

2022

# Eldon House Heritage Site and Gardens

## Annual 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.



Image courtesy of J. O'Neil

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



Board Chair, M. Donachie

It’s fair to say everyone has had an eventful time in recent years, and 2022 was certainly an eventful period for our little corner of downtown London here at Eldon House and Gardens.

As the stories we have told in this annual report show so well, everyone involved in our visitor attraction has spent the year focused on our top strategic priorities; as of course we should, ensuring we work to preserve the

house and gardens, while reaching out to the community to bring in new audiences and sources of funding. We have been delighted to welcome so many people this year, with the return of visitors in greater numbers made possible by changing pandemic conditions – and perhaps more challenging than we would like, due to the major construction work taking place downtown. Thank you for visiting us!

This year, we also welcomed new faces to our Board of Directors, when the municipal election began a new four-year cycle of the City of London's Boards and Commissions. Four Directors retired from the Board and four new people joined, appointed by council along with those of us who re-applied.



On behalf of the Board of Directors, I send my heartfelt thanks to retiring directors Maureen Spencer Golouchenko, Ron Koudys, Theresa Regnier, and Manosij Majumdar for their service and hard work as volunteers for our heritage gem. I'm pleased to say we've already managed to bring some of them back, to tap into their experience and skills as part of our structure of volunteer committees helping out in various ways around the house and gardens.

Meanwhile, we welcome four new Directors: Don Millar, Devinder Luthra, Bruce Duncan, and Doug Fleming, who join returning members Rebecca Griesmayer (Vice Chair), Joe O'Neil (Treasurer), Megan Halliday (Secretary), and Louanne Henderson. We're all excited as

Top image of the old Board from left to right: M. Halliday, R. Koudys, M. Donachie, J. O'Neil, T. Regnier, R. Griesmayer, M. Spencer Golovchenko, and L. Henderson.

Bottom image of the new Board from left to right: D. Millar, D. Luthra, D. Fleming, B. Duncan, R. Griesmayer, J. O'Neil, L. Henderson, M. Donachie.

we start tapping into the energies of our vibrant and diverse Board, and I look forward to the four years ahead.

The team is bigger than just the Board, of course, and we're grateful to everyone who supports Eldon House, especially our many dedicated volunteers. And, as always, our amazing staff team continues to redefine dedication in wonderful ways.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped to safeguard and share their love of Eldon House and Gardens. It may be a physical location, but its vibrancy is unlocked by the people who spend time here, enjoying this downtown oasis while understanding the stories of our past and how they relate to our today. Thank you for being here and being involved – you are helping to create the stories of today, and continuing the thread of local history that links us all. Long may it continue.



Images of Eldon House each month of 2022.

# Strategic Plan

The Eldon House Strategic Plan, which was created in 2017, officially expired in 2020. The importance of a strategic plan is to determine the directives of the Museum, and to establish goals to achieve them. While this document is important, the Board determined that, during this uncertain era of COVID-19, Eldon House should create an Interim Strategic Plan to see the Museum through the pandemic, and to the eventual 'new normal,' rather than draft one that would have shifting priorities. The Interim Strategic Plan was drafted by several members of the Board of Directors and outlines the objectives for Eldon House:

**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 times 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

# A Note from the Curator Director, Tara Wittmann



Curator Director  
T. Wittmann

Eldon House Heritage Site and Gardens, in partnership with you – our community – has grown from strength to strength this past year. For Eldon House, 2022 was an inspiring time of reopening and resetting, a moment for the Museum to respect the past and reach for the future. We welcomed our public to new exhibitions, increased our engagement, capacity, and hours for visitors, strengthened staffing and volunteers, reached out to broader audiences, and resumed a robust slate of educational and public programs. This report underlines the past year's challenges and achievements advanced through our Board and staff's dedicated advocacy of the Museum's mission to bring London's Heritage, and the interesting narrative of the Harris Family of Eldon House, to a wide audience.

Looking back over the past 12 months, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who continues to support and engage with our Museum in various ways. I thank the members of the Board of Directors for their guidance, and the confidence they have placed in the Eldon House management and staff. I thank the Museums' employees for their passion and dedication, as well as for their many contributions to a healthy and engaging Museum environment. And I thank the Museums' stakeholders, including members, partners, volunteers, and all of our visitors who continue to inspire us to delve ever deeper into exploring our shared and engaging histories.

## COVID-19 Overview

Years into the pandemic have made everyone weary of the topic, but COVID-19 still facilitated changes at the Museum. 2022 opened with a provincial closure shortly after New Years, but as the year progressed, things began to look brighter.

The closure lasted for a month, and for Eldon House it came at one of the

traditionally slower months of the year, so the impact was minimal. Throughout the winter season staff remained cautious, still enforcing social distancing and masking. Updates for the Museum were shared online, and staff attempted to engage the public with social media contests, videos, and images. Visitors were very understanding of our continued caution, and our Program Coordinator, Brenna, became an expert at creating events that were pandemic friendly and engaging. While we were concerned about the continued effect of pandemic protocols, staff were pleasantly surprised that visitors were seeking museums and cultural events, and response to programs was wonderful. Eldon House also remained a safe space for people who were leery of lessening restrictions and saw a variety of people daily.



## Masking In Effect

Eldon House has decided to continue our masking policy for the near future.

For questions please contact us at [info@eldonhouse.ca](mailto:info@eldonhouse.ca) or call 519-661-5169

### Masking Social Media Post



A. DiCecco and B. Ricciardi at a specialty tour

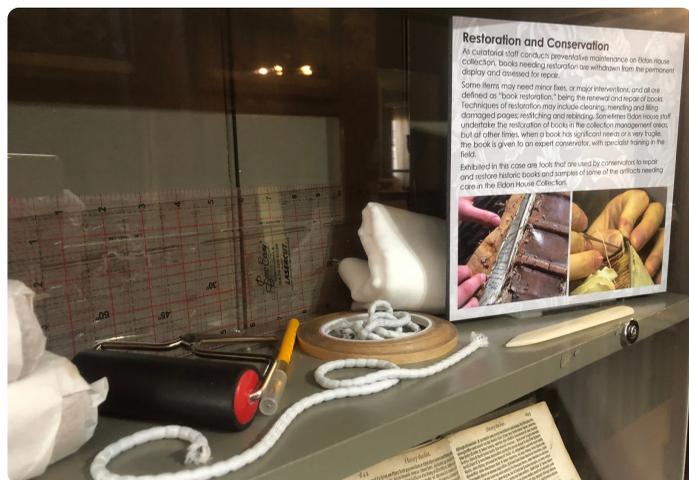
Numbers began to increase with the warm weather, and one impactful change signalled a shift for the public, the mask mandate was officially lifted on June 11, 2022. This marked a huge shift in public perception of the pandemic, as many considered it to be ‘over,’ or at least manageable enough that people felt comfortable engaging with larger crowds. This came in time for our summer season, and many people returned for staple museum events, including our annual Summer Tea. Our lovely grounds proved to be a blessing, as we were once again able to host large events but could remain cautious by having them outdoors.

As summer faded into fall, the organization felt comfortable enough to lift our own internal masking mandate, though as school bookings came in, and flu season was

soon upon us, staff did what they could to ensure that we were still as safe as possible. The year finished with no major incidents internally. We hope that this will continue as a positive trend out of pandemic mode for 2023.

Though COVID-19 has been impactful for the last couple years, Eldon House has remained optimistic and recognizes that many of the changes made during the pandemic have been positive. It has allowed the organization to focus on the Museum as a space, develop new and exciting programs, and bring interpretation to new venues, both digital and outdoors. While we are hopeful that we will not re-enter strict procedures any time soon, staff will carry lessons we have learned with us and will use them to make Eldon House a more engaging place.

## Exhibitions



Book exhibit in the second floor display case

which display curated exhibitions that expand thematically on the “life and times” of the Harris Family as outlined in the Museum’s mandate.

The pandemic encouraged us to find new ways of engaging with and reaching our exhibition audience and we have been delighted with the innovations that have been developed by necessity. In 2022, we were able to offer a mix of “in-house” and digital exhibits, and going forward will continue to create a variety of exhibitions that will inhabit several communication platforms.

Presenting captivating exhibitions is one of the keyways of sharing the Eldon House and Harris Family history with our visitors, in addition 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

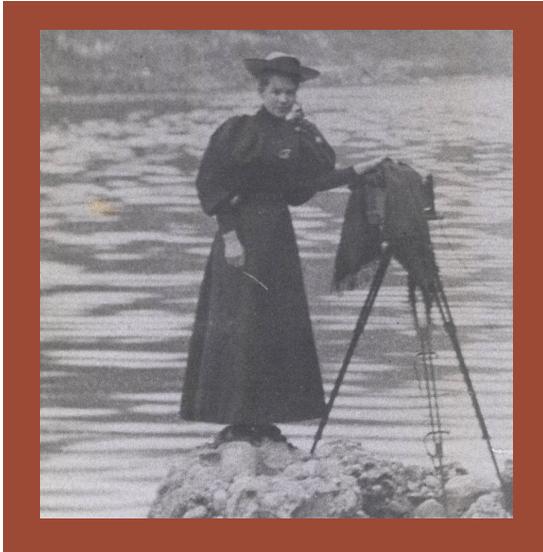
The exhibits that were featured in 2022 explored the themes of literacy, sport, domestic life, tea traditions and cultural exploration. The following descriptions give a glimpse into the exhibitions in 2022:

### **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 not only to tea, but also the interesting discussions and practices that resulted from the occasions. This exhibition explored the tea practice of a variety of cultures and how the inhabitants of London Ontario integrated the customs practiced in Britain into their own lives. Artifacts from the Eldon House Collection illustrated the vast paraphernalia used in enacting elaborate teas and was accompanied by first person accounts of Londoners during the Victorian period.



Tea stock image



Milly Harris, courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Western Libraries, Western University.

**But First, Let me Take a Selfie: Reframing Historical Photos for the Modern World** Images tell a story both for the past inhabitants of Eldon House, and those now engaged at the Museum. By examining historic photographs of the site, contemporary viewers can imagine themselves in the past, but can also transform these images in the present. This exhibit sought to reframe a series of historic images attributed to the Harris Family in a modern lens by using the framework of social media, and thus making the content more relatable to this digital generation.

## 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 the second slightly pared-back version of the exhibit, due to having suspended a long partnership with the Garden Club of London who traditionally created many of the greenery and dried flower arrangements that are featured through the museum.



Toys from the Eldon House Collection



A holiday card

## 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 devils appeared to punish the undeserving. This exhibit illustrated some of the Christmas "curiosities" by reproducing graphic Victorian postcards.

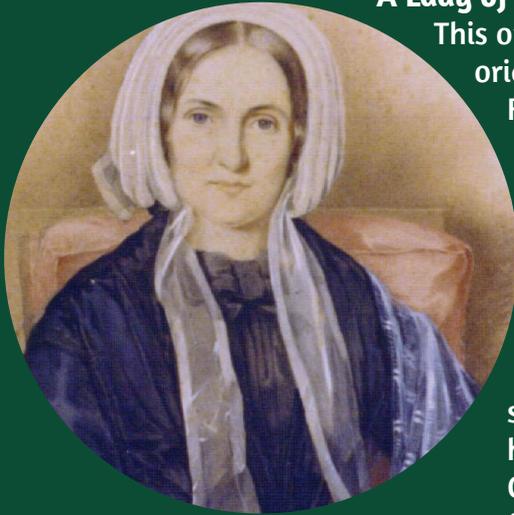
## Travelling Tales from the Harris Troop

This online exhibit explored the theme of travel and tourism in the late Victorian Era. Using diary excerpts and images of artifacts from the Eldon House Collection, themes of souvenir shopping, methods of travel, and travel mishaps were presented and provided our readers with an intimate glimpse into the travelling life of the Harris Family, specifically regarding their 1897 World Tour.



Suitcase from the Eldon House Collection

## A Lady of Force: Amelia Ryerse Harris



Amelia from the Eldon House Collection

This online and in-house exhibit explored the original matriarch of Eldon House, Amelia Ryerse Harris. An early Canadian woman, she faced the changes of country and city life, as well as changes in politics, social history, and changes in financial and familial status. Throughout her long life, Amelia was an impactful member of the Harris Family. A matriarch raising twelve children, she was renowned for her character and sense, and she became a central part of the history of Eldon House, and London, Upper Canada, then Ontario, as one of the City's founding women.

## Good Read, Exploring the Historic Book Collection at Eldon House

The Eldon House collection holds several thousand books that have been collected, borrowed, read, and re-read by generations of the Harris Family who lived in Eldon House. Historical photographs show books everywhere: in nooks and crannies, on tables, piled up on the floor and in the numerous bookshelves throughout the home. Many books are hand inscribed, while others are referenced in family diaries and letters, documenting the avidity of reading undertaken by the whole family. This exhibition explored a selection of books from the collection, giving a glimpse the times and interest of their readers as well as explored how antique books are cared for and conserved, and sometimes, how they reveal the details of family history within their pages.



A page from a book in the Eldon House Collection

## Sporting Life, the Harris Family at Play

Generations of the Harris Family enjoyed games, sport, and physical fitness, and recorded their pleasure in the form of dairies letters and photographs. This exhibition explored the family at “play” illustrated by historic photographs attributed to the family and held by Western University Archives, in the Harris Family Fonds at London’s own Western University.

Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections,  
Western Libraries, Western University.



Eldon House Dining Room

## From Pottage to Pinperneau: The Eldon House Cookbooks

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 online exhibit aimed in its display and interpretation of several historical cookbooks to elaborate on the origins, uses and terminology of these wonderful examples of social history.

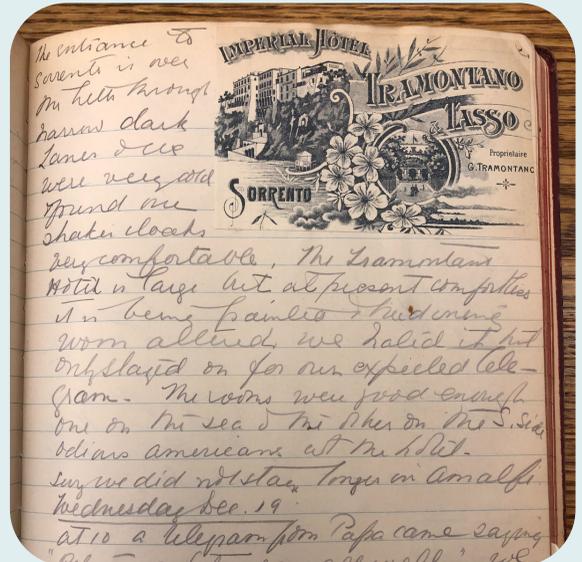
## Research, Digitization, Publications

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, dairies and photographs available for research at Western Archives, Western University, the Harris Family Fonds is an invaluable collection of primary source documents.

## Transcription and Publication

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 2022, 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 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!



Milly Harris diary, courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Western Libraries, Western University



## Research

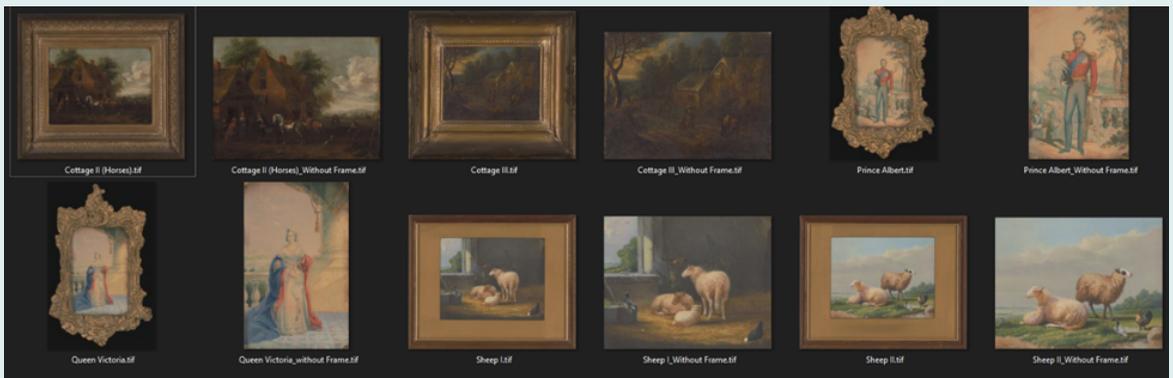
Through 2022, a renewed focus has been locked on Amelia Harris (1798-1882), the first matriarch of Eldon House who recorded her unique perspective in diaries and correspondence. Much is known about Amelia already, yet additional research has been undertaken with the aim of bringing her narrative forward in museum interpretation as well as in publication form. An “Amelia Harris” database had been established through

Amelia Harris, courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Western Libraries, Western University

2021, being a collected repository of primary and secondary material that illuminates her fascinating life and character. In 2022 staff put this database to good work, and added fresh research and transcription to Amelia's narrative, drafting a compilation that will be shaped into a near-future publication.

## Digitization

Eldon House holds a fine art collection that includes a number of unique and original pieces. As part of our commitment to preserve, care for and share our collection, a digitization project was undertaken starting in 2021 and was completed in 2022. Eldon House curatorial staff worked closely with the dedicated team at Mercury Blueprinting to digitize over 65 framed works.



Digitized images from the Eldon House Collection

## Collections, Conservation and Care

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.”



Servants' Quarters



**T. Wittmann with the bird dome**

Eldon House applies best practices to all activities associated with preserving the Museum's collections; this includes monitoring the museum environment and ensuring high standards in exhibiting, storing, and transporting 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.

The Eldon House Collection has enjoyed intensive attention through 2022, in addition to the ongoing preventative conservation program. This was in part due

to nearby excavation work that impacted the stability of the historic building and interior, due to heavy vibration and airborne particulate. Some of the permanent collection was put into secure storage, and some were anchored to horizontal surfaces with "museum wax"- an inert compound often used in dental applications. Happily, the site weathered the nine-month period of construction very well and also enjoyed some improvements, in the form of interior conservation to the second-floor servants' quarters.

Some concentrated collections work was undertaken as an extension of the "Poison Book Project" being conducted by Melissa Tedone and researchers at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library in the USA. The project undertakes to identify arsenical books, specific to the Victorian era, when certain textiles were coloured with a green copper aceto-arsenite, used from 1814 to the late 1800's; this green specifically is referred to as Paris green or Emerald green. Many books from this time were bound in textiles, or "book cloth," and so, could be dyed and used in publisher's



**Museum Wax**



bindings. Much has been written about the use of this green and the health impact on those who came into contact with it – today, those people are largely archivist and museum professionals. In early May 2022, Eldon House staff conducted a search of the book collection at Eldon House, pulling fourteen items, including a puzzle intended for children! These pieces are now in safe and encapsulated storage away from the public.

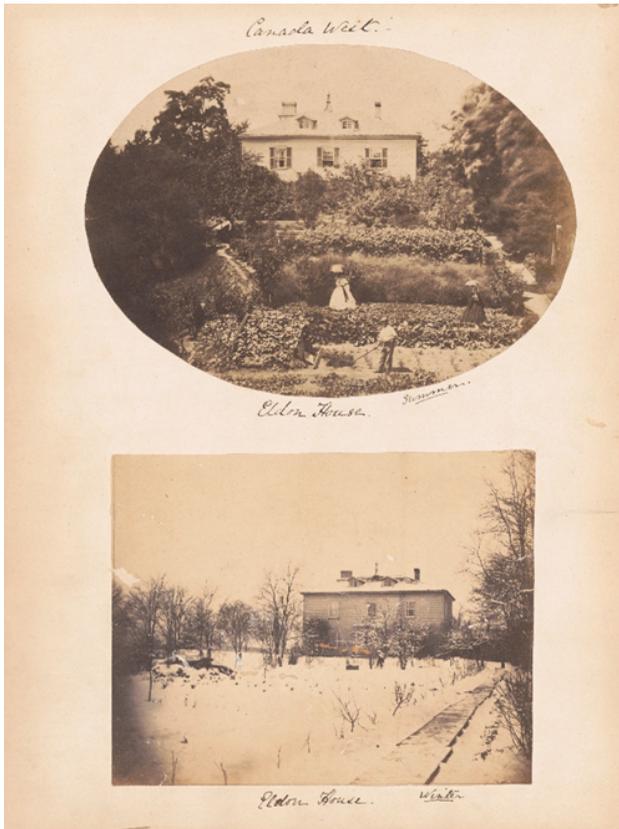
### Books from the Eldon House Collection

In the fall of 2022, two plaster busts of Harris Family members, dated to the 1860s, began their professional restoration in Toronto by Johnny Dorran, of Acanthus Plaster Restoration. The busts of Amelia Harris and her son John Harris Jr. were in very poor condition, neither of which had been on display in the history of Eldon House as a museum, due to structural damage. Their surface deterioration was also considerable, where decades of environmental damage, including general dust, soot, and inconsistent cleaning materials, had contributed to discolouration. Some surface cracking and pockmarking was evident, telling the story of the pieces' history – including the fact that John Jr. must have at one point, fallen on his nose! A set of images is inset illustrating the work completed to date. In the images, one can discern the original damage/discolouration, through a set of two “wraps” which remove surface debris, resulting in a more uniform appearance. The two busts are now back on permanent display at the museum, restored, stabilized, and magnificent!



Busts of John Fitzjohn and Amelia Harris from the Eldon House Collection

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



Images of Eldon House from J. Saddy

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 the Harris Family and their life in London, Ontario. This year, a series of original photograph album pages, dated to the mid-1860s were shared with Eldon House to digitize and utilize by collector J. Saddy, in memory of his parents, Mitch and Tess Saddy. Three of six album pages have images hitherto unseen by staff, and candidly illustrate the Harris Family and their home, giving viewers a glimpse into a very early period of the site’s settlement. We were delighted by this donation and thank the donor sincerely for his generosity!

Another priority area for acquisitions concerns the re-creation of the second floor “Nursery.” The artifacts on display in this space are largely donated pieces, often from the early twentieth century. Eldon House seeks to bolster this area of the collection as we increasingly interpret and exhibit artifacts related to the life, education, and role of children. To our delight and thanks, this year, a very special piece was donated by J. O’Meara, in the form of a c. 1927 wheeled Steiffe bear. The bear’s original owner was the donor’s father, and physical evidence illustrates it was a well-loved and used toy.



Stephen the Bear from the Eldon House Collection



Research Assistant, S. Pointer

Each year Eldon House partners with Western University's Master of Public History program and hosts a student for at least one semester, and 2022 was the eighth year of our partnership! During the school year, Research Assistants gain experience working in heritage institutions like Eldon House. Museum staff aim to use the time we have with our interns to give them a well-rounded experience in the museum world, covering collections, programming, and education initiatives. Creating this varied

experience allows students to explore new areas of interest and gives them a complete picture of what it is like to work in a small institution.

In 2022 we were pleased to welcome S. Pointer to Eldon House for the 2022-2023 school year. S. Pointer came to Eldon House from Alberta, having graduated with a B.A. from Mount Royal University with a degree in History, a minor in Business, and a minor in Indigenous Studies. Her focus has largely been on environmental and social histories and the relationships between federally funded Parks and Indigenous populations.

During her time at Eldon House, S. Pointer has worked on a variety of projects including collections, conservation, education, public programming, and social media. Her skills in research have been very useful in the development of exhibit text for our Origins series, where she was able to explore issues related to North American travel and Indigenous cultures. She also created an online exhibit that tied into the 2023 exhibition year.

Over her time with us, S. Pointer has exhibited excellent work and enthusiasm for the museum field. She took the skills learned at Eldon House and contributed greatly to the Museum. As her semester came to an end in April 2023, we wish her all the best in her future endeavours and hope that she will come back to Eldon House soon!

# Canada Summer Jobs Positions

The Canada Summer Jobs Grant is a federal grant that provides funding to support jobs in the summer. The grant was initially aimed at students, but the program has since expanded to include those under 30 and is not restricted to returning students. Each year Eldon House seeks funding from this grant to hire students, specifically for our annual Summer Tea Program.



From left to right: H. Nguyen, E. Meredith, E. Smith

In 2022, Eldon House was fortunate to be granted three summer positions which were all Summer Hospitality and Engagement Assistants. This position's primary tasks was to assist with the Tea Program, but also to have additional projects including audience engagement and social media.

Three students were hired: H. Nguyen, a high school student from London, E. Meredith, a student from King's University studying English and Art History, and E. Smith, another King's College student who is finishing her degree in History and English.

Throughout the summer, all three of the students did an excellent job adapting to changing procedures and capacities with the Tea Program. They helped create a positive atmosphere for guests and were able to handle a fast-paced environment, as the summer got hectic with tea visitors.

Additionally, all three assistants made some very positive impacts on social media, using downtime to assist the Museum Coordinator in creation of content for social media, specifically TikTok. Their impact on this platform was a catalyst for future content and followers.

We hope that all three students had a positive experience at the Museum, and hope to see them again in the summer, either as assistants or as patrons.

# A Note from the Program Coordinator, Brenna Ardiel

For the first six months of 2022, Eldon House's public and educational programming continued to be affected by the global pandemic of COVID-19. In January the Museum was closed temporarily for the last time due to the pandemic. Throughout the entire year safety measures and restrictions continued and were followed for the safety of visitors and staff. Despite the pandemic, both public and educational programming did see a drastic increase compared to the previous year. Overall, more programs were enacted and, for the first time since COVID, there was a sense of normality returning to the monthly programming flow.



Program Coordinator, B. Ardiel

The Program Coordinator was delighted to host 35 programs throughout the course of the year. This included: two community partnerships, seven special events, three specialty teas, four children's programs, eight workshops, and ten tour programs. The year saw the return of many staple tours, workshops, and special events along with the development of new ones.

We hosted the annual Summer Tea Program between the months of July to August. This tea incorporated the return of both savory and sweet delectables.

2022 saw a return of field trips which had been a challenge since 2019. Navigating ways in which to bring educators and students back to Eldon House has been challenging due to larger social issues such as labour strikes and COVID-19. However, there has been a great uptake in interest from educators inquiring about our on-site programming including walking tours, museum tours, and workshops. We also participated in the Museum School Program, funded by the London Culture Office, which continued into the beginning of 2023.

The Program Coordinator would like to thank Eldon House staff and volunteers for their hard work, flexibility, and dedication throughout the year. We would like to thank all Eldon House stakeholders in their unwavering support in our public and educational programming. The Program Coordinator looks forward to the next year of programming with gusto!

## Public Programming

Between January to December of 2022 thirty-five public programs were enacted. 2022 was an opportunity to test new ideas and alter programming. With the unpredictability and inconsistency that COVID-19 presented in the past couple of years, lessening restrictions finally gave the opportunity to begin programming in a 'normal' programming year. This was an opportunity not only to uphold annual events but also to develop future ongoing initiatives and long-term projects and see these initiatives develop from start and to finish.



Strawberry  
Tea plate

### Specialty Teas

Eldon House once again hosted three specialty teas throughout 2022. These included the Mother's Day Tea, Strawberry Tea, and Christmas Tea. In 2021 the Program Coordinator successfully converted these annual on-site teas into tea boxes that could be enjoyed by guests safely via curbside pickup. This was at the height of COVID-19 and was created in response to customer interest and to protect our staff and patrons. In 2022 this method was used once again for the Mother's Day Tea and the Christmas Tea. This was an effective method to mitigate costs due to the unpredictability that remained with guest registration and advice from the London Middlesex Health Unit. A tea box to-go method was more efficient and perfect as a gift for a family member or friends for the holiday.

The Mother's Day Tea Box To-Go took place on Sunday, May 8th and was catered by Petit Paris: Creperies and Patisserie [as of January 2023, The Coop]. Guests were treated to classic chicken and egg salad tea sandwiches followed by the delightful lemon cranberry scone with butter and jam, mini cheesecake, rich chocolate brownie,

mini carrot cake, the classic macaron, fresh strawberries, and a single serving of the Eldon House blend loose leaf tea to be brewed at home from the Tea Haus. This box was well received by visitors and was a lovely and unique gift idea for our patrons.

The Strawberry Tea was hosted on the grounds in mid-June. The weather was favorable and predictable at that time and registration was more guaranteed due to customer interest. Overall, the tea box to-go method is both profitable and promising in seasons where weather does not permit outdoor events.

"TBH all very good quality and tasty - great tea, fresh treats, my mom doesn't like scones :- ) but she liked these nonetheless because they were so fresh. It was also amazing that curbside pickup was available -- very respectful of older moms who are still trying not to catch COVID! Also respectful of the history of pandemics, appropriately enough for a museum :- )" -Quote from a Mother's Day Tea survey

The annual Strawberry Tea was hosted on Saturday, June 18th on the west lawn under the magnolia tree and side porch. It was catered by Pastry Culture, located in the Covent Garden Market. The tea included mini chilled quiches and sweet treats that were accented with seasonal strawberries. This event was the first time we partnered with Pastry Culture and the event served as a wonderful preview for the Summer Tea season. The French style bakery catered items themed with strawberries and created a lovely and decadent menu. Once again, the Tea Haus provided the strawberry black tea for the event. Thank you to the Home County Music and Arts Festival for providing musicians to preform throughout the weekend and enhancing the Strawberry Tea experience for our guests.

Lastly, on Sunday, December 4th Eldon House hosted its Christmas Tea Box To-Go catered by Pastry Culture and the single serving of loose- leaf tea was provided by The Tea Haus, which was the traditional Christmas Blend.



Christmas Tea items

The traditional cucumber and egg salad finger sandwiches were accompanied by the classic English scone, a custard tart topped with raspberries and blueberries, followed by a rich chocolate mousse cake, a French style cheesecake, and a cream puff with raspberries. These tea boxes were a delightful start to the winter holiday!

## Tours

Our first public program to kick off the new year was our *Trinkets of Travel and Treasures from Japan* tour on Saturday, February 12th. This tour was developed to highlight and showcase the unique cultural collection of the Museum. The focus was primarily on the Harris Family's yearlong world trip beginning in September of 1897, during which Milly Harris, her brother Ronald Harris, her mother Lucy Ronalds, and her father George Harris travelled the world, marveling at the art, culture, and people they encountered. The legendary trip began in Japan, where the family collected artifacts such as the Kyoto cabinet and the blue willow pattern china that remains on display in the Eldon House Morning Room, captivating our modern visitors.



Japanese Hairpin  
from the Eldon  
House Collection

"This was my second Eldon House tour. I like the themed tour approach because I will learn something different each time."  
-Quote from the *Upstairs, Downstairs* Survey

On Saturday, February 26 Eldon House hosted the *Upstairs, Downstairs* tour which highlights the lives and stories of those that served at Eldon House. This tour discusses what it was like in the Victorian era for a servant. Once again, it makes reference to some of the notable servants who contributed to the restoration of the kitchen and servants' wing in the 1990s.

*From Cupping to Cocaine: Health and Wellness for the Victorian Woman* took place on Sunday, March 12th. The tour was developed in 2019 for International Women's Day. As this tour was extremely popular in 2021, the theme and content involving women's physical health, dangerous and often unattainable beauty standards, and global pandemics, continues to be current and of interest to many.



### FROM CUPPING TO COCAINE

March 12, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
<https://eldonhouse.ca/product/from-cupping-to-cocaine-health-and-wellness-for-the-victorian-woman-copy/>

Images from our *From Cupping to Cocaine* Tour

*The Behind the Ropes* tour is by far our most popular specialty tour! On Saturday, April 9th guests were treated to a unique experience literally stepping behind ropes and barriers. This provided guests with a unique opportunity to be up close and personal with the artifacts and to look behind nooks and crannies that are traditionally out of reach. Highlights on this tour include walk throughs of the basement, including the gardener's workshop and the goldfish tub, and the attic which formally housed the female servants before the addition of the servant bedrooms in 1877.



Guests in the Library and Blue Bedroom



On Sunday, August 7th guests were treated to a *Garden Tour* which focused on the grounds and gardens around Eldon House. Traditionally, this tour would take guests down into Harris Park, which was the Harris Family's eleven-acre backyard, and which included vegetable gardens, a tennis court, a small golf course, and a private swimming pool before becoming a public park in 1960. However, due to the heat wave that day guests were not escorted to the park due to safety concerns.

Front planters at Eldon House

October is one of the busiest months of the year for staff at Eldon House. Spooky and ghoulish themes are woven into our tours, workshops, and special events. This content is extremely intriguing for many guests. Throughout October most patrons that visit Eldon House are attracted to the paranormal. Eldon House is famous as London's oldest residence and one of the city's most infamous supernatural attractions.

We continued our partnership with Mount Pleasant Cemetery, and between October 8th and October 9th hosted *The Mount Pleasant Walking Tours*. Participants learned

about Victorian era funeral customs and grave iconography while enjoying this serene and ecologically friendly site.

The cemetery tours were followed by the popular Curses, Crimes and Haunts Walking Tour of downtown London. This tour was developed in 2020 by the Museum Coordinator and investigates the creepy curses, captivating crimes, and historical hauntings throughout London's history. Once again it was sold out immediately and the first event to sell out of all the October programs, workshops, and tours.

"...Host was knowledgeable and the points of the tour made sense."  
-Quote from the Curses, Crimes, and Haunts tour survey

October concluded with three evenings of the Morbid and Macabre Tours through October 28th to 30th. Eldon House's Morbid and Macabre Tours are an anticipated annual program for many guests as it focuses on the weird Victorian practices and Eldon House renowned ghost stories. Special thanks to Board Director Joe O'Neil for the loan of historical embalming equipment, including a replica wicker casket, morticians' makeup, and turn-of-century embalming apparatuses.



Drawing Room during Morbid and Macabre

Lastly, Eldon House hosted its Ghost of Christmas Past Tour which centered around Victorian Christmas traditions and the ways in which the author and poet Charles Dickens and his writings influenced our modern Christmas customs. Guests learned about the English tradition of ghost story telling at Christmas, the origins of the Kissing Ball, and the concept that Dickens' most famous holiday work never mentioned the iconic Christmas tree!



A. DiCecco, A. Vouvalidis, and B. Ricciardi

## Workshops

Eight workshops took place throughout 2022. The first workshop hosted in 2022 had been several years in the making. In 2019 there had been communications with artists Gabriella Solti and Michelle Wilson about hosting a Stump Embroidery and Cyanotype Photography workshop. Guests were treated to a two-hour workshop in which they tried their hand at the basics of stump embroidery and cyanotype photography using botanical silhouettes printed on to parchment paper. This workshop drew inspiration from the Botanical Books in the Eldon House Collection. On Saturday, May 28th guests were able to partake in the workshop outside in the glorious weather on the west lawn.



Images of guests creating cyanotype and stump embroidery

The Program Coordinator welcomed artist, presenter, and retired Eldon House Historical Interpreter Sarah Cowling to host a Painting in the Garden workshop on Saturday, July 23rd. Guests enjoyed a unique mixed media form of canvas painting and collage. The inspiration for the workshop were the Eldon House gardens and botanical collection.



**"I like the ideas the presenter shared about doing something creative. I came away with the intent of incorporating collage into my own painting and I felt very inspired."**  
-Quote from the Painting survey

Guests at our Painting workshop

On the evening of Thursday, October 13th Eldon House hosted a workshop which delved into the unique history and timeline of Mourning Jewelry: From the Cradle to the Grave. The workshop focused on how mourning jewelry changed throughout the



ages, from ancient Roman bronze skull rings, to miniature eye portraiture of the 1700s, and Victorian hair bracelets, lockets, and wreaths. Guests tried their hand at creating their own memento mori pendant in the form a watercolor miniature and had the option to incorporate ethically sourced human hair. We would like to thank the Fanshawe Pioneer Village for the loan of their intricate Victorian hair wreath for the workshop.

### **Hair Wreath**

The second October workshop, Tea and Tasseomancy, took place on Thursday, October 20th and was hosted by Ruth Strebe. She shared her personal family connections with tea leaf reading as well as provided history on the practice, discussing its ancient origins. Guests learned how to read and interpret tea leaves and had the opportunity to interpret for themselves and fellow participants.

**"I enjoyed the atmosphere and Nyxx (one of the presenters) and his incredible depth and passion of explanation."**

**-Quote from a Tarot workshop survey**



**Guests learning to use Tarot cards**

The Age of Tarot was the last workshop of spooky season on Thursday, October 27th. The workshop was led by local shop owners of the Seven Sisters Ritual Apothecary, Melanie and Nyxx Noir. Guests and staff were enthralled with their unique presentation and learned about the history and development of tarot along with simple and concise explanations on the uses and meanings behind each card. Guests enjoyed trying their hand at interpreting and pulling cards in groups at their tables.

The last three workshops of the year took place in November and began with the paper making workshop on Saturday, November 12th. Instructor and local entrepreneur Ashley Ranger of online shop Artful Design taught guests how to create paper through recycled means. Guests mushed up pulp by hand and dried sheets of paper, which they later took home. This followed a short twenty-minute presentation by the Program Coordinator on the unique forms of paper artifacts within the Eldon House Collection including the stunning Japanese wallpaper, the Ronalds' botanical collection, and the Harris diaries.

**"I enjoyed the presentation showcasing the historical context of quilling as well as the instructor's enthusiasm and skill! It was also fun to try the crimping tool! Thank you for a great workshop!"**

**-Quote from a Quilling Workshop survey**

The Program Coordinator led the last two workshops of the year on November 19th, Quilling Holiday Ornaments, and November 24th, Kissing Ball Workshop. Both workshops focused on and discussed on the Victorian history of these unique crafts. Quilling is the art form of taking thin strips of paper and curling, twirling, and whirling them into artistic pieces of art. Quilling was a popular pastime for ladies in the Victorian era having its origins date back to ancient Egypt. Kissing balls were a Victorian North American tradition having been adopted by European settlers to continue the cheeky practice of kissing under the mistletoe. Guests appreciated the unique holiday themed artforms and left with the skills to create additional pieces for their holiday celebrations.



**Participants and their kissing balls**

## **Special Events**



**Tea cup from the Eldon House Collection**

Eldon House was invited to participate in the Victoria Day Celebrations at the Fanshawe Pioneer Village. On Monday, May 23rd Historical Interpreter A. DiCecco was in Victorian costume to discuss Victorian tea etiquette with guests. Approximately three-hundred guests visited the Village that day and interacted with our interpreter. Her explanation included a display that showcased the proper placement for teacups, cutlery, plates, crystal decanters, teapots, food, and interactive smelling jars full of different types of tea. This partnership with the Fanshawe Pioneer Village is an excellent opportunity to cross promote and support a fellow heritage site, and we hope to continue it in the future.

On Friday, July 1st Eldon House commemorated Canada Day by Celebrating Canada's People showcasing local artists highlighting the unique and diverse cultures and communities within London. Some of these artists included puppeteer Phil Arnold and the harrowing tale of the Menasha and the Matryoshka doll, the Korean fan dancers from the Korean Society Canada: London chapter, Antonio's Mariachi Band, and Salsa London. Eldon House continues to be an active member of the local community and a site in which the people and cultures within the London community can come together to share their knowledge and experiences.



From top left to bottom right: Korean Society Fan Dancers, Antonio's Mariachi Band, Phil Arnold



Eldon House Summer Market, photos courtesy of J. O'Neil

On Sunday, June 26th we hosted our second annual Summer Market which was a massive success including eight local artists and entrepreneurs showcasing their wares to approximately five hundred site visitors, which was a 54% increase from 2021. This event is a new initiative and provides an opportunity for Eldon House to create partnerships with local artists and community members and fulfills our Strategic alignment of making Eldon House a center for community. The Program Coordinator would like to thank all the vendors who participated: A Turtles Garden, Ara & Ro., Art with Panache, BiVii Creative, Feels Good London, Heavenly Beads, Pixie Painthings, and Solaris Sprout.

Once again, we participated in the annual city-wide Doors Open initiative coordinated by the London Heritage Council. The Museum was open for self-guided tours between Saturday, September 17th through Sunday, September 18th. Guests were able to drop by the Museum, welcoming approximately 300 visitors throughout the weekend.

Through the month of December, Eldon House's annual Victorian Christmas closed out 2022. The Museum was decorated with handmade greenery enhanced with dehydrated apple and orange slices, fake food feasts and cookies throughout every room, and Victorian Christmas decorations galore! Throughout the entire month our staff dressed in Victorian and Edwardian costume to enhance the visitor experience for the holidays. We also had our seven-foot-tall Father's Christmas Standee on the front lawn ready for holiday selfies. Guests were encouraged to take photos with our Father Christmas and share them on social media.



From left to right: Drawing Room floral arrangement, Eldon House Library photo courtesy of J. O'Neil, "Scary Santa" from the Eldon House Collection

## Tea Programs

The 2022 Summer Tea Program was a huge success hosting over 1000 guests. This was a massive milestone for the Museum, as staff feared that the pandemic and construction impacts on Ridout Street would have a negative effect on the program. Staff were overjoyed to see that people were interested in coming to tea and were pleased to see many new and familiar faces. From the statistics gathered from our tea server customer feedback, 74% of visitors had never participated in our summer tea and 26% of guests had enjoyed one of our Eldon House teas before. 17% of guests that took the survey requested to be added to our events mailing list.

In 2021 our menu was limited due to safety; in 2022 we partnered with Pastry Culture and The Coop to create a combined menu.

Additionally, Eldon House once again partnered with London Arts Live to provide music for the program. The London Arts Live program supports local artists and partners with sites like Eldon House in providing space for their musicians. This is a wonderful initiative, as it gives artists exposure and an audience, and allows Eldon House to create a lovely ambient environment on the weekends. In 2022 several artists performed including classical, folk, and contemporary musicians.



Light tea menu

**"The tea was lovely and service was great! On a scale of 1 – 10, I give the Eldon House a 10,000!"**  
-Quote from the Summer Tea surveys

Thank you to the London Arts Council for providing and coordinating musicians to enhance the ambiance of our tea program every Saturday and Sunday throughout July and August. And thank you to our food providers, The Coop, Pastry Culture, and the Tea Haus, for their excellent service and delicious menu. Without them the Tea Program would not be possible.

### Children's Programming

Throughout 2022, Eldon House hosted special events targeted to families and children. On Friday, June 3rd Eldon House once again participated in Kids 1st Day which is a citywide initiative hosted by the Investing in Children organization. Children and their families were encouraged to visit Eldon House for self-guided tours and participate in Victorian lawn games. Approximately fifty visitors, both children and adults, participated in the event with many trying their hand at croquet on the front lawn.

On Saturday, August 27th we hosted the annual Teddy Bear Picnic where families toured the museum and attempted to find all 17 hidden historical teddy bears throughout the site. Most of the families that arrived for the special event brought picnic



Families enjoying the Teddy Bear Picnic

blankets and baskets in hand and enjoyed lunch and snacks on the front lawn. Almost all the children brought a teddy bear or stuffed friend with them for the special day! Actress Kattina Michelle took on the role as Eldon House's matriarch during Story Time with Amelia and read out passages from the Lewis Carol classic Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.



**Spooky Gourd Painting**

On Sunday, October 30th we welcomed families and costumed children to pick a mini-pumpkin or gourd from our front flower bed 'pumpkin patch' as part of our Spooky Gourd Painting. Once they had picked the perfect pumpkin, they were encouraged to paint a spooky design which they took home. In 2022 we saw a massive increase in participants for this event as Eldon House partnered with the City of London in the Downtown Candy Crawl and welcomed over 200 visitors to the site within the span of the three-hour event! Eldon House would like to thank the Miller Berry Farm for their generous donation of approximately one-hundred gourds and we cannot wait to host the event next year!

The last children's program to take place was on Saturday, December 10th for our Victorian Christmas Crafting for Kids! Participants enjoyed making pomanders, Christmas crackers, and painted salt dough gingerbread cookie ornaments. We welcomed back actress Kattina Michelle for another Story Time with Amelia as she read out the classic tale 'Twas the Night Before Christmas by Clement Clark Moore. This Christmas event was hugely successful and was the starting point for a series of children's events in 2023.



**Victorian Crafting for Kids**

# Educational Programming

Throughout 2022 Eldon House hosted approximately 451 students along with 120 chaperones through our educational programming. This is a drastic increase compared to the previous years in which COVID-19 prevented students from visiting the site. The Thames Valley District School Board, the London District Catholic School Board, and the Ontario Government were not permitting fieldtrips due to the pandemic for most of the year. During this time Eldon House continued to promote its workbooks and live virtual tours that were developed the previous year. We also continued to promote our tours, specifically our outdoor walking tours and indoor tours for private, home school, and international schools.



Kids tour at Eldon House  
could see them virtually. As partners of the event, we provided first-come-first-serve virtual tours of the museum.

During May, Eldon House participated in the Thames Valley Regional Heritage Fair. The fair was converted from an in-person event at Fanshawe Pioneer Village to an online format for both 2021 and 2022. Teachers and students sent their history and social studies projects to be posted to the Thames Valley Regional Heritage Fair website for viewing and judging. The participating heritage organizations, arts groups, and community partners judged the projects, and the public

Eldon House once again participated in Museum School, which is a program funded by the London Culture Office and administered by the London Heritage Council. Museum School provides a unique opportunity to have teachers and classes visit Eldon House for an entire week. Our Interpretive Centre becomes the student's classroom, lunchroom, and occasional recess center.

Throughout the year we continued to increase in the number of school tours and workshops that took place on site.

## **Outreach**

Throughout 2022 Eldon House hosted several outreach programs to long term care facilities as an extension of our Memory Lane Program. Each session was approximately fifty minutes presented by Eldon House staff using interactive memory kits. These kits contain artifacts on a select theme included “Photography: People and Places,” “Life and Leisure,” “In the Kitchen,” “School Days,” “A Victorian Christmas,” and “Women’s Work” with the goal to interact with guests through conversation and storytelling.

## **A Note from the Museum Coordinator, Nicoletta Michienzi**

A year at Eldon House can always be divided in two, what the public see, and what they don't. In 2022, a lot happened on both sides.

In the public realm, the Museum had a very successful year. Despite some blips with closures or capacity changes, we were able to be open to the public for the majority of the year. Each month was full of fantastic programs that engaged a variety of audiences, and exhibits piqued the interest of patrons onsite and online. We were thrilled to see the return of so many visitors to Eldon House! Over the past few years staff have been a little worried about the effect of the pandemic on our visitor numbers, but the response in 2022 showed that Londoners have not stopped caring about Eldon House. We were very happy to welcome international visitors back once again, and our guestbook was full of wonderful comments from locals and those from abroad.

Behind the scenes, museum staff remained quite busy, working with the collection, and maintaining Eldon House. Staff were very happy to report some good conservation went on, and as always, the opportunity to engage students from Western University and those from our Canada Summer Jobs grant was a treat.



**Museum Coordinator N.  
Michienzi**

Additional planning took place for events and upcoming exhibits, and our social media thrived with content from all members of staff. It was an excellent year for Eldon House, and translated into work that was positively commented on by the public.

The Museum Coordinator would like to extend special thanks to all of those who made this year great. Thank you to our wonderful staff, for their ability to pivot and be positive and helpful. Thank you to our amazing volunteer team who were so flexible with the ever-changing needs of the Museum. And a big thank you to all our community partners for the opportunity to work with and support our Museum.

## Memberships



Green Bedroom, photo courtesy of J. O'Neil

The Eldon House Membership program was created in late 2019 with attempts to bolster museum engagement amongst frequent Eldonians. The membership gives visitors discounts on programs and gift shop as well as advance notice on program postings, and a quarterly newsletter.

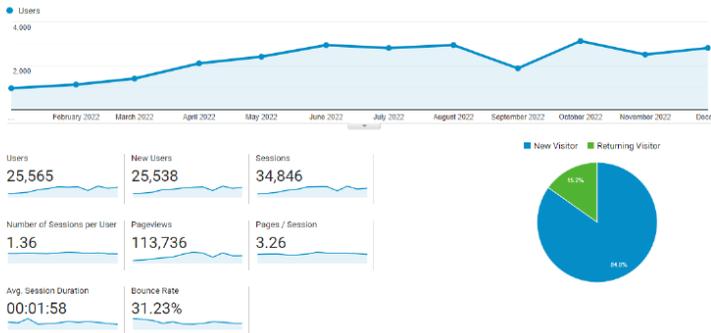
In 2022 several people purchased memberships for friends and family during the holidays. The memberships are steadily growing, and there is hope that in a few years this will become a well-known benefit of Eldon House and get people interested.

## Website and Social Media Report

Digital media and communication have become increasingly important for Eldon House. It is the way people interact with the Museum, how we sell tickets, how patrons find us, and how we advertise. The organization has been working to put more effort into digital platforms, and the return has been impressive.

This report covers the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022

## Audience Overview (2022)



Website data courtesy of Kreadiv House

noted the top ten countries people were viewing from. In the top ten were: Canada, United States, China, United Kingdom, “Country not set,” India, Russia, Germany, Netherlands, and Brazil. Within Canada the top three province views came from Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia.

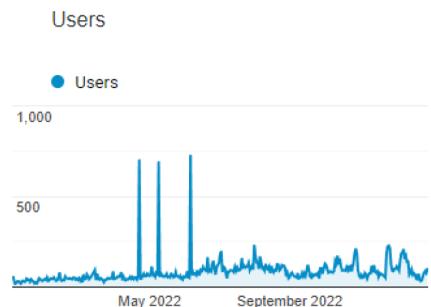
Our website, which is managed by Kreadiv House, has seen a large uptake in visits over the past couple years. In 2022, over 25,000 people viewed our website in over 34,000 sessions. There were 52% more viewers this year than last year, and 52% more view sessions, which is huge.

Additionally, our website

The age and sex of our viewers was consistent with last year, with almost 25% of views coming from those between ages 25-34, and 65.1% of views coming from women. The demographics are important, as they tell us something about our customers and can show us where events and marketing might be the most successful. In the past few years, we have seen a consistency in the sex of our visitors, but the age has come down slightly. In 2022, we see that though 25-34 was the top age category, those on either of the age scale are not far off in percentage, which is fascinating.

Finally, looking at the website we can see that there was a huge spike in website visits in the summer and in October, which made sense as it corresponded to e-commerce purchases for our events. This is always wonderful to see, as we know that our events and their promotion on our website are successful.

User data courtesy of Kreadiv House



Social media is a large part of the Museum. Staff use various platforms to engage with the public. They post information and advertisements for events, as well as share insight into the everyday life of those working at Eldon House. It is also a space for museum staff to have some fun with their jobs.



Summer Market Facebook ad

Facebook is one of the older platforms used by staff and we have had profiles since 2015. This platform has been reliable in relaying information to friends of the Museum and some of our more frequent Eldonians. The demographic for this platform tends to be slightly older, but as a result they are very interested in our postings. Facebook has also been a very good place to advertise for events, either by creating event pages, or by paying for ads. In 2022 staff saw a return on many paid ads, including those for larger events like the Summer Market and our Christmas Crafting Day for Kids.

Eldon House has had a Twitter profile since 2014. At first, Twitter was a quick way to send out facts about the Museum and connect with other organizations. Museum staff have since adapted, and now Twitter is used for sharing fun stories about the Museum as well as for event postings. We continued to see considerable growth on this platform in 2022 and hope to continue growing.

Instagram as a social media platform, has been another link to a younger demographic. This platform has allowed Eldon House staff to share fun photos and videos of the Museum, as well as information related to events. Instagram's merge with Facebook and the ability to post directly from TikTok, has also opened the possibility for more content and marketing. Like Facebook, Instagram



Screenshot of Shop London Instagram reel

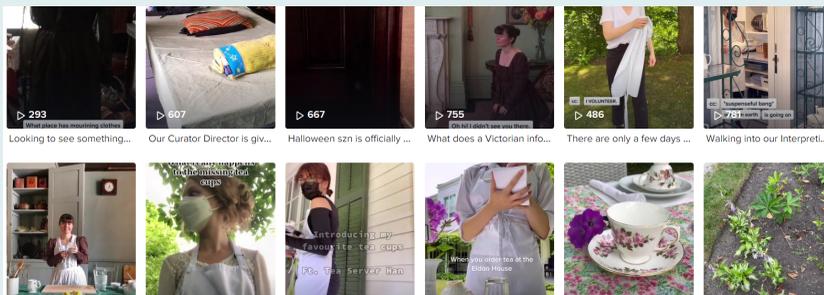
was used for marketing some of our new events and there was great success on this media. Instagram is also a cool app, in that it is very easy for visitors to find us and tag us in their photos. Over 2022 we had numerous interactions with visitors who shared some wonderful images of them and their loved ones having fun in the Museum. In December, we were also featured on the popular Shop London page. This page advertised Eldon House as a Christmas destination, and this joint post garnered over 2100 views. Eldon House staff are always excited to share our photos on Instagram and will continue to post fun and engaging content.

Our YouTube channel was created just before the pandemic by a former Research Assistant. During the pandemic, this platform was wonderful in sharing longer video messages and communication for events like Doors Open London. During 2022 staff continued to try and create videos. This year, the focus was on some food history, once again featuring Historical Interpreter B. Ricciardi. She had started sharing food history videos in 2021 and they were quite popular. We hope more delicious content is to come for 2023!



B. Ricciardi making tea sandwiches

TikTok is the new 'social media toy' of museum staff. Eldon House has been getting into this Gen Z platform and have been encouraging our students and research assistants to have fun as well. This has translated into some fun and silly videos. Several for 2022 included references to trends and pop culture, some featured staff in costume. Our follower numbers have increased exponentially by 319%! We are so excited for this development and hope to continue the trend.



**Follower Numbers**  
 Facebook- 2157  
 Twitter- 1360  
 Instagram- 1631  
 YouTube- 33  
 TikTok- 382

TikTok videos

# By the Numbers

While the pandemic and provincial closures have greatly impacted the last two years, 2022 was the beginning of a return to 'normal.' Eldon House was open to the public consistently since the start of February, and during that time there was a return of visitors. We were once again able to host large events and patrons came from everywhere to see us. While our numbers are not what they were pre-pandemic, we are getting back to a standard level.

Number of Days Open to the Public and for Private Tours	273
Number of Days the Gates were open	287
Number of Operating Hours	1263

Number of General Attendance including grounds visitors	3441
Number of Tours Participants	652
Number of Special Events Attendees	1677
Number of Tea Visitors	1020
Number of Outreach Attendees	324
Number of Rental Visitors	121

Total Number of Visitors	7235
Total Number of Visitors 2021	3837

Number of Volunteers	18
Number of Volunteer Hours	504

Eldon House in the spring



# Visitor Statistics

The climb to a 'normal' visiting year has been slow, and while we have not reached full normalcy yet, the Museum is well on its way to recovery. In 2022 we saw a total of 7235 visitors. While this is lower than our pre-pandemic numbers, it is an 88.5% increase from 2021.

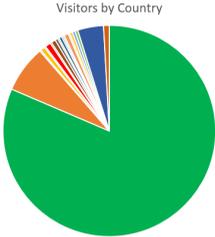
Data collected by the museum staff on visitor numbers from 2022 came from anecdotal information collected at the door, and also from our guestbook. Our guestbook is in the front hall, and staff encourage visitors to record their information whenever possible, including if it's their first visit, how they found us, where they are from, and comments related to their visit.



Eldon House Drawing Room

Overall, over 2000 general visitors were new to the site, many identified finding the Museum through online platforms like Google, tourism pages, and social media. This is on par with our City target of seeing 1000 new faces each year. We also saw many new visitors coming to the Museum with past visitors. Eldonians took 2022 as an opportunity to share our local heritage gem with loved ones, especially during holidays and large-scale events. There were several visitor spikes over the year, especially on long weekends, in the summer, and during Christmas.

As travel and pandemic restrictions eased, out-of-towners also came back to Eldon House. Throughout COVID-19, the Museum has been missing our national and international visitors and were glad to see an influx this year. Eldon House saw visitors from 19 international countries! (Collected from information in our guestbook.) As always, the highest rate of international visitors came from the United States. Unusually, most of the American visitors came to us

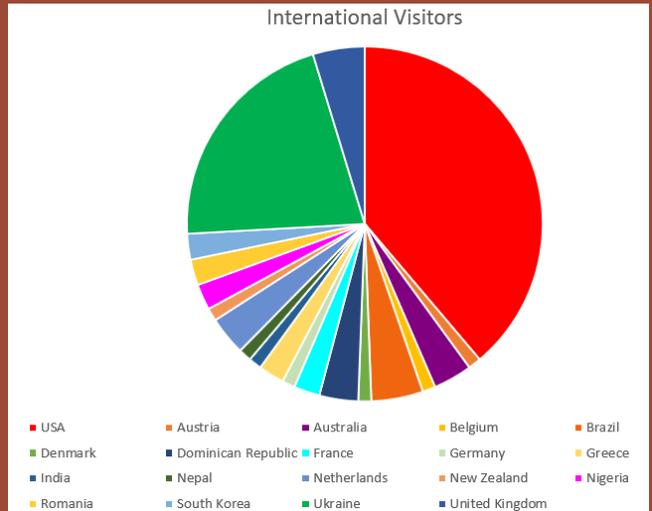


- Canada
- Brazil
- Greece
- Nigeria
- USA
- Denmark
- India
- Romania
- Austria
- Dominican Republic
- Nepal
- South Korea
- Australia
- France
- Netherlands
- Ukraine
- Belgium
- Germany
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom

Visitors by country

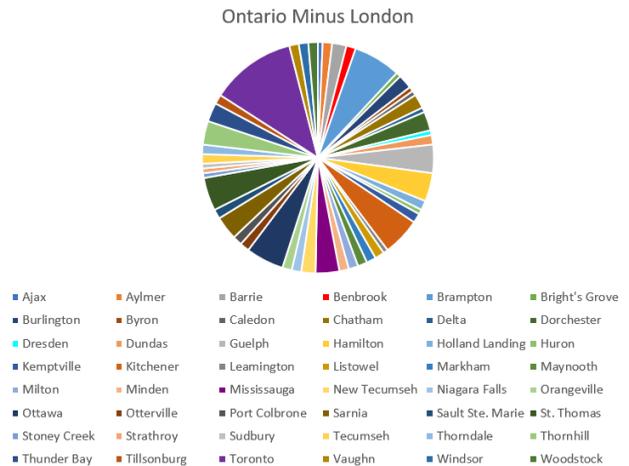
from Texas. This was because a large tour group was passing through London, and their group made up almost 50% of our American visitors. Others came to us from Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Mississippi, Missouri, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Eldon House also saw a high rate of visitors from Europe, with visitors from 10 different countries. The majority of our European visitors came from the Ukraine, many identified themselves to staff as recent refugee immigrants. Several came with family and settlement workers to the Museum and were very happy to engage with our staff and use our Ukrainian translations for the site. Large amounts of European visitors also came from the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, and Romania. There were also a few visitors from South and Central America, Oceania, and Asia.



**International Visitors**

Within Canada, the majority of our visitors were from Ontario. People wrote their locations in the guestbook, and unsurprisingly over 50% identified being from London. Outside of London, the top five locations included Toronto, Brampton, Kitchener, Ottawa, and St. Thomas. Overall, 48 locations in Ontario were written down. Within Canada we saw very few people from out of province this year. In previous years there have been a lot of cross Canada visitors, in the guestbook, 29 people identified



**Ontario visitors outside of London**



dedication to the site. Their advocacy for Eldon House has made all the difference in keeping us open and accessible throughout the pandemic and construction. City Facilities is another unsung hero of the Museum, assisting us with everything from small repairs to temperature control. In 2022 this department was essential in helping keep the doors open and the site functional, we would like to give them thanks.

2022 was full of surprises at the municipal level, with the summer and fall being dominated by a large construction project on Ridout Street. As London expands, infrastructure needs to be adjusted including road work and transportation routes. The City of London's Bus Rapid Transit Route (BTR) hopes to expand ridership starting in the downtown core. The BTR project began construction in 2022, extending from Wellington Street to Ridout Street, as well as to



Photo courtesy of J. O'Neil

York Street. Due to micro-tunneling happening in these areas, a section of Ridout and Fullarton was designated as a work zone for construction. This meant starting in March, the street was closed at that end, and throughout the project was adjusted for additional construction. Ridout Street was not reopened until mid-November. This project was a surprise for museum staff, and Eldon House personnel became very involved working with City planners, members of the construction team, and contractors to ensure that we were able to maintain our operations. While things started rocky, staff took updates and surprises in stride, creating clear communication plans to serve our patrons. While some programs and accessibility were affected by construction, our staff did an excellent job in providing the best service possible to the public. It is the hope of Eldon House staff that relationships and communication built during this phase of construction will follow us to future projects.

Day-to-day maintenance of the site has been the work of various staff, including the Facilities and Maintenance Coordinator, and our new Garden and Grounds Coordinator. Interior facilities are overseen by G. Neves Lopes, who has worked throughout the pandemic and into 2022 to ensure that the site is kept tidy and accessible.

The Eldon House grounds came under the supervision of C. Martin, who was new to the Museum. His position was added in 2022 and was a seasonal role that adjusted with the weather. During his time as Coordinator, C. Martin worked to make the gardens a destination for museum visitors. He worked closely with our dedicated team of gardens volunteers on the maintenance of the site, transplanting in the gardens, adding new plant material, adjusting the garden beds, and growing seedlings for our annual plant sale.

He was also heavily involved in registering the site as a pollinator garden and creating connections with Seeds of Diversity, an online forum for seed exchange and collecting. The Pollinator Pathways Project aims to create gardens for bees, butterflies, and birds, and focuses on plants native to the area. The Eldon House rock garden on the north end of the property has various pollinator plants and has been designated by this project, linking us with other pollinator gardens in the City. We would like to thank C. Martin for his valuable knowledge of horticulture and for making the Eldon House gardens a key focus this year.



From top left to bottom right: Pollinator pathways signage, daffodils, crocus', roses collected from the garden, magnolia on the West Lawn



B. Keenan and B. Rutledge

We would also like to thank our garden volunteers: L. Beaujot, R. Donachie, M. Hoffmann Chase, B. Keenan, C. Lynch, M. Pflieger, and B. Rutledge for their exceptional work. Our volunteers were very helpful in maintaining our grounds during the year and were also instrumental in growing plants, and assisting in the annual plant sale, which took place on May 14 at the Covent Garden Market. This location proved to be excellent for foot traffic, and we sold more than in any other year.

## Finance Report

The organization is run on a not-for profit model and relies on our partnership with the City of London and external granting for funding. In 2022 the Museum received several grants, including the Community Museum Operating Grant. This fund is instrumental to the Museum as it assists in maintaining a high museum standard in all areas of operation. The Safe Reopening Grant has been available for the past two years as tourism continues to recover from the pandemic. This fund aided Eldon House in continuing to operate safely in 2022.

Two additional grants assisted Eldon House in its ability to run summer programs. The Canada Summer Jobs grant is applied for on a yearly basis and gives the organization the ability to hire students to assist with some of our most popular programming initiatives. The Celebrate Canada Grant also provides funding for July 1st celebrations and enabled the Museum to host an

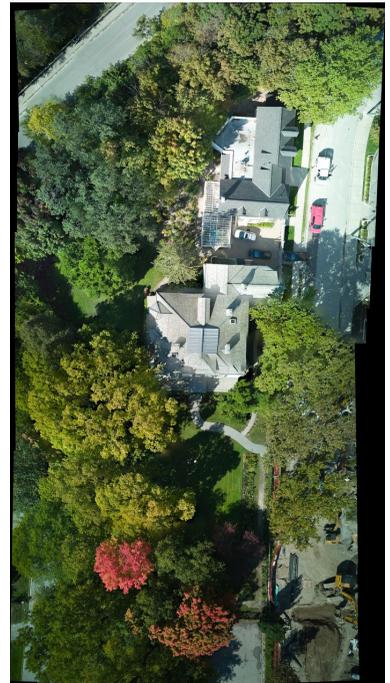
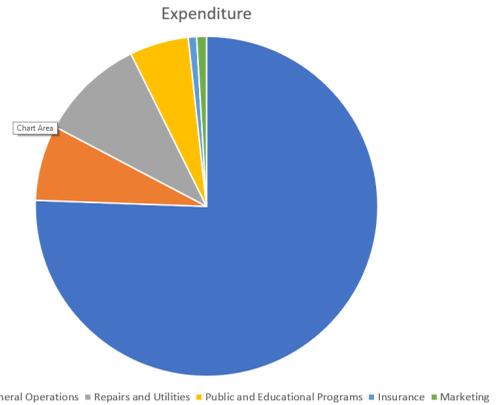


Photo courtesy of J. O'Neil

event on this holiday.

Eldon House felt the effects of pandemic budgets, construction projects, and staff turnover in 2022. The Museum posted a loss of just over 32 thousand dollars for the 2022 fiscal year but still finished the year with a strong cash position with more than 130 thousand dollars in cash and cash equivalents. The loss was primarily attributed to salaries, maintenance expenses, utilities, and lower revenues than budgeted. Revenues were hampered due to ongoing street construction in front of the house.



2022 expenditure chart

We will be starting budget discussions later this year and once again are expecting to approve a four-year budget with the City of London.

## Grants

Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG)  
Celebrate Canada, Celebration and Commemoration Fund  
Safe Reopening Grant  
Canada Summer Jobs Program



London  
CANADA



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien



Canada  
Summer Jobs



# Community Partnerships



# 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 the wonderful volunteers who continue to support us with their time, energy, and positive attitude. We thank them for their continued involvement and understanding during these challenging times.

Liz Beaujot  
Brenda Britton  
Rose Donachie  
Ardath Finbogasson-Hill  
Penny Finneron  
Al Green  
Shelia Green  
Stephen Harrott  
Merrilee Hoffmann Chase

Barbara Kennan  
Cathy Lynch  
Wendy Magrath  
Marianne Pflieger  
Diane Picard  
Betty Rutledge  
Marie Rooks  
Andrea Tonkovic  
Lyn Tremblay



Photo of the Gardens Volunteers  
left to right: B. Keenan, B.  
Rutledge, L. Beaujot, M. Pflieger,  
M. Hoffmann, C. Lynch

## 2022 Board of Directors

Mike Donachie, Board Chair  
Rebecca Griesmayer, Vice Chair  
Megan Halliday, Director  
Louanne Henderson, Director  
Ron Koudys, Director

Manosij Majumdar, Director  
Joe O'Neil, Treasurer  
Theresa Regnier, Secretary  
Maureen Spencer Golouchenko, Director (Past  
Chair 2013-2016)



Board of Directors

## Staff Team

Tara Wittmann, Curator Director  
Brenna Ardiel, Program Coordinator  
Nicoletta Michienzi, Museum Coordinator  
Bernie Keim, Finance Manager  
Guilherme Neves Lopes, Facilities and Maintenance Coordinator  
Craig Martin, Garden and Grounds Coordinator  
Alexa DiCecco, Historical Interpreter  
Christi Hudson, Historical Interpreter  
Cathy Luke, Historical Interpreter  
Becca Ricciardi, Historical Interpreter  
Ally Vouvalidis, Historical Interpreter



From top left to bottom right: G. Lopes, A. Vouvalidis, A. DiCecco, B. Ricciardi, N. Michienzi and T. Wittmann, B. Ardiel, C. Hudson, and C. Martin, some photos courtesy of J. O'Neil

*Canada West.*



*Eldon House.*

*Summer.*

Photo courtesy of J. Saddy



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