



# ELDON HOUSE ANNUAL REPORT

2020 REPORT

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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.



*Images of Eldon House each month of 2020. Photos courtesy of J. O'Neil and Eldon House staff*

# A Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors, Mike Donachie



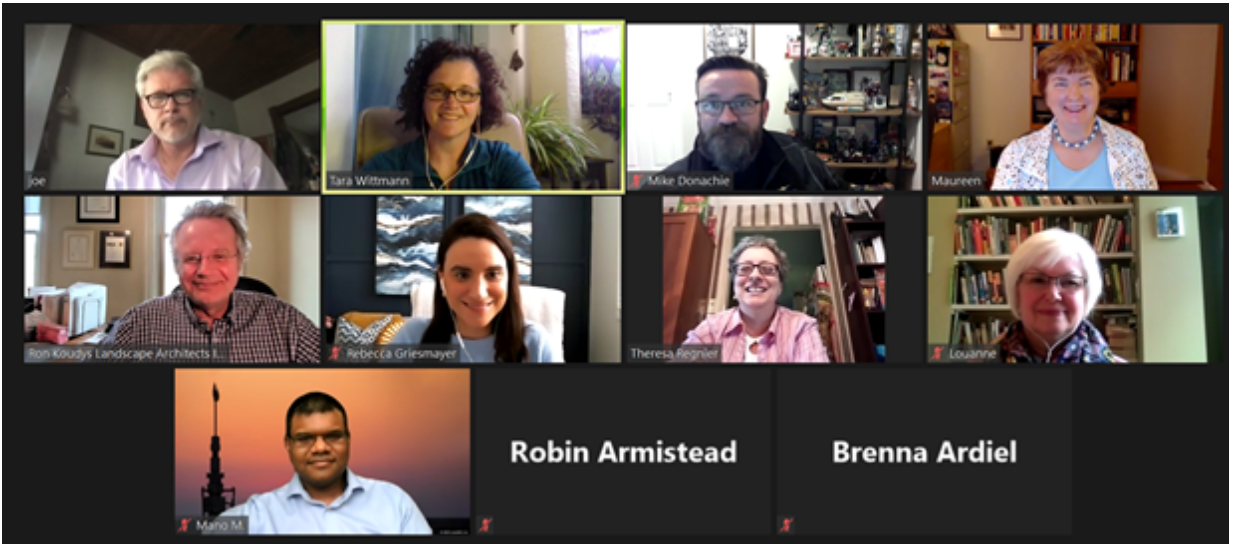
*Eldon House in July*

As we look back on an eventful year, let's thank everyone who played a part in safeguarding public health. We often talk about our strategic priorities, which are led by maintaining and protecting Eldon House Heritage Site and Gardens so people can enjoy it now and for many years to come; we must never lose sight, however, that the house's people are what make it a success. That began with the Harris family and those associated with them, and continues today.

Special thanks to everyone who works at and with Eldon House, led by our unstoppable Curator-Director, Tara Wittmann.

The courageous and conscientious work of all Eldon House staff has allowed the attraction to remain open, when regulations allowed it and with safety careful measures in place, and for visitors to experience tours in circumstances that minimized the risks related to the pandemic.

It has been and continues to be a time for flexibility and creative solutions, such as the move to online for much of our storytelling and many events. As part of that, our Board meetings switched to a virtual environment early in the pandemic and have stayed there. I want to express gratitude to our Board members – Rebecca Griesmayer, Joe O'Neil, Theresa Regnier, Maureen Spencer-Golovchenko, Louanne Henderson, Ron Koudys and Manosij



*Zoom Board meeting from left to right: J. O'Neil, T. Wittmann, M. Donachie, M. Spencer-Golovchenko, R. Koudys, R. Griesmayer, T. Regnier, L. Henderson, M. Majumdar, R. Armistead and B. Aridel*

Majumdar – for their patience as we experienced this change, and for their hard work and determination as advocates for the house and gardens.

It is undeniable that museums, especially smaller ones such as ours, are facing challenges as we look to the post-COVID era. I am honoured to have been chosen to chair this Board, and I'm confident the Eldon House team is equal to the challenges to come. We're all lucky, as Londoners, to have Eldon House in our midst, and we can be confident of a long and bright future for our city's heritage gem.

## **A Message from the Curator** **Director, Tara Wittmann**

Ours is an organization propelled by people. The museum's role – and its reach – are growing, made possible by our members and our volunteers, our partners, and our financial supporters. Thanks to you, we are moving forward

with momentum as we strive to bring the stories of the Harris Family, their life and times to a wide and diverse audience.

As we report on last year, we continue to weather daily, constant change. Looking back at 2020 is an exercise in self-evaluation – it provides an opportunity to reaffirm our core mission and focus on the priorities that will advance Eldon House in an uncertain future. Evaluating the successes and challenges of the past year provides a sense of great accomplishment for our team. The challenges we have faced in 2020 have allowed us a remarkable opportunity to ensure that the museum is a resilient, vital, active space that serves in its community. “Pivot” emerged as the buzz word of 2020 which was used ubiquitously to describe how organizations were changing in order to survive the pandemic. Implementing a COVID-19 Safety Plan, increasing our on-line presence to facilitate engagement and considering how to adjust our public and school programs are all measures that were taken.



Thank you to the Eldon House Board and Staff who have worked vigorously throughout a global pandemic. You were innovative, flexible, and ensured the delivery of exceptional content to the local community in a safe, accessible, and inclusive manner. Thank you to the dedicated Museum volunteers who have continued with us through this difficult time. This has not been an easy year to volunteer but the sense of community amongst our generous volunteer group remains strong. Thank you to the citizens of London for continuing to support the Museum during these unprecedented times.

*Tara with the Christmas greens*

# A Message from the Interim Program Coordinator, Brenna Ardiel

Eldon House's Program Coordination, Danielle Costello, began her maternity leave at the end of November 2019. I have stepped in to fill the position for 2020, and part of 2021. In my new role, I have been enthusiastic about the museum's education and public programming initiatives, and work with the philosophy that history is meant to be engaging, interactive and educational.

As we moved into a new decade of programming, we looked back to a previous century in our programming themes, to the 1920s and the topics of birth, marriage, death, fashion, art, and design and women's history. Unfortunately, in 2020, the traditional structure for programming was turned on its head due to the global pandemic. For a time, Eldon House was temporarily closed, and public and public programming and school tours were either postponed or cancelled with the safety of both staff and visitors in mind.



*Brenna in the Front Hall*

Therefore, the 2020 year was a time in which adaption and experimentation with developing new forms of programming was possible. This innovation and our ability to change, was due to the commitment of our staff and our desire to continue public education for years to come.

# A Message from the Museum Coordinator, Nicoletta Michienzi

2020 was an interesting year for all of us at Eldon House. COVID-19 and forced closures meant that we saw a large drop in visitorship this year and were also unable to see many of our volunteers and staff. Those who remained onsite felt a huge change in the museum environment.



*Nikki with the Shephard's Crook*

Despite the changes to our operations this year, Eldon House continued to thrive. Museum staff worked hard all year to ensure that while our doors were physically closed, in a way they remained open. We are proud of our output on social media platforms, and our interaction with the public in a virtual manner. While we hope for a more traditional return to work in 2021, we are still proud of the work we do and will continue to serve our community in any way we can.

We would like to express our thanks to all of our staff, volunteers, and Board members who made this year possible. We are grateful for the support and understanding we have received internally this year, and are very thankful of course to our visitors who have remained invested in us during this difficult year.

# 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



*Japanese Wallpaper in the Front Hall*

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

## **Cultural Equity Statement**

In 2020, there was a large cultural shift with people thinking about colonialism and racism in our society. Eldon House as a community organization with colonial ties, was forced to think very critically about our past, present and future within the London community. As we continue to grow and change, Eldon House needs to address the history it presents to our visitors and online audiences. As a first step, Eldon House has conducted an internal examination, including writing a cultural equity statement, consultation with Indigenous groups on an upcoming Land Acknowledgement statement, and upcoming diversity training for all site staff, and a revision of tour programs to address our colonial heritage. Eldon House will continue to challenge itself and its presentation of history to make our museum an open and

safe space for all members of our community. We encourage all patrons to contact our museum if there are any questions, comments or concerns about our museum's policies moving forward.

## **Eldon House Statement On Cultural Equity**

To support a fully engaged visitor experience for all, Eldon House commits to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, equitable community.

### **Definition of Cultural Equity**

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to: those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, linguistic ability, or religion—are represented in the institution. Representation can include, but is not limited to: staff or board personnel, programs, outreach, education, exhibitions and social media initiatives.

### **Acknowledgments and Affirmations**

- In Canada, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally, such that result in inequity and injustice, and that must be continuously addressed and changed.
- Cultural equity is critical to the long-term viability of the heritage sector.

- We must all hold ourselves accountable, because acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.

### **Modeling Through Action**

To provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity, we strive to...

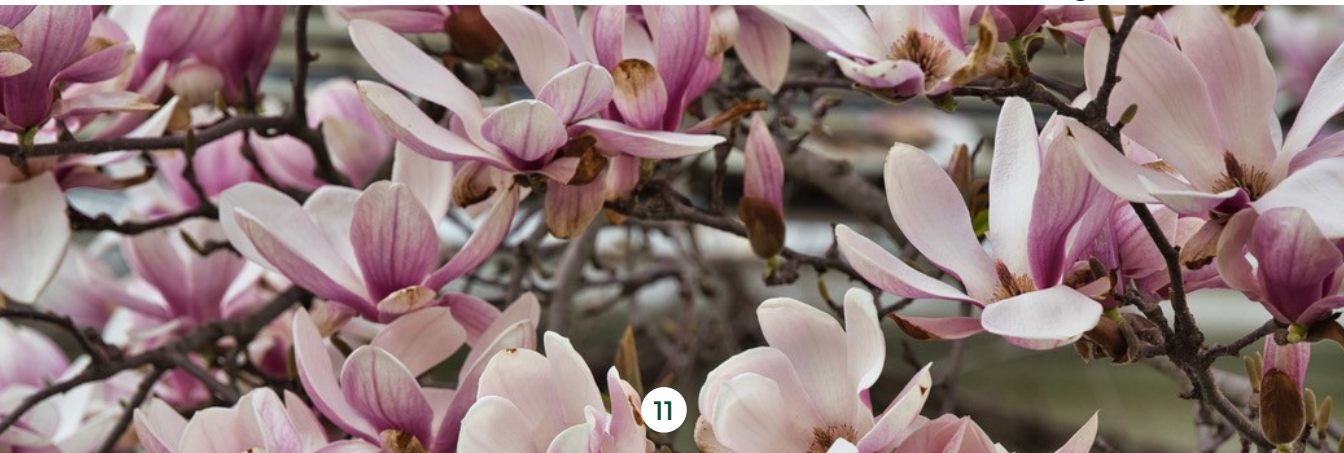
- Pursue cultural consciousness throughout our organization through substantive learning and formal, transparent policies.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and report organization progress.
- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, and partnerships.

### **Fueling Field Progress**

To pursue systemic change related to equity, we strive to...

- Encourage substantive learning to build cultural consciousness and to proliferate pro-equity policies and practices by all of our stakeholders and audiences.
- Improve the cultural leadership pipeline by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership that reflects the full breadth of Canadian society.
- Generate and aggregate quantitative and qualitative research related to equity to make incremental, measurable progress towards cultural equity more visible.

*Eldon House Magnolia Blooms*



# COVID-19 Overview

“

*WHO has been assessing this outbreak around the clock and we are deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction.*

*We have therefore made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic.*

*- WHO statement March 11, 2020*

”

The COVID-19 virus was officially declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, nearly 2 months after the first case appeared in London, ON. Eldon House staff had been occupied with thoughts of the pandemic prior to WHO's announcement. Staff sought to prepare Eldon House for potential closures, reopening, with public safety and the safety of our artifacts being of the utmost importance. The preparedness of Eldon House staff has

allowed our organization to navigate the pandemic successfully thus far.

At the start of the pandemic, the Eldon House Curator Director began looking for cleaning supplies that would be effective for public safety and safety of our artifacts. Extensive research and discussion with other museum professionals was done and materials were tested to establish a cleaning regiment that would involve sanitizing all high touch surfaces. Various hands-on activities were removed, and items that are sensitive to chemical sanitization have also been moved for their



*COVID-19 cleaning supplies*



*Brenna at the Museum*

safety. The Curator Director ensured that staff were trained on new procedures and various documents were created to guarantee that staff were sanitizing surfaces frequently. Additionally, extra hand sanitization stations were purchased and placed at key entrances and exits at the museum.

The Curator Director also worked with the Interim Program Coordinator and the Museum Coordinator to re-evaluate our safety measures in the museum. The full-time staff

spoke with members of the London Middlesex Health Unit, other museums, as well as read provincial guidelines on how to safely operate our institution.

While conducting research into safety operations, it was announced that all non-essential services were to close starting on March 15. This initial closure was the longest closure to date, lasting from March 15 to July 17. During this time, Eldon House staff did what they could to safeguard the museum and its artifacts. This included moving several items into storage and working closely with City security to make sure that Eldon House was protected.

As we remained closed for majority of the summer, Eldon House was forced to cancel



**IN COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS ELDON HOUSE IS TEMPORARILY CLOSED DUE TO COVID-19.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 519-661-5169 OR EMAIL INFO@ELDONHOUSE.CA**

*Closure Notice*

many of its staple events, including our annual summer tea. As a result, we were unable to host students for our Summer Tea Server positions. Despite the closure and cancellation of many events, the grounds remained open and accessible to members of the public, and the site was well-used by neighbours and downtown visitors.

During the closure our full-time staff looked to the future and created several plans for reopening with public safety at the forefront. Staff created a route system to guide visitors through the the museum and to eliminate contact with other groups, signage was designed and put in place to assist with guidance. In addition, a booking system was created to time entry and to screen visitors. This system was put into place with our reopening in July, and we continued to be open by appointment until a second provincial closure in December.



*Route System*



**WE'RE OPENING  
SOON!**

Help us keep you safe!

Though the pandemic is not over, the Eldon House team feel confident in our ability to work through the changes this global health crisis has presented. Staff will continue to ensure that the safety of the public, our staff and volunteers is protected, and will continue to make sure that Eldon House is a heritage presence within the community.

# Exhibitions

Presenting captivating exhibitions is one of the keyways of sharing the Eldon House and Harris Family history with our visitors along with to introducing them to international cultures and stories. 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.

Our planned schedule of exhibits was interrupted in 2020 due to the various closures and limited audience brought about by the pandemic. Instead, we worked diligently to present a mix of exhibits, both on-site and, for the first time, available digitally. The pandemic encouraged us to find new way of engaging with and reaching our audience and we have been delighted with the innovations that have been developed by necessity. We continue to plan for a bright future, moving forward with exhibitions that will inhabit several communication platforms.

The exhibits that were featured in 2020 followed the themes of domestic service, tea traditions and cultural exploration.

We started the year with two exhibitions that looked at the life and work of the Eldon House domestic staff in the late Victorian to modern era.



*The Larder, courtesy of J. O'Neil*

## From Pottage to Pinperneau: The Eldon House Cookbooks

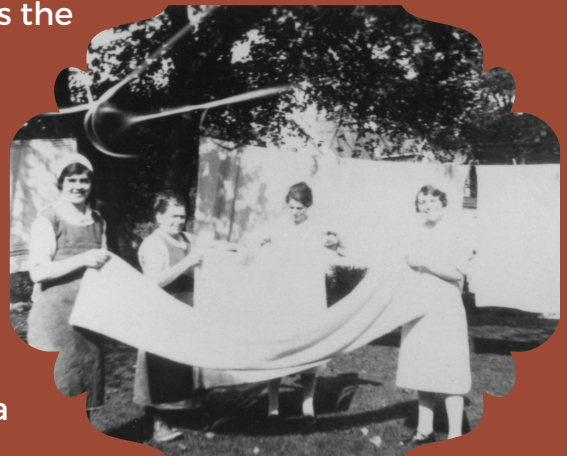


*Spice containers from the Eldon House collection*

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 encyclopedias of domestic advice, encompassing recipes for home remedies, medicinal treatments as well as delicious desserts! This exhibit displayed and interpreted several historical cookbooks in the museum’s collection and elaborated on the origins, uses and terminology of these wonderful examples of social history, while also reproducing a recipe from each cookbook.

## The Servant Question

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 homes 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 the servant and the served as well as the ephemera that influenced the structure of their relationships, a glimpse into the domestic life in London, Ontario was revealed.



*Eldon House staff from left to right: Doris Robertson, Lilla Hart, Margaret Mitchell, and Mary Kidd ca. 1930*

An exploration of cultural history accompanied by artifacts collected internationally was enacted with three exhibitions in 2020, including our first stand-alone online exhibit:

### **The World in Miniature**

When the Harris Family traveled around the world in 1897, they collected hundreds of cultural treasures. Pottery, porcelain, ethnographic objects and ivory carvings made up only a few of the many items of interest that the family brought back to Canada, effectively creating a “walk in” curio cabinet of their home. This exhibition displays several miniscule and elaborate pieces, often unseen by the public and will illustrate the Victorian partiality for curios.



*Netsuke in the Eldon House Collection*



*Milly Harris and friends on top of the pyramids of Giza in 1898*

### **The Harris Family Abroad**

Through 1897 and 1898 the Harris Family of Eldon House went on an 11-month “world tour” traveling through Japan, China, Burma, India, Egypt, Palestine, into Europe and England. Not only did they bring back innumerable souvenirs which give Eldon House its unique character, they also returned with hundreds of photographs. This exhibit aimed to illustrate the locations explored on the family’s “Grand Tour” while also focused on “Canadian’s Abroad” at the end of the Victorian Era.

## Inspired by Nature, Online Exhibit

Inspired by Nature, created by our Historical Interpreter Susan Butlin, explores the complex relationship between design and nature as seen in works from diverse cultures, and which date from the seventeenth to the early-twentieth century. The works are drawn, with one exception, exclusively from the collection of Eldon House Heritage Site and Gardens. The individual stories of the artifacts and the research for this exhibit has revealed much about Harris Family history, their collecting habits as early Canadians and as late-nineteenth century tourists, as well as the relationship between design and nature in the nineteenth century as revealed in the works themselves.



*Guest Curator Susan Butlin  
with a Japanese 'frog'*



*Items from the Cross Cultural Learning Center's clients*

## Celebration of Nations, Guest Exhibit from the Cross Cultural Learning Center

In November, Eldon House hosted a travelling exhibit from the Cross Cultural Learning Center here in London. This organization's mandate is to help newcomers to the community, as well as to promote cultural diversity. Eldon House has worked with this group before, hosting tours for newcomers. This exhibit was created by volunteers of the CCLC, and this exhibit travelled to various London museums in late 2020. Artifacts in this display were comprised

of culturally significant items donated from clients of the center, and provided a glimpse into the diverse makeup of London, Ontario.

A portion of our exhibit space is always devoted to the Harris Family and explorations into their lives and times. In 2020, we delved into the elaborate Victorian traditions of taking tea and Christmas.

## **Taking Tea**

The Harris Family of Eldon House frequently refer to "taking tea" in their letters and diaries as it was an important staple for their diets and social lives. Three generations of Harris women refer to not only to tea, but also the interesting discussions and practices that resulted from the occasions. This exhibition explores the tea practice of a variety of cultures and how the inhabitants of London, Ontario integrated the customs practices of Britain into their own lives. Artifacts from the Eldon House Collection illustrate the vast paraphernalia used in enacting elaborate teas and are accompanied by first person accounts of Londoners during the Victorian period.



*Tea Cup from the Eldon House Collection*

## **Christmas Curiosities**

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 evils appeared to punish the undeserving. This exhibit illustrated some of the Christmas "curiosities" by reproducing graphic Victorian Postcards.

## Victorian Christmas

Through the month of December, Eldon House annually celebrates the season with a museum-wide exhibit on Victorian Christmas. This year, we celebrated safely with a slightly pared-back version of the exhibit, due to having suspended a long partnership with the Garden Club of London who traditionally create many of the greenery and dried flower arrangements that are featured throughout the museum. This year staff worked to create all the arrangements in-house with great results. With the lack of school tours and limited visitor engagement, our "Christmas Lite" was launched and enjoyed digitally and in small groups.

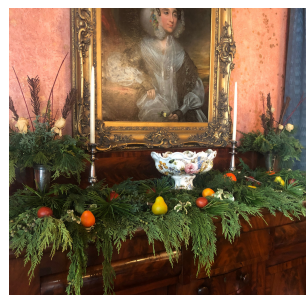


*Scary Santa by the mantle*

## Christmas by the Numbers

- 9 trips to Springbank Park to harvest greens
  - 31 wreaths
  - 23 seasonal arrangements
  - 2 outdoor arrangements
  - 4 Volunteers, 3 staff and 2 research assistants to create greenery
  - 4 Eldon House Staff to set up
  - interpretive material
  - 2 Exhibit Installations
  - 300 hours of work
- = Victorian Christmas

*Images from left to right: gingerbread house, Dining Room, wreathes on porch, two arrangements, V. Burnett making garlands, T. Wittmann and R. Marshall making garlands*



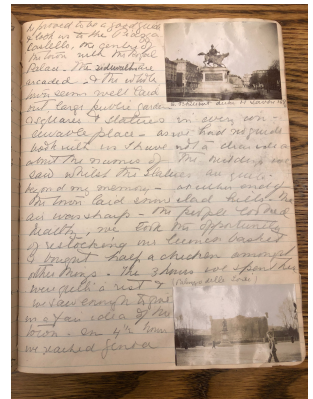
# Research, Digitization, Publications

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 Western Archives, Western University, the Harris Family Fonds is an invaluable collection of primary source documents.

## Transcription

All full and part-time Eldon House staff contribute to ongoing transcription projects, as time permits. Milly Harris (1862-1959) has been the diarist we have been following, through her girlhood, travels and later life.

In 2020, several new diary transcriptions progressed, related the Harris Family travels. We continue with this project, now moving into the (literal) "last leg" of the world tour and into the next century. Several original diaries were photographed at Western Archives, which are visually reproduced for staff

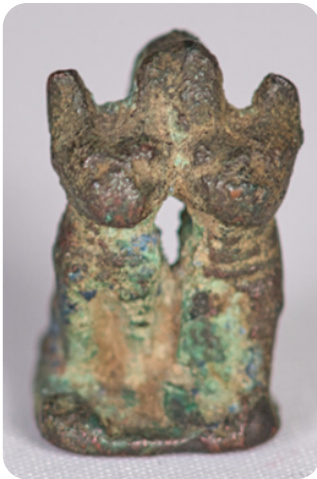


*Milly's Naples Diary*

to work from as they record and decode the diary entries. After these several years of work, we aim to formalize the transcriptions in a publication so that Milly Harris' story can be shared with a larger audience!

## **Publications**

Eldon House was featured in the Culinary Historians of Canada's newsletter (Number 90, October 2020), titled "Digestible Bits and Bites" The museum's interesting servant history as well as that of the three cooking/preparation spaces inside the house were examined.



*Cats from the Eldon House Collection*

The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (SSEA) featured Eldon House in its Winter 2020 Newsletter, in an article on "Curiosities and Collections." The article revealed the museum's collection of Egyptian artifacts - some typical to the late 19 century, and several of which are genuinely ancient, including shabtis (protective figurines), scarabs, and a small, charming bronze amulet of a pair of kittens.

## **Research and Digitization**

In working with researchers through 2020, Eldon house staff had an opportunity to learn more about a painting in the collection that had long held some mystery. Dr. E. Harris of Bermuda reached out to Eldon House to learn

more about an oil painting called the “Evening Gun” that hangs on the walls of the museum, painted by E.G. Hallewell.

The British military artist, Edmund Gilling Hallewell (1820-1869) first appeared in British military records when he was commissioned in 1839 as an ensign with 20th Regiment of Foot and he died at Sandhurst, England. He rose through the ranks retiring on half-pay as a colonel in 1860 when he was appointed the commandant of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst in 1864. His tours of duty took him to Bermuda (1848) as a major, then Canada, England, the Crimea and Malta. Hallewell's Canadian service began at Halifax then at Quebec in 1847, he was next posted in Kingston, London, and Montreal before leaving the Canadas in 1850. His residence in London, Upper Canada was from May to September 1849. As a painter, Hallewell is known for his landscapes in oil and watercolour and it is probable that he trained in landscape topography as part of his early military training.

Recent research conducted by the Eldon House Curator Director has found that Hallewell was a frequent visitor to Eldon House and friend to the family. In 1849, Charlotte Harris wrote in her diary "Ensign Hallewell brought a gift of a drawing called The Evening Gun." It is this painting that Dr. E. Harris showed interested in including it in an upcoming publication of the artist's work.

According to Dr. Harris, it is an unusual painting for the artist, due to the medium used, as Hallewell was almost exclusively a water-colourist. He shared a watercolour study of the Eldon House painting, which is in his own collection in Bermuda. Compared with the image of the Eldon House oil painting to the right, it is a perfect match.



*The Evening Gun*

# Collections, Conservation and Care



*Silver polishing on a candlestick in the Eldon House Collection*

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 assessment of artifacts. In addition to this, the site, ensuring regular treatment and a number of professional conservation projects are undertaken each year funded by the "Lucy Little Endowment Fund."

Eldon House applies best practices to all activities associated with preserving the Museum's collection; this includes monitoring the museum environment and

ensuring high standards in exhibiting, storing, and transportation of its objects. In addition, curatorial staff undertake treatments on all objects to be displayed or loaned and conduct research both on the collections and on conservation issues.

Every year, the Collections and Policy Committee enjoys the opportunity to consider a broad range of artifacts and archival materials that have been offered by generous donors to its permanent collection. As a rule, very few pieces are absorbed into our collection, with some exceptions that are set out in our Collections Policy. One class of artifact that is an ongoing acquisition priority at Eldon House are pieces that have a primary connection to the Harris family. We delight in bringing artifacts back “home” so to further our mandate to share the stories of Harris Family and their life in London, Ontario. This year, we had a remarkable opportunity to receive a

generous and fascinating donation of what has been called the “Harris Family Mascot.”

In September 2019, the Curator Director was contacted by a descendent of the Harris Family, A. Crutchley, currently residing in England. She wrote of a donation she wished to make to the museum – a spade guinea which belonged to Teresa Littledale with an inscription on it:

“

*About 1835 my Father John Harris threw the spade guinea into the lap of my Mother Amelia Harris saying “There! As long as you own that you will never be a poor woman.” It has been looked upon as the family mascot ever since.*

*-Teresa Littledale*

”

The “mascot” was given to Teresa’s great nephew Victor Crutchley, grandson of her sister Eliza Bayfield Harris. It has remained in the Crutchley’s keeping and has long been the wish of the last owners to donate it to Eldon House “...where it belongs.” The accession process at Eldon House, as in many museums, is a lengthy one involving research, reporting and deliberation, and as the “Mascot” was formally accepted into the collection in late 2020. We thank the donor most sincerely and are

looking forward to exhibiting this wonderful artifact in its own right!



*Both sides of the Spade Guinea coin. The left image has the inscription carved into the edge*



# Public Programming



*St. Paul's Choir in the Drawing Room*

Between January and March of 2020 programming continued as scheduled beginning with the annual New Year's Levee. There were over 200 visitors that participated, joining us to take in the last of the Christmas decorations and enjoy the festive caroling by the St. Paul's Cathedral Choir. Activities and refreshments were held in the Interpretive Center along with touring inside the museum.

As the year progressed and closures were announced, Public Programming required either alteration or adaption to encompass the guidelines for interest, fun and safety.

Eldon House was able to continue to host small events once we opened to the public again in July, though our major events for the summer were cancelled. The Interim Program Coordinator and the Eldon House staff pivoted, working with municipal restrictions and additional safety measures to ensure that our community was still able to enjoy our wonderful museum.

**Eldon House**  
Heritage Site and Gardens

**Eldon House is Now Open**

As the Ontario Government gradually reopens heritage institutions, Eldon House welcomes you to come and stroll the grounds and enjoy our gardens. Eldon House will be open for self-guided tours booked by appointment.

Our hours are currently reduced and new procedures have been put into place to ensure the safety of our visitors and staff. Call or email us to make an appointment and enjoy a self-guided tour of London's Victorian time capsule.

Eldon House is strictly following the Provincial and the Ministry of Health's guidelines involving a methodical re-opening process, which means your on-site visit might look a little different than previous years!

In order to keep our visitors safe, Eldon House will be reducing its visitor capacity and be screening visitors to ensure health regulations are met: physical distancing and face coverings will be mandatory and interactive elements of the museum will be closed to limit visitor contact. We have implemented enhanced disinfection protocols in order to ensure the safety of our visitors and staff.

To learn more about what to expect before you visit, look at our website for further details.

To book an appointment please call 519-661-5169 or email [info@eldonhouse.ca](mailto:info@eldonhouse.ca)

*Eldon House COVID-19 opening sign*

## Tours

The first tour of the year was our traditional Behind the Ropes tour. This tour is immensely popular as guests are able to step 'behind the ropes' and walk-through doors, which would traditionally not be available to the public on a daily basis. This is an opportunity to view the unreachable nooks and crannies of Eldon House.

Following this, we hosted a tour designed to look at the lives of the servants of the Harris family. The Upstairs, Downstairs tour is a combination of stories, anecdotes and facts what about the daily routines of the employees who worked throughout the house and on the grounds. This year, we were fortunate to have Richard Kloggard join us on one of these tours. He is the son of the late Mary Kidd, who served as a parlourmaid to the Harris family throughout the 1930s. He was able to enrich the experience with stories of his mother and his memories of the Harris family. This tour, similar to that of the 'behind the ropes' looked at parts of the house that are not traditionally open to daily visitors and, therefore, the experience was greatly intriguing for the participants.



*K. Baker leading the  
Upstairs, Downstairs  
tour*

Between mid-March until the end of August having indoor guided tours of the museum was not possible. This was due once again to the safety restrictions involving COVID-19 which, prohibited large groups. Eldon House staff followed health guideline that encouraged limited capacities safe space and proper social distancing throughout the museum. At this time, persons were instructed to stay within their visitor bubbles (their personal household) when visiting.

September provided an opportunity to utilize our outdoor spaces and, we hosted our Historical Walking Tour and Riverwalk Tour. Visitors were asked to wear face coverings or masks, along with maintaining safe social distancing while enjoying an informative and leisurely walk around the neighbourhood surrounding Eldon House. These tours also included discussions about the history of the period, and the influence of the Thames River in London.

October was an exciting month with our debut of our Crimes, Haunts and Curses Tours. Visitors greatly enjoyed walking around downtown London at dusk hearing stories of family curses, dastardly crimes and London's notable haunted locations, including that of the infamous Eldon house ghost Wenman Wynniatt. This tour proved to be a great success and we look forward to hosting it again come October 2021. The spooky season also included the Woodland Cemetery Tours which, were hosted for two days. Immensely popular, visitors were treated to discussions surrounding the culture of death throughout the Victorian era and the macabre practices of the Victorians. We continued our partnership with Woodland Cemetery and look forward to our continued partnership in the future.

Finally, we hosted our Victorian Traditions Tours leading up to Christmas, in which guests could book a personal tour of up to six persons and have a guided tour of the museum enjoying the Victorian holiday decorations and seasonal atmosphere. This program was also popular and allowed museum staff to show off the wonderful decorations that were create in house.



*Poster for Crimes, Haunts and Curses Tour*

## Workshops

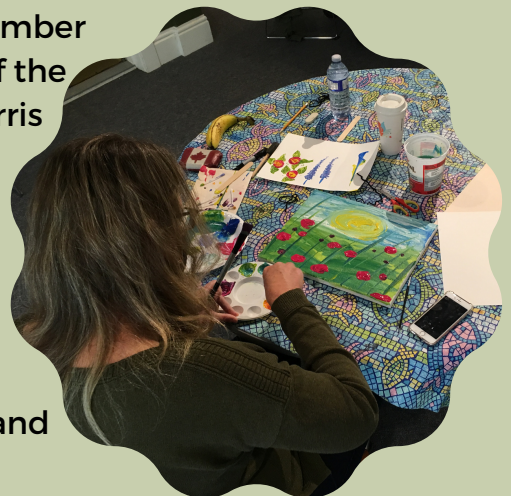
The Interim Program Coordinator developed four brand new workshops this year designed to engage our visitors during COVID-19. This included two themed Quilling Workshops, and Mourning Jewelry: from the Cradle to the Grave and a Painting Workshop. The last workshop of the season included a Kissing Ball Workshop perfect for the winter holidays. All workshops began with a brief PowerPoint on the history of the subject and its connection to Eldon House. This was followed by a step-by-step instructions where the participants created their very own craft which they could take home.



*Quilling example*

Both Quilling Workshops, which took place in September and December, looked at the ancient art form of curled, twisted, and twirled strips of paper into unique designs. This was a popular pastime of the Victorian ladies, which was seen as both an elegant and mess free artform. Participants then tried their hand at this artform creating a seasonal card using this quilling method.

A Painting Workshop also took place in September where the participants learned about some of the notable art pieces and artifacts within the Harris collection. They then tried their hand at creating a floral still-life painting. This included following the instructions of the Interim Program Coordinator using techniques and materials that could be found in one's home, such as string or Q-tips. This workshop was designed for both expert and beginner artists.



*Participant at the Painting Workshop*



*From top left: Hair tree from Fanshawe Pioneer Village, hair pendant from the Eldon House Collection, Willow Tree hair from the Eldon House Collection, eye pendant by B. Ardiel*

A most unique workshop that took place was in October, was the Mourning Jewelry: from the Cradle to the Grave. It examined the unique practices involving death and remembrance during the Victorian era. Participants learned the peculiar way by which the Victorians would create jewelry and decorations using human hair, paper or black gems. Often, hair was from a loved one, family or friend, and would be put into a pendant such as a necklace, braided into a bracelet, or intricately stylized into rings or portraits. The participants were able to try their hand at making a pendant which, included hair from

costume wigs collected by the Interim Program Coordinator. The workshop was well received and can be added to Eldon House's annual Occult Workshop Series in the House's annual Occult Workshop Series in the future.

The last workshop of the year took place in December where the Curator Director, Interim Program Coordinator, and Museum Coordinator all assisted in gathering fresh greenery to create kissing balls. Kissing Balls are a delightfully unique holiday items to North American homes and are seen in the museum during our Christmas tours. The kissing ball workshop was the most popular throughout the year selling out quickly, and participants enjoyed styling and trimming their homemade holiday décor.



*Two participants at the Kissing Ball Workshop*

## Special Events

Eldon House was able to participate in several special events in 2020. We hosted our second ever Murder Mystery Party, with the group Gumshoe Mysteries, this event was a success. We also participated in The Heritage Fair: Remembering their Sacrifice -75 Years Later on February 15th, coordinated with the London Heritage Council. The theme of the heritage fair was in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II.



*Tea cups for our Canada Day i-Spy*

On July 1st, we welcomed visitors onto the grounds to celebrate Canada Day, to explore the gardens and enjoy the first of the summer weather. This was the start for the season for Eldon House, as our gates were previously closed to the public during the provincial shutdown. Eldon House staff continued to open our gates to the public during summer for them to utilize our beautiful green space. Both children and adults alike enjoyed strolling around the

grounds searching for specifically place teacups as part of our interactive hands-free 'i-spy scavenger hunt'. We were delighted and approximately 120 people joined us for this public event.

In November, Eldon House hosted its first live virtual trivia night. This virtual 1920s Trivia Night was the first of its kind, and participants registered or sent a link to join a video chat through the Zoom application. The Interim Program Coordinator was the moderator for this event, along with the Museum Coordinator as the score keeper. A PowerPoint was shared with the participants where questions and answers were read out loud and reviewed. Smaller video clips acted as intermissions between each round while scores were being tallied marked. This was new and exciting, and promised to serve as a unique special event for Eldon House in the future.

## Tea Programs

This year was quite challenging logistically regarding the hosting of our annual special tea events and our Summer Tea Program. This was due to the potential risks and safety parameters surrounding COVID-19. Unfortunately, for 2020 Eldon House staff made the conservative decisions to cancel these events. However, the Interim Program Coordinator is excited to be preparing and is looking forward to once again hosting our annual popular holiday themed teas events and the anticipated Summer Tea Program come 2021.

## Children's Programming

This year Eldon House was able to host several special events for families with children. In March, we were able to once again partner with The Amazing Corbin, hosting his Magic and Mystery Show. Several children volunteered and were delighted to join The Amazing Corbin on stage to assist in several of the magical and intricate illusions.

In August, Eldon House hosted the annual Teddy Bear Picnic where families toured the museum and participated in a teddy bear I-spy scavenger hunt.



*Teddy Bear Picnic signage*



*Gourds on the Eldon House lawn*

On October 31st families were welcomed to join a Spooky Gourd Painting event where children were encouraged to pick a small gourd or pumpkin from our makeshift pumpkin patch in the front flower bed on the south lawns. Once they had picked the perfect pumpkin, they were encouraged to paint a spooky design which they could take home.

# Education Programming



*Social Media Advertisement for Walking Tours*

In, 2020 Eldon House continued to offer half day educational programs for grades 1 through 10 covering curriculum subject matter for history, social studies, geography, the arts and more. We also provided the option to customize a tour for post-secondary learning, ESL groups and adult groups. In our offerings

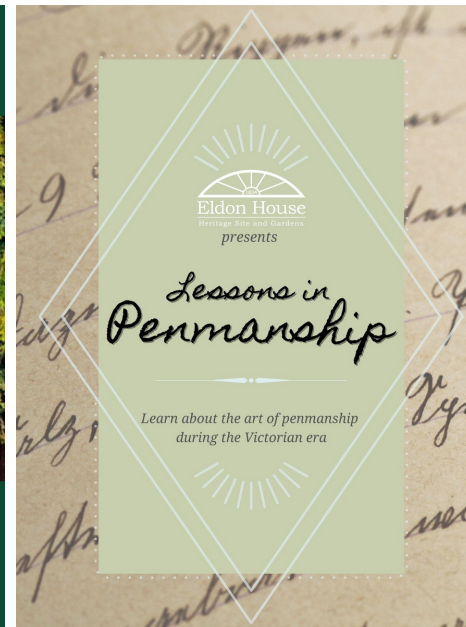
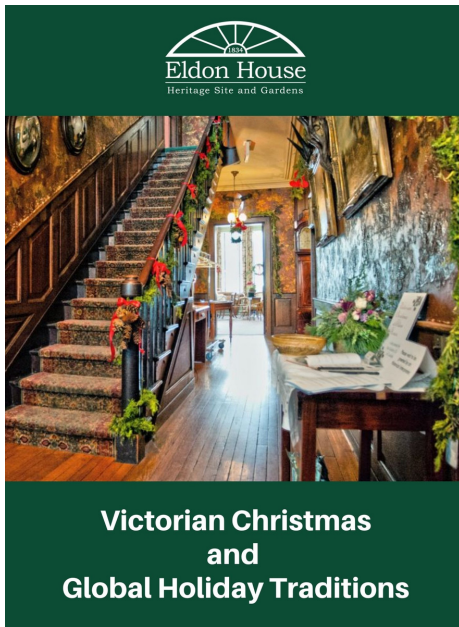
we have included two historical walking tours. The Harris Adventure Walk involves walking around the surrounding neighbourhood learning about the families and community from the time of the Harris family. The River Adventure Walk looks at the geographical influences that the Thames River had upon early London.

Eldon House is a member of the Beyond Blackboard group, which is a network of educators and program coordinators of local non-profit organizations throughout the Southwestern Ontario region. These institutions provide curriculum based and educational programming often for schools and the public. The Interim Program Coordinator represents Eldon House at these meetings. During this difficult time, this community of educators and professionals has been an asset in supporting each

other in sharing knowledge and experiences in adapting to technological assisted and off-site programming. Ideas and experiences are discussed, and the group works to tackle shared challenges that many heritage and educational institutions face.

## **Workbooks**

Eldon House developed its first workbooks to be utilized in the classroom and homeschooling. These workbooks were developed with the assistance of our two research assistants from Western University's Public History Program. The workbooks were designed to provide teachers with another method of accessing Eldon House while the pandemic has suspended fieldtrips.



*Front covers for the Victorian Christmas and Global Holiday Traditions Workbook and the Lessons in Penmanship Workbook*

These workbooks are sent to the teacher and contain a variety of interactive activities, as well as accompanying educational videos created by the museum staff. The Victorian Christmas and Global Holiday Traditions workbook has many interactive components in which, students learn about Victorian Christmas traditions of the Harris family, along with other seasonal celebrations such as Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and the Lunar New Year. The second workbook, lessons in penmanship, looks at teaching students the art of cursive writing, along with what a Victorian classroom was like for young pupils over 100 years ago.

We look forward in continuing to develop more themed outreach kits and incorporate them into the standard Eldon House programs.

## Outreach

In 2020, between January to March, we continued our Memory Lane Program, made possible through funding granted by the New Horizons for Seniors Program. Going into our fourth season, this program continues to be popular with senior centers where some of their clients are impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia. We continue this partnership with long term care homes throughout London, Dorchester, Strathroy and Delaware.



*Mustache Tea Cup in  
our "Taking Tea" kit*

Our program themes include "Photography: People and Places", "Life and Leisure", "In the Kitchen", "School

Days”, “A Victorian Christmas” and “Women’s Work”. After March, the focus of the program shifted, due to the restriction about visiting our clients in person. The focus for 2020 became acquiring artifacts, equipment, and resources in which, the program can be enhanced for the following years. This included the purchasing of artifacts for the development of a two new kit themes: "Music: Get into Rhythm" and "Taking Tea".

## Virtual Programming

2020 was a time of alteration and adaptability when it came to public and educational programming. During this time, the development of virtual tour programming began. Digital resources (social media, online programming, virtual technologies, etc.) have become an asset to heritage sites and cultural institutions, to enhance and continue educational and public programming. In 2020 global museums began experimenting with online tours, lectures and workshops, and online events have become extremely popular. Learning from this, the Interim Program Coordinator began the development of Eldon House’s live virtual tours, which can serve a variety of audiences including students, seniors, participants of our Memory Lane program and for the general public. The implementation has resulted in a great deal of planning and testing which will continue into 2021.

## ELDON HOUSE LIVE VIRTUAL TOURS

*Bringing Eldon House into the Classroom*



### Guideline for a Virtual Tour

- 1 hour virtual tour (45 minute tour + optional 15 minute question period)
- Perfect for the classroom or at home learning
- For optimum accessibility Eldon House recommends the use of a computer/PC. Cellular device and iPads have some limitations
- Virtual tours must be booked in advance and are only available select days of the week (please contact for further details)

To book a virtual tour please email:  
[bardiel@eldonhouse.ca](mailto:bardiel@eldonhouse.ca)

### NEW ELDON HOUSE LIVE VIRTUAL TOURS

Students will step back in time with a unique virtual tour of London, Ontario's oldest residence. Join one of Eldon House's knowledgeable and enthusiastic Historical Interpreters as you explore the 19th-century Victorian house from the comfort of your classroom or home.

### *Virtual Tours Information*

# Internship Students



*J. Chernich with a sword  
from the Collection*

Eldon House was pleased to host three Public History Master's students in 2020. Eldon House has been working in partnership with Western University's Public History program for over six years, hosting students and helping them gain firsthand experience in local history institutions. J. Chernich was the Research Assistant to Eldon House for a full school year, from September 2019 to April 2020. J. Chernich was instrumental in helping Eldon House staff set up our YouTube channel, and worked with staff on multiple collections and conservation projects. In September 2020 we were delighted to welcome and host V. Burnett and R. Marshall through the fall. Eldon House staff worked with both students to ensure a well-rounded experience, exploring collections, conservation, exhibits, and education.

Both of our research assistants aided the Eldon House staff in various projects, though the role of our students was slightly altered during the pandemic, involving more one-on-one work or off-site projects. Both V. Burnett and R. Marshall assisted in the conservation projects in several rooms, as well as cataloging and photographing various artifacts. Both students worked with the Interim Program Coordinator on creating educational workbooks, including research, writing and design. Both of our students ended off their placement with the creation of greenery displays for Christmas as well as set up for Victorian Christmas. We are very grateful to both students and wish them luck in their future careers.



*R. Marshall and V. Burnett  
silver polishing*

# Facilities and Grounds Maintenance

## Lifecycle Renewal:

In the fall of 2018 planning began for the scheduled “Life Cycle Renewal Projects” to be undertaken in 2019. The project spanned two years and was completed in the fall of 2020. 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. The scope of work for the recent capital project included mechanical replacements, flooring replacement of asbestos containing tile, structural and carpentry repairs, foundation repointing and exterior painting, largely centering on the Interpretive Centre building to the north of the historic home. The overall visual effect the capital project is that the Interpretive Centre has been given a significant restoration that will safeguard the exterior fabric of the building for years to come!



*Wood rotting on the Interpretive Center prior to the Lifecycle Renewal*

## HVAC Retrofit:

In late 2019, 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 large re-consideration of all HVAC systems in the

historic building and had secured the consultant firm AMERESCO to do so. Installation work was conducted in the month of July 2020, during one of the periods of the Museum's closures and after completion, the system performed optimally. The museum-wide refurbishment of HVAC technology has provided us with a sophisticated and holistic system that should allow us to better maintain the interior of the museum to industry standards, as well as efficiency reduce our carbon footprint.

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 80% completion.

### **Grounds and Gardens:**

The Eldon House grounds and gardens were appreciated by many visitors this year who were seeking outdoor enjoyment. As the museum shut down to the public for the first time in March, we enacted plans to ensure that the grounds would be in good order in the case of being able to safely host visitors outdoors as restrictions would allow. We geared many of our public programs that went forward in 2020 to utilize the



*L. Beaujot and B. Keenan  
decorating urns for Christmas*

grounds where social distancing measures could be maintained. There were however periods of time that our grounds were closed to the public and during those quiet times, site staff were amazed at the variety of animal life that emerged: numerous coyotes, deer, fox and a family of skunks were our most regular visitors!



*Magnolia Tree,  
courtesy of J. O'Neil*

We did not fill our seasonal role of Grounds and Garden Coordinator as we froze hiring after March 15. Instead, we once again enjoyed the services of Definitive Lawn and Garden who maintained the grounds beautifully. Our dedicated gardens volunteers equally contributed to the

beauty of the gardens by growing plant material from seed in our historic greenhouse, and also ensuring that the beds remained well organized and colorful through the growing season. This year, we were able to complete a project that saw ten didactic panels installed around our herbaceous border, interpreting select heritage plants. The completion of this project was possible thanks to a top up Grant from the Julia Hunter Memorial Fund.

At the end of the summer season an existing garden bed which had been the site of an excavation for over a year, was reconsidered and re-planted. Several new hydrangea plants, ostrich fern and ivy have been combined to create a new heritage bed.

# Finance Report



*Eldon House in the summer*

Eldon House had a net surplus of \$23,971 which was primarily due to the generosity of a bequest received early in the year. Unsurprisingly, total revenue was significantly lower in 2020 than in 2019 (\$75,061). Eldon House continued to receive support from various levels of government including supports for COVID-19. While the usual grants and City of London payments were received, Eldon House also applied for the pandemic payroll support, (TWS) and a provincial re-opening grant.

We are in the second year of the four-year budget and while there was some concern that the City might reduce its' support

payments, those concerns were unfounded, and our city funding was increased by 1.5%. We continue to look for government pandemic supports where possible.

## Grants

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



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien

# Community Partners

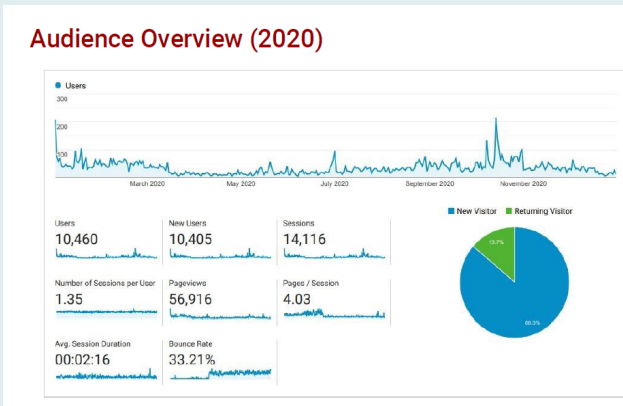
Community Museum Partnership:  
“The Future of Tradition”

City of London  
Cross Cultural Learning Center  
Garden Club of London Partnership  
Fanshawe Pioneer Village  
Julia Hunter Fund  
Investing in Children  
London Arts Council  
London Arts Live  
London Heritage Council  
Petit Paris Creperie and Patisserie  
The Pro Bono Analytics Club  
The Royal Canadian Regiment Museum  
The Tea Haus  
Western University



# Website and Social Media Report

Due to the pandemic and provincial closures, Eldon House was forced more into the digital world than ever before. Luckily, Eldon House has established itself on a variety of digital platforms, including social media and on our own website. In 2019 Kreadiv Haus completed a redesign of the Eldon House website and launched the new site in May 2019, which included new sections on the Harris Family women and integration of videos and images.



*Audience Overview from Kreadiv Haus*

### Geography - Global

Country	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
	10,460 (100.00%) (10,460)	10,414 (100.00%) (10,460)	14,116 (100.00%) (14,116)	33.21% (33.21%) (9,609)	4.03 Avg for View 4.03 (9.98%)	00:02:16 Avg for View 00:02:16 (9.60%)
1. Canada	8,586 (81.25%)	8,485 (81.45%)	12,074 (85.52%)	30.01%	4.28	00:02:26
2. United States	1,171 (11.32%)	1,165 (11.19%)	1,212 (8.59%)	58.83%	2.34	00:00:34
3. United Kingdom	106 (1.01%)	105 (1.01%)	116 (0.82%)	43.97%	3.39	00:01:47
4. China	67 (0.64%)	66 (0.63%)	67 (0.47%)	68.66%	1.55	00:00:19
5. Germany	65 (0.62%)	64 (0.61%)	68 (0.48%)	50.00%	1.96	00:01:22
6. India	42 (0.40%)	42 (0.40%)	69 (0.49%)	31.88%	4.33	00:03:06
7. South Korea	39 (0.37%)	39 (0.37%)	39 (0.28%)	43.59%	2.26	00:00:03
8. France	34 (0.32%)	34 (0.32%)	35 (0.25%)	31.43%	2.54	00:07:02
9. Netherlands	34 (0.32%)	33 (0.32%)	38 (0.27%)	52.63%	3.95	00:02:19
10. (not set)	24 (0.23%)	24 (0.23%)	26 (0.18%)	69.23%	2.04	00:01:38

*Website viewer locations from Kreadiv Haus*

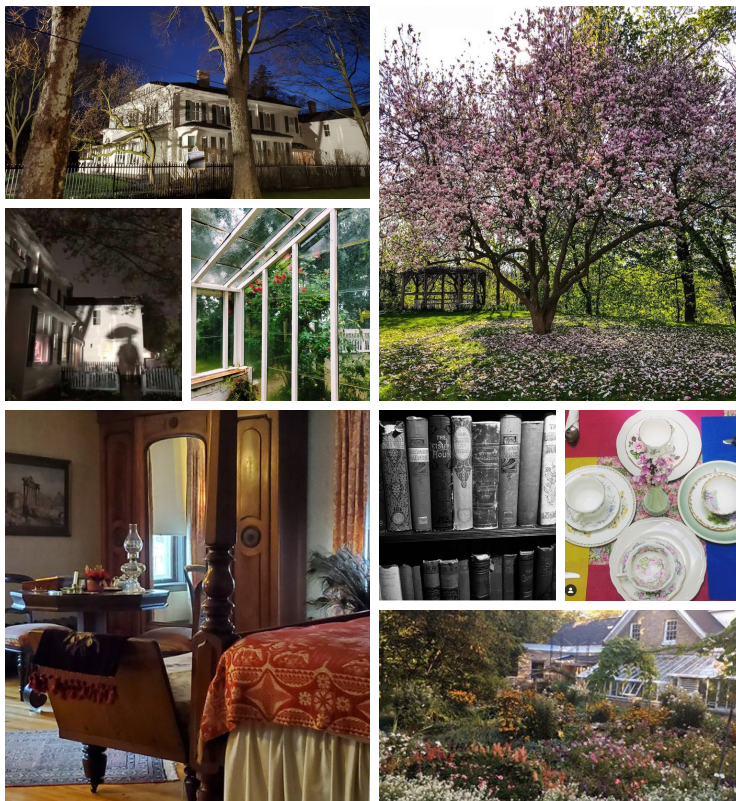
audience members, which increased by over 5%. Eldon House continues to

In 2020 there were over 14,000 sessions on the website. We are happy to report that 86.3% of our users were new visitors to the site! We continue our goal to attract new attention to our digital media as part of our Strategic Plan and alignment with City initiatives. Unsurprisingly, this year the largest segment of our users were from Canada, and 96% were from Ontario. International visitors to our website included those from the U.S, U.K., China, Germany, India, South Korea, France, and the Netherlands. Additionally, our website metrics have shown that some of our demographics have changed. Compared to last year, the number of people between the ages 25-34 viewing our site is higher, as is the number of male

increase website tractions in 2021.

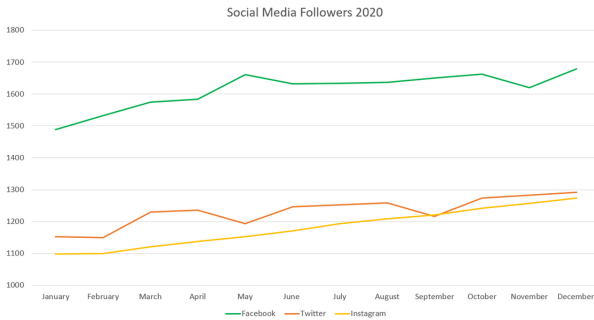
Eldon House has continued our virtual outreach with social media initiatives and in 2020 our social media presence continued to expand. Over the past two years Eldon House has joined additional social media platforms. We now have profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. On each of these platforms, Eldon House staff aim to create fun and educational content that will allow our visitors to engage with the museum and its artifacts.

This year, Eldon House staff participated in various staple social media campaigns and created some of our own. Staple social media initiatives included Museum Week, in which museums post about their organization on social media leading up to the International Day of Sites and Monuments on May 18. Eldon House also is a part of Museum 30, another social media campaign that challenges museums to post about their site with guiding prompts to theme each day. Eldon House staff find these campaigns very helpful in keeping our engagement levels high and in connecting with museums in Canada and internationally. Furthermore, Eldon House staff sought to create our own social media campaigns, considering we were unable to promote as many events and



*Photos from participants from our Photo Contest*

and programs this year. Eldon House staff came up with a Museum Count, in which we posted about items ranging from 1-30 each day of the month. This was very popular with our online visitors and got staff and the public interested in different parts of our collection. Social media played a huge role in engagement this year, as seen from our social media analytics.



*Eldon House Social Media Followers Chart*

Facebook is the oldest form of social media at Eldon House and is one that consistently has the most views. In 2020 there was a yearly reach of 154,564. Our Facebook fans engaged with our various campaign posts as well as any post related to events. most

Twitter continued to be the most consistent form of social media. In 2020 Twitter was great for sharing and following other museums. Various heritage organizations were interested in what was happening in our sector and were happy to retweet and comment on heritage posts from our heritage partners. In 2020 we had over 1100 retweets.

In 2020 Instagram showed the most growth. Eldon House was delighted to see that many visitors are starting to look and engage with our Instagram page, and a search of tags on Instagram indicates that people are sharing their photos of the museum with their own followers. Popular images from our followers include interior shots on tours, as well as images of the garden and Eldon House inspired art.



*Post on Instagram by @collenhansenart*

YouTube is one of our newest social media platforms. Our YouTube channel was created by our 2019-2020 Research Assistant, J. Chernich, who used this site for one of her museum projects. J. Chernich created a “Chose your own Adventure” video series, where people ‘travelled’ with the Harris Family during their World Tour in 1897 and helped them choose souvenirs, all of which are artifacts in the museum. This allowed for people to engage with the artifacts and allowed for multiple play throughs. In later 2020 Eldon House staff focused on putting together a few short videos for the channel. Our subscriptions are slowly growing, and this platform has given us more possibilities for the future.



*Choose Your Own Adventure on YouTube*

“  
*Social media followers can actively participate in an open dialog with a museum, a goal that was hard to accomplish prior to the advent of social media.*  
Elizabeth Stewart  
”

In the last few days of 2020, Eldon House staff decided to join a different social media platform- TikTok. TikTok is a relatively new form of social media, which allows people to share short 30-60 second videos. It appeals largely to younger audiences and is heavy on trends and less serious forms of engagement. Other

museums have jumped on TikTok as a way of engaging with a younger demographic, and Eldon House staff believe it is important to expand our reach on social media as a heritage institution.

## **Follower Numbers 2020**

Facebook- 1679  
Twitter- 1292

Instagram- 1274  
Youtube- 14

TikTok- 11

# By The Numbers

Expectedly, COVID-19 impacted our numbers quite aggressively in 2020. In 2019 we had our highest attendance on record with over 12,000 visitors and over 280 operating days. This year, due to closures our operating days decreased by almost 50% and we were shut for part of the summer which is normally our busiest time. Additionally, Eldon House did not receive any school bookings past February, as pandemic restrictions forced schools to reconsider all in-person field trips for 2020. Despite this, Eldon House was still able to remain open for part of the year, and our special events and outdoor events were popular.

Number of Days Open to the Public and for Private Tours	114
Number of Operating Hours	1032
Number of Operating Days	172
Number of General Attendance	1126
Number of Tours Participants	125
Number of Special Events Attendees	967
Number of Tea Visitors	0
Number of Outreach Attendees	47
Number of Rental Visitors	4
Total Number of Visitors	2269
Total Number of Visitors 2019	12290
Number of Volunteers	17
Number of Volunteer Hours	433



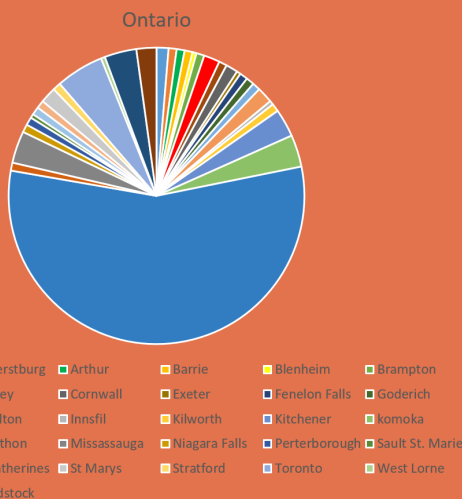
*From left to right: Gong in the Dining Room, Redbuds on the lawn courtesy of J. O'Neil, Mugs from the Eldon House Collection, Kitchen courtesy of J. O'Neil*

# Visitor Statistics

Eldon House is interested in our visitor statistics, in person statistics as well as digital. Museum staff collect a variety of visitor data using our guest book, surveys, and in person interactions. Unfortunately, during 2020 there was less data to pull from as we did not have a large pool of visitors. However, due to our booking system and controlled entry, we were able to collect data on those who came into the museum.

Prior to the pandemic, Eldon House saw people from a mix of countries coming to the museum. We had visitors from a total of 15 countries, including Canada. Of these, a large portion were from Europe, though several visitors came from Asia. Some of our newcomer tours later in the year identified their home countries in our guestbook, which contributed to the data.

Majority of our visitors were from Canada, specifically south-western Ontario. This year there was a large rise in visitors from smaller communities around London, and also from cities like Toronto, Kitchener and Windsor. Visitors from Canada often indicated that they were looking to be 'Canadian tourists' during the pandemic, and many were eager to travel close to home.



*Visitor locations in Ontario*

From our guestbook and anecdotal evidence from the staff, we also see that



# 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. Now more than ever, the support of those involved with our museum is so important, and we would like to thank them for their efforts.

## Eldon House Volunteer Team

Liz Beaujot

Ardath Finbogasson-Hill

Stephen Harrott

Wendy Magrath

Diane Picard

Andrea Tonkovic

Brenda Britton

Penny Finneron

Merrilee Hoffmann Chase

Jennifer McLean

Emily Qin

Lyn Tremblay

Jennifer Dowker

Al Green

Barbara Kennan

Marianne Pflieger

Marie Rooks

## 2020 Board of Directors

Mike Donachie, Board Chair

Louanne Henderson, Director

Manosij Majumdar, Director

Theresa Regnier, Secretary

Rebecca Griesmayer, Vice Chair

Ron Koudys, Director

Joe O'Neil, Treasurer

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

## Staff Team

Tara Wittmann

Danielle Costello

Brenna Ardiel

Nicoletta Michienzi

Bernie Keim

Guilherme Neves Lopes

Kim Baker

Susan Butlin

Christi Hudson

Cathy Luke

Andrew Moore





Eldon House

Heritage Site and Gardens

[www.eldonhouse.ca](http://www.eldonhouse.ca)

