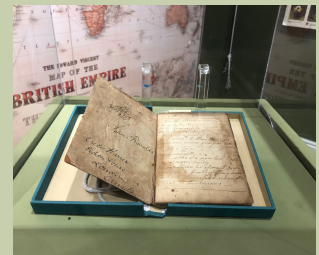
Eldon House holds a sheet music collection of over 40 hand-inscribed songs from the 1830s to the 1850s which has been recently digitized, allowing the museum to explore the pieces with greater attention. Many of the songs are “parlour music” intended for voice and keyboard and performed by amateurs, including patriotic selections, religious songs, and pieces written for the musical stage. What makes this collection so interesting today is the lack of truly “Canadian” music that speaks of the lives of those dwelling in the region prior to 1867. The popular European and American songs in the pre-confederation collection would soon be replaced by “Canadian” tunes and can be seen as the country’s first instance of “Can-Con.” This exhibition commemorates our Canadian musical heritage, while also celebrating contemporary musical achievements, as the Juno’s were hosted in London, Ontario in the spring of 2019.



A Juno Award

From Pottage to Pinperneau: The Eldon House Cookbooks June through November 2019, Eldon House Second Floor

The Eldon House Collection holds several books of cookery – from printed materials to hand inscribed “receipt” books. Historical cookbooks contain more than just tips on turning a “joint of meat to perfection;” they are encyclopedia’s of domestic advice, encompassing recipes for home remedies, medicinal treatments as well as delicious desserts! This exhibit will display and interpret several historical cookbooks in the museum’s collection and elaborate on the origins, uses and terminology of these wonderful examples of social history, while also reproducing a recipe from each cookbook.



Lucy Ronalds' Cookbook from the University of Toronto archives



Maids at Eldon House doing laundry

The Servant Question July 2019 through January 2020, Eldon House Interpretive Centre

During the 125 years that Eldon House was the residence of the Harris family, domestic servants lived and worked in the house – because of this, the museum interprets the “two” families who dwelled within the home walls. This

exhibition aimed to explore domestic life of upper-middle class households in the late Victorian era and early 20th century, using Eldon House as a case study. With primary material of both servant and served as well as the ephemera that influenced the structure of their relationships, a glimpse into the domestic life in London, Ontario was revealed.

Christmas Curiosities December 2019, Eldon House Second Floor

Many of the Christmas celebrations we enjoy today can be linked to traditions started in the Victorian Era: from Christmas trees to giving presents. However, there was a darker side to Victorian Christmas, where ghosts and devils appeared to punish the undeserving. This exhibit illustrates some of the Christmas “curiosities” by reproducing graphic Victorian Postcards.



Krampus Card

Google Cultural Institute

Members of the London Museum Network, including Eldon House, and The London Heritage Council continue to partner with the “Google Cultural Institute” to spotlight several London, Ontario institutions. Introduced in 2017, the project aimed to launch online in 2019 emphasizing some of the “treasures” in London, Ontario. Eldon House was due to contribute five images and accompanying text (or metadata) for online exhibitions for the next four years, highlighting our collection. In 2019, the following artifacts have been included on the Museum’s Google Cultural Institute page:

- 1) Shodana Cabinet, ca. 1850
(Artifact, Furniture)
- 2) Brass Art Nouveau Snail, ca. 1910
(Artifact,
Sculpture)
- 3) Botanical Specimen Folio, ca. 1820
(Artifact, Book)
- 4) Rhinoceros Tantalus, ca. 1905
(Artifact, Natural History
Taxidermy)
- 5) Crystal Smelling Salts Bottle with
Silver Filigree, ca. 1875 (Artifact,
Material Culture)



**Left Image: Rhinoceros Tantalus
Top Right Image: Art Nouveau Snail
Bottom Right Image: Smelling Salts**

Victorian Christmas December 2019

The month of November is annually a preparation month for the museum's "Victorian Christmas" celebrations. The efforts of our student intern, garden volunteers and staff team this year have been pivotal in creating the living greens that deck the halls of Eldon House.

The Garden Club of London again produced seasonal arrangements on two decorating days of November 26 and 27. Victorian Christmas launched to the public and educational tours as of November 28.

The launch of the month long transformation of the house is the work of many hands and a great deal of effort. 2019 Victorian Christmas "by the numbers" are as follows:

9 trips to Springbank Park to harvest greens
255 feet of handmade garland
31 wreaths
33 seasonal arrangements
5 Eldon House Staff + Volunteers to create greenery
4 Eldon House Staff to set up interpretive material
24 Garden Club members
2 Exhibit Installations
288 hours of work
=Victorian Christmas



From left to right: Members of the Garden Club, Library mantle, Wheelbarrow full of wreaths

Research, Digitization, Publications

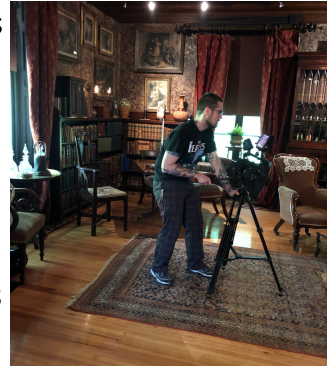
Documentary Video:

In 2019, a long anticipated project was completed that has added to the accessibility of Eldon House.

Museum staff worked closely with filmmaker J.Plant in completing a video project that produced several dynamic tours of the Museum.

Footage for three videos were captured over the course of three days in June, with interview, stills, and motion capture components. The videos enable the Museum to offer an alternative touring experience for

visitors, on and off the Eldon House site. Interpretive detail shared by historical interpreter Cathy Luke, creates an accurate narrative with a stunning backdrop of images that illustrate the fabric of the Museum and its collection.



J. Plant in the library

Research and Transcription:

The Eldon House Staff Team, Internship students and Curator Director are committed to and engaged in various historical research. As part of the Museum's mission, the "life and times" of the Harris Family is the source of historical reference point for the myriad of happenings on the site: our public programming, educational and interpretational programming as well as our exhibitions and publications. With generations of family archive material including letters, diaries and photographs available for research at Archives and Special Collections, Western Libraries, Western University, the Harris Family Fonds is an invaluable collection of primary source documents.

In 2019, new research was undertaken into the Harris Family archives illuminating life in London, Ontario in the early twentieth century. Milly Harris' "World Tour" diaries continue to be transcribed by the Eldon House Team. Milly compiled



Milly's diary courtesy of Western University Archives

five journals during the period of the travels (1897-98) and in 2019, the third and fourth volumes were transcribed, including the family's trek through Burma, Singapore, India, Egypt, Palestine and Greece.

Additionally, a "new" twentieth century travel journal written by Milly Harris was completed in 2019. Milly and her father George travelled to New Orleans, Mexico and California in the spring of 1909, during which she recorded her observations. Historic public-record images of period postcards have been included in the final copy for interest and illustration. Details of the trip, similar to Milly's other diaries, are thought-provoking in themselves, yet in this journal a long-standing mystery has been resolved: that of the origins of "Milly's Tarpon" that hangs in the back hall.

Staff Engagement Projects:

In 2019, Interpretive Staff took on additional projects in their own specific areas of interest. New research, tour and exhibit development was conducted through the year, resulting in fresh programming and knowledge. Kim Baker diligently researched the lives and trends of domestic servants that lived and worked at Eldon House, developing an "Upstairs Downstairs" tour, now popular with visitors. Susan Butlin undertook a project that will result in an online exhibit entitled "Inspired by Nature," focusing on cultural artifacts in the collection that exhibit a relationship between design and nature. Andrew Moore completed two projects, one of which acts as a visual aid for our visitors to identify artifacts within two intricate curio cases; and another that resulted in a very popular tour entitled "The Morbid and Macabre" taking place in October of 2019. Cathy Luke researched and formalized a new Christmas tour, in the spirit of Charles Dickens, called "The Ghosts of Christmas Past" which focused on the darker elements of Victorian Christmas.

Collections, Conservation and Care



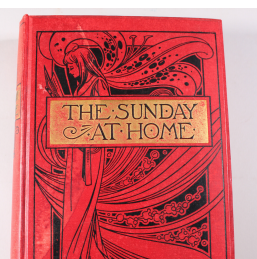
Tara Wittmann working on conservation in the Dressing Room

Eldon House is committed to the highest standards of collection management of its artifacts and facility. An active “preventive conservation” program is continually in rotation through the site, ensuring regular treatment and assessment of artifacts. In addition to this, a number of professional conservation projects are undertaken each year, funded by the “Lucy Little Endowment Fund.”

Some of the more intensive conservation projects in 2019 include: dressing room exhibition restaging and freshening and prioritized artifact repair. An ongoing

artifact storage re-organization project continued into 2019, formalizing the storage spaces of the Museum. Physical plant assessments were completed in planning for new HVAC solutions, so to regulate the interior environment of the historic building to ensure optimal conditions for the collection.

The Curator Director and the Museum Coordinator have been working to update our PastPerfect catalog. PastPerfect is the museum software used for cataloging artifacts, photographs, and archival material. Eldon House received this software in 2006, and at that time, some items in the collection were added into the system. In 2019, Eldon House Staff worked to update these files and add photographs for each artifact. The Curator Director and the Museum Coordinator will continue adding to the program through 2020.



Top Image: Botanical cabinet- photo courtesy of J. Plant, Norwegian Beer Stein, Sunday at home book

Public Programming



Annually, we launch our programming at Eldon House with the tradition of our New Year's Levee. We were pleased to continue a partnership with St. Paul's Cathedral Choir who entertained our guests with carols in the Drawing Room of Eldon House – after which we always invite our patrons into the Interpretive Centre for hot cider.

Tours:

Our first tour program of the 2019 year was our ever popular Behind the Ropes Tour which takes guests through all the nooks and crannies of Eldon House. This tour was so popular in 2019 that our series of three, became a quarterly offering accommodating a number of eager guests on a waiting list. In addition to this fan favourite, we were very excited to offer some new tours touching on the themes of domestic service. Our Gardens and Groundsmen and Upstairs, Downstairs Tour allowed us to present a different perspective of Eldon House and its history through the experience of those who worked on the grounds and back of house. We also had the opportunity to develop a new tour for the Women's History Conference hosted at Museum London. With the theme of the conference being history of women and medicine, we were excited to welcome members of the conference for our tour entitled From Cupping to Cocaine: Health and Wellness for the Victorian Women. This tour was focused various health measures and medical interventions for the women of Eldon House during the 19th and 20th centuries.

As we approached the fall season and of course Halloween, we satisfied an inclination for chilling and spooky subjects with a



From left to right: Burial display, embalming display, Jack FM Halloween radio show. Photos and displays courtesy of Joe O'Neil

few new tours. We partnered with Woodland Cemetery and offered very well attended tours through the Harris Family plot and discussed a culture of death and dying in the Victorian period. Continuing with that theme, we hosted a very successful series of tours called The Morbid and Macabre – not only continuing the conversation on death and mourning in the Victorian period, but also touching on all things dark, to strange and even paranormal in the history of Eldon House.

Finally, we satiated our guests with more chilling stories with our Ghost of Christmas Past Tours, as telling ghost stories was a Victorian tradition at Christmas time. This tour appealed to our more adult audience as it touched on the dark aspects of a Victorian Christmas including sinister assistants to St. Nick.

This year Eldon House was decorated again for our annual seasonal events; our delightful annual Christmas Tea being our most popular specialty tea of the year, children and families had the opportunity to have a photo and talk with Father Christmas at our Meet Father Christmas event.



Joe O'Neil as Father Christmas

Workshops:

In keeping with our themes on domestic service, we were delighted to welcome Charles MacPherson to Eldon House to give an intriguing lecture called "The Butler Speaks" on the Evolution of Domestic Service as well as a hands on workshop on The Art of Table Setting in our historic dining room. As an experience butler, founder of a Canadian Butler Academy, author of various books on etiquette and TV celebrity, Charles thoroughly educated and entertained his fans for a very well attended speaking engagement and workshop. In fact he was so popular, we invited him to return for a workshop called Table Setting for the Holidays for our Christmas programming in late November.



May Table Setting Workshop

Also in keeping with our focus on the servants of Eldon House, we were privileged with a visit from Prof. Irina Mihalache and archivist Elizabeth Ridolfo to speak on Cooks and Cookbooks in the 19th century, with a specific focus on the discovery and digitization of Lucy Harris' cookbook dating from that time period that was found in the University of Toronto archives.

And finally in October, we offered our Occult Workshop Series for the second year in a row. Workshops in this series included The Battle of the Magicians, led by our favourite local magician Michael



Tarot Workshop

Fisher a.k.a The Amazing Corbin, and The Age of Tarot led by Shelley Carter, an expert in tarot cards and tarot reading. With continued interest from the public, Eldon House will offer the Occult Workshop Series on an annual basis.

Special Events

We kicked off our special events in 2019 with a Murder Mystery Party called Eldon House Gone Awry hosted by Murder For Hire in our Interpretive Centre. Guests thoroughly enjoyed an opportunity to dine and experience Eldon House through costume and play acting in the 1940's time period.

In April, we appealed to our peers and local history buffs by offering a Local History Trivia Night. This event was attended by members of the public as well as fellow museum workers and known heritage community. Everyone had great fun competing and boasting about their local history knowledge!



The Murder Mystery Party



**The Amazing Corbin on
Canada Day**

In May, we graciously accepted an invitation to Fanshawe Pioneer Village to celebrate Victoria Day, giving our Garden Tea Party for the third year in row. Soon after on July the first, we offered our own holiday celebration on the grounds of Eldon House for our Canada Day Carnival. We had our best attendance ever in 2019 for this old fashioned carnival style celebration, replete with games, entertainment, and of course cake to commemorate Canada's birthday. Special thanks to the federal "Celebrate Canada" fund whose grant assisted us to bring the carnival to the London community.

Our second annual Lemon-Yellow Party fundraiser was a great success in July. It gives us much satisfaction to offer this 1920s theme party exploring a different time period in our mandate that we don't often offer. Enthusiastic and costumed guests enjoyed authentic 1920s cocktails, and dancing on the beautiful grounds of Eldon House. In addition to great entertainment, guests generously participated in our silent auction, contributing to our program funding for Eldon House.

In September, the theme for Doors Open London 2019 was “untold stories”. We took advantage telling the “untold stories” of domestic servants of Eldon House for this community wide event which brings hundreds of local visitors to our museum. We were delighted to give a voice to the working class at Eldon House and participate in this large scale community event.

Tea Programs:



Eldon House programming wouldn't be complete without our annual tea programs. Our tea programs include our Mother's Day Tea in May, our Strawberry Tea in June and of course our Christmas Tea in December. All of which were well attended and enjoyed as they often are year after year by our dedicated patrons. The greatest success in 2019 however was our Summer Tea Program which generated our largest attendance to date and appealed to over 1000 visitors to our prized historic house museum. We thoroughly appreciated our amazing partners for this program offering including Petit Paris Creperie and Patisserie who catered the decadent food, The Tea Haus who supplied our quality teas and the London Arts Council through their London Arts Live

Left image: Our delicious summer tea
 Top right image: Coming Up Roses performing at the tea
 Bottom Right: One of our tea cups

program with their live musical performances by local musicians. We hope to continue this successful program with our partners for many years to come.

Children's Programming:

On an annual basis, Eldon House offers several events at a low cost for families with children. In 2019, we hosted Family Day at Eldon House with tours and activities for children and families. We also participated in Kids First Day – a community wide event that encourages families with young children to explore what London has to offer at low or no cost. We were delighted to offer tours, activities and games on the grounds for enthusiastic families visiting Eldon House for the first time.

In August, we hosted our annual Teddy Bear Picnic, entertaining young children with our Teddy Bear Hunt, Magic Show by the Amazing Corbin, Puppet Show by Phil Arnold and of course games and refreshments on the grounds of the museum. We were also graced by the presence of Dr. Bearington from London Children's Hospital. Children and families enjoyed an afternoon of fun and furry friends!



Playing croquet

Later in the year, we invited children to come and Meet Father Christmas. Families took advantage of a photo opportunity with the big man himself and the beautiful Victorian Christmas Tree in the Drawing Room and enjoyed tours and activities throughout Eldon House.

Educational Programming



A Christmas tour

In 2019 we continue to offer our usual education programs covering curriculum for grades 1 through 10, as well as custom tours and ESL tours for post-secondary and adult groups. 2019 was year of planning as we revamped our Education offerings for a new school year in September. Now offering half and full day programs, we hope to see more students return for a fresh new curriculum based programs.

Eldon House is one of many sites participating in Museum School London coordinated by the London Heritage Council. In 2019 we were pleased to host 4 weeks of museum school with Our Lady of Lourdes C.S., Forest Park P.S. and White Oaks P.S. as our guests.

Museum school programs are immersive, exciting and provide

experiential learning for students over the course of a week here at the Museum. The students dabbled in subjects such as Victorian etiquette, local history, historical amusements and games in addition to our curriculum based programming.



Students from Glen Carin P.S.



Our new theme is Music

Outreach:

In 2019 we continued our Memory Lane Program for the third consecutive year, which was made possible through funding granted federally by New Horizons for Seniors program. This reminiscence and artifact therapy program has continued popularity with our client groups struggling with the challenges of Alzheimer's and dementia. Groups included various Long Term Care homes in London, Dorchester,

and Strathroy as well as the Memory Café in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society. In addition to our themes from last year including "Photography: People and Places", "Life and Leisure", "In the Kitchen", "In the Garden", "School Days" and "A Victoria Christmas" a new theme was developed and offered exploring the theme of women's history. "Women's Work" was a program theme that grew in popularity in our 2019 year. With the hopes of continuing with our funder in the new year, plans are set to offer new themes in music and taking tea.

Internships

Eldon House was pleased to welcome a Public History Master's student to the Museum in September 2019. Eldon House has been working in partnership with Western University's Public History program for over five years, hosting students and helping them gain first-hand experience in local history institutions.

Our 2019 intern was J. Chernich. J. Chernich is from Pennsylvania and has an extensive background in local historical sites and interactive Museums. She has been working hard on assisting Eldon House staff with various forms of collections care, maintenance and research.

Her projects include:

- Transcribing the diaries of Ronald Harris from 1900
- Updating artifact descriptions in PastPerfect
- Assisting with conservation programs
- Launch of the Victorian Christmas exhibit

J. Chernich will continue to work with Eldon House in 2020 and complete additional projects.

This winter we had a student through Western University's Department of Education selected Eldon House as their Alternative Field Experience Placement.

K. Chui main focuses were to create this winter seasons Victorian Christmas paper ornament activity for our school programs and assisted in developing the Celebrating Girl Guides of Canada on Sunday, February 16th, 2020.

Other projects included assisting with tours and school programs, the annual Christmas Tea, and learned the importance of museum management. There was also the daily behind the scenes tasks that go along with the physical conservation required for such a unique heritage house which includes silver polishing, archival photography, dusting and sweeping the exhibition spaces. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with Western University's Faculty of Education and it was a great success in which K. Chui's work and effort are greatly appreciated.



**J. Chernich modelling
for Rebels and Redcoats**



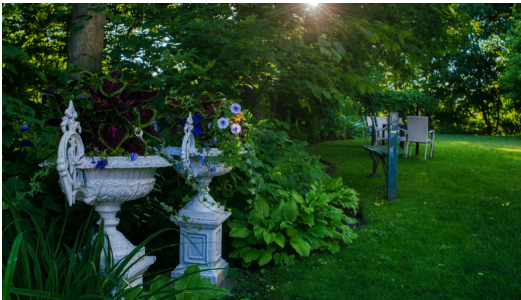
M. Jurjans and B. Ardiel on Canada Day

Summer Students

Eldon House applies for granting through the Canadian government each year to gain funding for summer employment. Traditionally, the grant allows Eldon House to hire students looking to gain experience in tourism and horticulture. In 2019, the grant became more broad and allowed employers to hire people under the age of 30 in these fields. Eldon House put forth an application for three tea servers and one horticultural assistant, and received funding for all four positions. We are very pleased to

welcome M. Jurjans in the role of Gardens assistant. M. Jurjans worked on maintaining the grounds and assisting with set up for events. We were also pleased to welcome E. Qin and D. Renaud back to Eldon House! Both ladies had been Summer Tea Servers in 2018, and came back in 2019. Additionally, B. Ardiel joined the Summer Tea Servers, and this amazing trio assisted with the Summer Tea Program, which lasted from late June to August.

Facilities and Grounds Maintenance



Andrew Kitt started as Grounds and Maintenance Coordinator in June 2018 and quickly stepped into the role, maintaining the grounds and working closely with our gardens volunteers. In 2019, Andrew worked on several project including organization of some of the workshop spaces, and general maintenance of the grounds and house



Top image: West lawn, courtesy of Joe O'Neil

Bottom left image: Plant sale

Bottom right image: Roses at house

In the winter, Andrew worked closely with our gardens volunteers to grow the seeds for our annual garden sale and planting season. The sale was a success, with a great number of community members attending. Andrew moved on to other employment in the spring.

During the spring and summer months, we were fortunate to have a gardens assistant who helped maintain the grounds, as well as having contracted Definitive Lawn and Gardens that helped with weekly maintenance through the fall.

In the summer, Eldon House Staff were also able to continue some of the objectives set out by the Julia Hunter Fund in 2018. In 2018, the Julia Hunter Fund donated funds to improve the south herbaceous border. One of the goals set by the Fund and Eldon House was to check our annual bee count. Staff conducted a count this year and is happy to report that the garden is attracted a large number of bees and accompanying wildlife.

Lifecycle Renewal:

In the fall of 2018 planning began for the scheduled “Life Cycle Renewal Projects” to be undertaken in 2019. Eldon House, owned by the City of London is fortunate to have dedicated Heritage Planners and Facility Maintenance and Capital departments overseeing the longevity of the site and accompanying buildings. A detailed scope of work was put out to tender which included mechanical replacements, flooring replacement of asbestos containing tile, structural and carpentry repairs, foundation repointing and exterior painting. Tradition Restoration was awarded the contract and worked on site from June through November 2019, and will be returning in the spring of 2020 to complete the contract. The ongoing LED retrofit project initiated by the Curator Director in January 2017 has continued, phasing in new technology as the budget allows. As of the current date, the retrofit is at 75% completion.



The courtyard renovations

In the month of July, after a cascade of mechanical issues with Eldon House’s environmental controls, an assessment was ordered to take stock of all air conditioning, heating and dehumidification needs at the museum. The audit identified significant issues and recommended several replacements. Upon seeing the scale of the replacements, Corporate Capital Facilities made a decision to undertake a larger re-consideration of all HVAC systems in the historic building and has secured the consultant firm AMERESCO to do so. Currently, the firm is conducting an audit and will be aiming to install new devices in the spring of 2020.

Financial Report

Financially 2019 was a positive year for Eldon House Corporation. Eldon House broke even before accounting for amortization and entered 2020 with a strong balance sheet (current assets of \$126,000 vs \$88,000 in the prior year. Eldon House was the recipient of three large donations (2 received in 2019 and the third in early 2020) totaling more than \$45,000. While these donations have some stipulations on how they are spent, the funds can be used to help employ (and pay) staff members on special projects.

2019 began the four-year budgeting process with the City of London. We asked for an average 1.5% increase over the four-year cycle which was approved by the city. We asked for a special funding increase to provide additional security/patrols for the house, while not directly provided, other city departments were provided increased funding to add additional patrols to the property.

Grants

Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG)
Celebrate Canada, Celebration and Commemorating Fund
New Horizons for Seniors Grant
Canada Summer Jobs Program



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien



Community Partnerships

Community Museum Partnership:

“The Future of Tradition” – a brand new fair for Careers in Heritage was hosted at Wolseley Barracks, on 16 May 2019. Eldon House committed to facilitate a workshop for the high school students attending the fair related to the care of museum collections. The event was the first of its kind to be held in London and coincides with ICOM’s international “museum week.” The event is booked to capacity was a collaborative project, including six local museums.



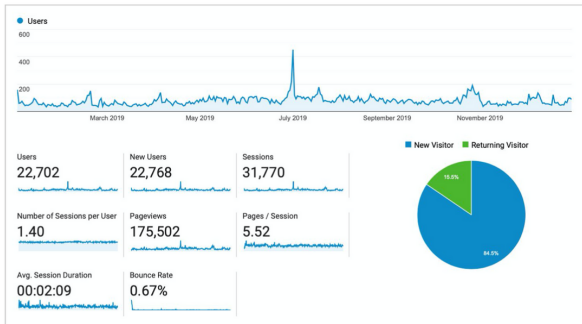
Website and Social Media Report

In late 2018 Eldon House decided to pursue a partnership with Kreadiv House, a website design and marketing company located across the street from the Museum. Kreadiv, has made some important changes to our website and allowed it to function better as our online presence expands.

Kreadiv has monitored our analytics over the course of the year, and it has revealed some interesting information. Majority of our website visitors are new and are

direct searches. Another large percentage are directed from Facebook and the London Tourism website.

Audience Overview (2019)



Website analytics provided by Kreadiv

that our site was a little dated and was not making ecommerce easy for our customers. The aim of the new site is to be more responsive to the needs of our visitors and make their virtual experience better. Kreadiv has been working alongside Eldon House Staff and a new website will be launched in 2020.

Data also shows that majority of our web visitors are from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and India, and most of our web visitors are female. These analytics show who our target audiences are and can help us with online marketing and media.

In 2019 Eldon House staff entered into talks with Kreadiv about designing a new website.

The Museum Staff had noted

Geography - Global

Country	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
	22,702 % of Total: 100.00% (22,702)	22,768 % of Total: 100.08% (22,768)	31,770 % of Total: 100.00% (31,770)	0.67% Avg for View: 0.67% (0.00%)	5.52 Avg for View: 5.52 (0.00%)	00:02:09 Avg for View: 00:02:09 (0.00%)
1. Canada	19,155 (83.79%)	19,107 (83.85%)	27,792 (87.48%)	0.57%	5.83	00:02:20
2. United States	1,531 (6.70%)	1,517 (6.66%)	1,631 (5.13%)	1.16%	4.25	00:01:00
3. United Kingdom	372 (1.63%)	369 (1.62%)	395 (1.24%)	0.51%	2.99	00:00:38
4. India	193 (0.84%)	193 (0.85%)	232 (0.73%)	0.00%	2.74	00:01:11
5. Indonesia	108 (0.47%)	108 (0.47%)	112 (0.35%)	0.89%	2.24	00:00:23
6. South Korea	108 (0.47%)	108 (0.47%)	109 (0.34%)	1.83%	2.06	00:00:02
7. Germany	101 (0.44%)	99 (0.43%)	107 (0.34%)	0.93%	3.88	00:01:11
8. Australia	82 (0.36%)	81 (0.36%)	87 (0.27%)	0.00%	3.22	00:00:36
9. Philippines	68 (0.30%)	68 (0.30%)	76 (0.24%)	0.00%	2.71	00:00:52
10. China	56 (0.24%)	56 (0.25%)	57 (0.18%)	19.30%	2.02	00:00:03

Locations of web visitors, provided by Kreadiv

A couple of years ago, Museum Staff decided that it was important to increase our online presence, particularly on social media. Eldon House has three forms of social media: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with an additional profile on TripAdvisor. In 2019, museum staff dedicated more time to posting online with the goal of promoting our events and programs in a more engaging manner.

Facebook continued to be our most popular form of social media with a yearly reach of 275,609! This was nearly double last year's reach. Facebook content was geared largely toward events and programs with separate pages being made for different events. These pages were very helpful in promoting our staple programs.

Twitter had the most significant rise in follower numbers, especially in the latter months of the year. Twitter has been useful for participating in international Museum events, including Museum Week. Museum Week is a week long initiative where Museums post images and content that corresponds to the week's predetermined themes.

Instagram is the newest platform run by Museum Staff. At the end of 2018, Eldon House's account had less than 1000 followers, and in the past year has grown by 1.9%. Our Instagram account is tied to much of the content on our other social media platforms, but has also allowed us to communicate with a younger demographic and enabled us to share images captured by the public.

Social Media Followers:
Facebook 1444
Twitter 1200
Instagram 1101



Top Social Media Images from 2019

Top left image: Summer Tea
Top right image: The Harris Family graves at Woodland Cemetery
Bottom image: Original Kids Theater photo shoot for their production of Clue

By the Numbers

Number of Days Open to the Public and for Private Tours	287
Number of Operating Hours	1409
Number of General Attendance	4609
Number of Tours Participants	1483
Number of Special Events Attendees	3926
Number of Tea Visitors	1003
Number of Outreach Attendees	1022
Number of Rental Visitors	147
Total Number of Visitors	12290
Total Number of Visitors 2018	12086
Number of Volunteers	17
Number of Volunteer Hours	960



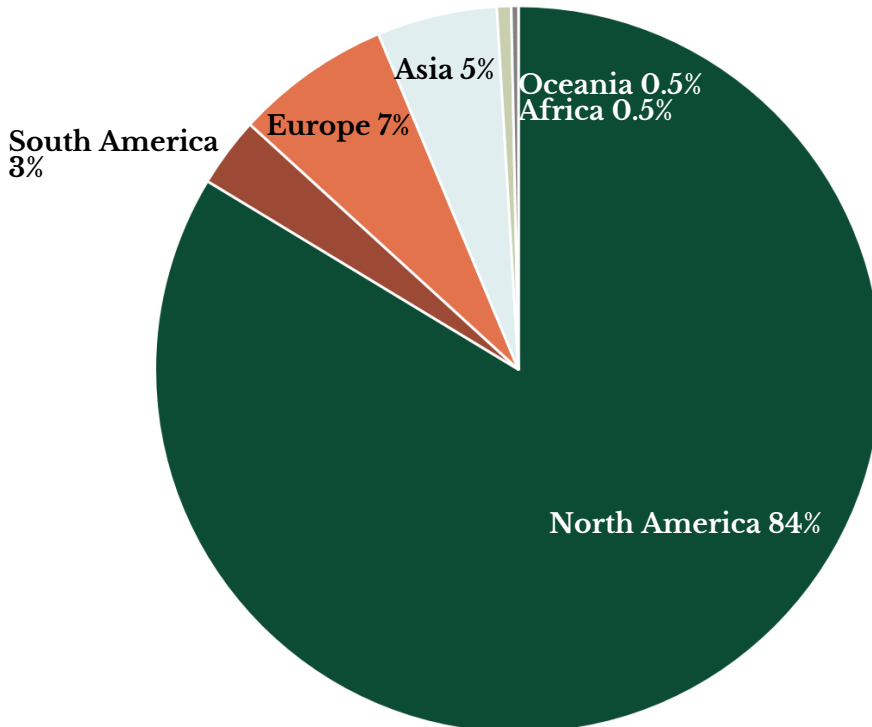
Ariel view of Eldon House, courtesy of Joe O'Neil

Visitor Statistics:

In 2019 Eldon House received a record breaking number of visitors with over 12,200 guests coming to the Museum! This was an increase of 1.86% from 2018. Numbers have continued to increase over the past several years and staff are working on innovative ways to engage our visitors and keep the public excited about Eldon House and the local heritage community.

A revamp of the Eldon House guest book also allowed staff to collect more data about our visitors. Our new guest books has space for visitors to tell us where they are from, how they heard about us, if this is their first visit, and space for a comment.

Eldon House visitors by continent



From our guest book, we were able to see that majority of our visitors come from Ontario, specifically the London and surrounding region. A fair amount of Canadian visitors also came from out west. Eldon House also saw a fair number of international visitors from 42 countries. Unsurprisingly, our highest number of

international visitors came from the United States, but there was also a significant number of visitors from Thailand, Brazil, England, Mexico, and the Netherlands. Compared to 2018, Eldon House saw a decrease in visitors from Europe but an increase in visitors from Central and South America and Asia.

A Board directive this year, was to see if we could get 1000 new people in the museum. We asked visitors to tell us if it was their first time visiting. 62% of people, (over 2100) recorded it was their first visit. 38% of people noted that they had been to Eldon House before with many people stating that they come to the Museum annually, normally to participate in one of our staple events like the New Year's Levee or the Summer Tea Program.

Visitors also provided information on how they heard about the Museum. Eldon House is entering the digital age, with most people recording that they had heard about Eldon House online, either through social media, a general google search, or tourism websites. A large percentage also stated that they heard about us through other friends and family.



Word cloud of top comments

Our new guest book also sought to gather information about what visitors liked about Eldon House. Most answers in the guestbook were simple, one to two word answers of mostly positive feedback. Visitors commented on the beauty of the house and of the approachability of the Eldon House Team. The word cloud shows the most common words used to describe the museum.

Overall, statistics for 2019 show that Eldon House is moving in the right direction, in terms of programming and marketing. Museum Staff continue to engage the public in unique events and tours, and our media presence continues to grow online and in print.

Eldon House Team

Eldon House could not exist without the many dedicated contributors to its success, from the Board of Directors to its Staff and Volunteers.

Eldon House Volunteer Team

Eldon House is extremely thankful to all of our wonderful volunteers who continue to support us with their time, energy and positive attitude.

Jackie Anger
Elizabeth Beaujot
Brenda Britton
Jennifer Dowker
Ardath Finbogasson-Hill
Al Green
Stephen Harrott
Evelyn Hayman
Louanne Henderson
Merrilee Hoffman Chase
Wendy Magrath
Jennifer McLean
Lisa Michienzi
Diane Picard
Marie Rooks
Andrea Tonkovic
Lyn Tremblay



**Top left image:
Merrilee Hoffman
Chase and Liz Beaujot
in the greenhouse**

**Top right image:
Brenda Britton and
Wendy Magrath at the
Lemon-Yellow Party**

**Bottom image: Marie
Rooks (center) assisting
participants at the Tea
and Paint event**

2019 Board of Directors

Mark Tovey, Vice Chair/ Board Chair

Joe O'Neil, Vice Chair

Manosij Majumdar, Treasurer

Theresa Regnier, Secretary

Mike Donachie, Director

Rebecca Griesmayer, Director

Louanne Henderson, Director

Ron Koudys, Director

Maureen Spencer Golovchenko, Director (Past Chair 2013-2016)

Staff Team

Tara Wittmann, Curator Director

Danielle Costello, Program Coordinator

Brenna Ardiel, Interim Program Coordinator

Nicoletta Michienzi, Museum Coordinator

Andrew Kitt, Grounds and Facilities Maintenance Coordinator (January-June)

Bernie Keim, Finance Manager

Kim Baker, Historical Interpreter

Susan Butlin, Historical Interpreter

Sarah Cowling, Historical Interpreter (January-September)

Christi Hudson, Historical Interpreter

Emily Larsen, Historical Interpreter (January-May)

Cathy Luke, Historical Interpreter

Andrew Moore, Historical Interpreter





The front gate, 1977