



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 1st 2022 - March 31th 2023

Chris Hellowell

Overview

2022-23 was the first year that hasn't been covid affected since before the pandemic, so it was reassuring to see the public are still enthusiastic about what we are doing, and that lots of organisations around the city want to work with us to support their communities too. The popularity of ETL has continued to rise and there are encouraging signs of the culture of sharing and thinking of sharing before consumption becoming an increasingly prevalent mindset in our membership.

THE IMPACT OF THE EDINBURGH TOOL LIBRARY

Environmental Impact

Thanks to the hard work of our data team, we now use the world's first tool library carbon calculator. This is a more accurate model than we have used before, using individual loans to populate our data set rather than averages. In order to provide a comparison, I have included last year's amended figures.

	2021-22	2022-23	% Variation +/-
Active members	1249	1654	+32
Carbon saved (kgs)	28647	38581	+34
Money saved (£)	173313	225855	+30
Total Loans	5934	8356	+40
Av. loans per member	4.75	5.05	+6
Total no. different tools from inventory borrowed by members	1022	1112	+9

A membership increase of over 30% again has kept up the pattern of growth for ETL (during non-pandemic years) and wonderfully growth of ETL does not equal growth in consumption, so it's a feel-good growth! The final two figures are included to show that members are utilising the breadth of our inventory more too, backed up by the higher growth in loans than membership. This suggests an encouraging behavior change in our members, thinking more about sharing before buying. It also suggests a greater awareness of the full inventory and this is something we are keen to continue to build on in the future.

In 2023, Circular Communities Scotland conducted the first Share Library Impact Report with members from libraries across Scotland. 90% of respondents indicated that their membership made them think twice before buying something new, and it is at this point we need to make sure members know if the thing they were thinking about buying is available to share from ETL.

Social Impact

As well as reducing the environmental impact of our membership, ETL is also about addressing social issues. These include climate justice, mental health and social isolation, poverty and lack of access. Making can be a therapeutic, meditative process for many, whilst for others it is about the thing they are making and fixing and how it makes their life easier or better. For others, coming to a workshop space can just be about getting out of the house and being around other people. This goes for our general membership and for our outreach participants too.

One of the aims for anyone taking part in any of our outreach programmes is that we break down the barriers to access of our spaces (unfamiliarity, being invited to participate, not feeling like it's a space for them), and invite them to also be part of our community, and become a full ETL member. All outreach participants now get a free membership and workshop induction as part of their programme. We have partnered with other charities that work with people who may not have had access to the training or spaces we can provide.

Members

	2021-22	2022-23	%age variation +/-
Money saved by ETL membership (£)	173313	225855	+30
%age of concession membership	20	18	-2
Number of member workshop inductions	240	340	+42
No. of attendees at ETL members workshops sessions and events	859	1405	+63

We saved 30% more money for our members than the previous year, with an increase in both inductions and workshop use of 42% and 63% respectively. This translates as 340 people getting safe access to a space they are new to, and this space being used over 1400 times for 3 hour sessions by our members. **That's the equivalent of the workshop being in use 24/7 by our members for 175 days!**

The one figure that has come down is the percentage of members taking advantage of our concessional rates (£10). This may have to do with the move of the library to Meadowbank and a slightly different local population being more affluent. Certainly with the cost of living crisis, you might have expected this to increase. This is something that, moving forward, we need to bear in mind with our communications. If we want to help people struggling financially we need to make sure we are reaching them and they are aware of how cheap the ETL membership is and how much money it can save them.

Outreach

In 2022-23 we ran 27 outreach sessions with a variety of charities including:

- [Upmo](#)
- [Pilton Community Health Project](#)
- Womanzone (a project of [FourSquare](#))
- [Social Bite Village](#)
- Nabni! ([The Conservation Volunteers](#)' Syrian refugee project)
- [Freshstart](#)
- [Positive Paths](#)
- [Spit It Out Project](#)
- [One Dalkeith](#)

Each session was run with groups of 6-10 and focussed on outcomes defined by the group at the beginning. This could be skill development, confidence, social interactions, or sometimes just a reason to get out.



HUMAN RESOURCES

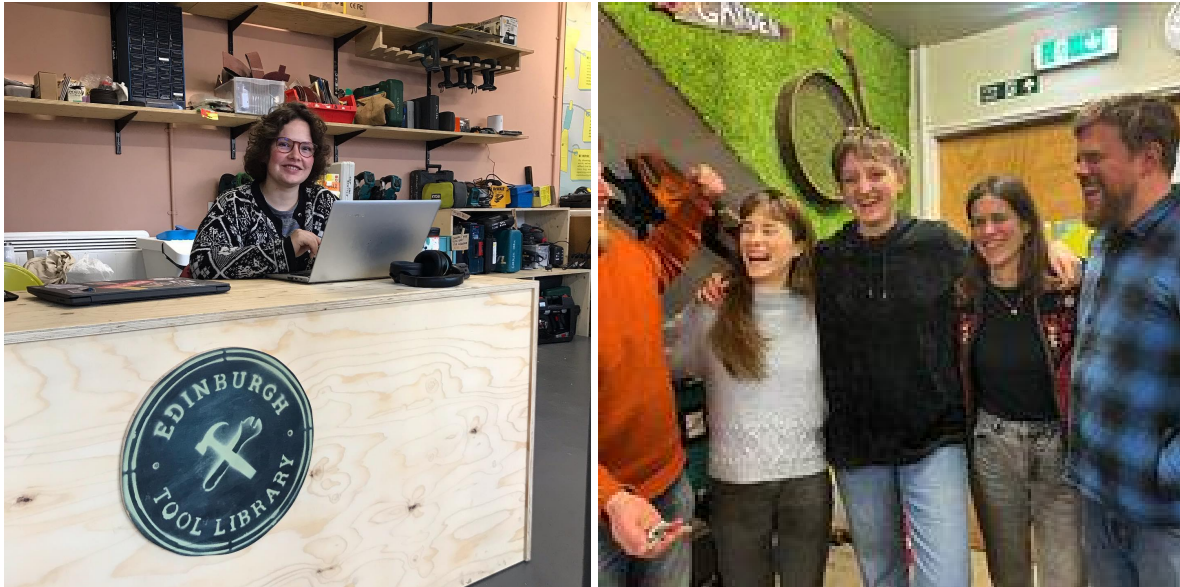
Staff updates and changes

This year we said goodbye to two stalwarts of ETL, Joe Buckley and Terence Finnegan, who walked the earth and moved to pastures new respectively. We are indebted to their talents, skill and humour and have already reconnected again with Joe after his travels, welcoming him back as a volunteer as he takes the next step in his medical career.



Incoming are Alys Woodhead (left), who took over Joe's role as Custom Lane's workshop Manager after freelancing as a workshop lead for some time, and Daisy Crooke (right photo, centre) who started as our Volunteer Coordinator and Community Builder. This involved a little rejig of staff duties, as Cecile Levasseur

moved from Volunteer Coordinator to a role in capacity building for the organisation.



Volunteers

On the board, we said goodbye to John Sinclair, who was one of our original board members. We also said a temporary goodbye to Gillian Eunson, our chair, who took a period of maternity leave. Filling their ample shoes were new trustees Tim Graham, Kerry Kirkpatrick and Paul Makin, who had been volunteering with ETL for a year previously. Bios of all of our trustees are available on our website. For Gill's maternity period we operated with a rotating chair (not like the Mastermind one!) with different trustees leading different meetings.

Our team of over 50 volunteers lead our outward facing service delivery, running borrowing sessions, open workshops, volunteer builds, tool repair, and a whole host of other behind the scenes roles. In 2022-23 they contributed **3405 hours of volunteering** the equivalent time of **2.2 full time members of staff**. Using the Volunteer Scotland Volunteer Economic Contribution Calculator, this **equates to in-kind support of £71,376**. This is a transformative contribution, equivalent to over 50% of our annual budget, and as ever, we are hugely grateful to each and every one of them for their efforts, and wanted to share a little bit of feedback we had from a member via social media, after getting help to make something in the workshop.

“Thanks to the volunteers for helping me out! They were superb, super friendly, helpful and insightful. They are an absolute credit to the charity”

ETL members

We have grand plans for the future of ETL, and will need even more help from our community. If you are reading this and feel an inclination to get involved, contact

daisy@edinburghtoollibrary.org.uk

WHAT DID WE GET UP TO?!

New initiatives, old classics, and highlights of another wonderful year

ETL Retrofixers

One of the wonderful things that happened at ETL this year is that volunteers really started to take ownership of the organisation. One such example happened in our Portobello space, where a small group of volunteers started chatting on a shift about building retrofit being the single biggest carbon saving action an individual can take to reduce their carbon footprint. From this they asked if they could start using the workshop as a meeting space for people interested in learning more about retrofit. This blossomed into a growing group that meets regularly and has taken part in demonstration events and run and coordinated workshops so that people can learn to save money and reduce their carbon footprint through small effective steps in draught proofing and insulation. It's a wonderful example of the ETL community using us as a resource to make the changes they want in the world around them. We are very excited about the future of this community within a community.



Repair Cafe Edinburgh (RCE)

Another great group self-started group within ETL was Repair Cafe Edinburgh. Steve Cook started volunteering for ETL and had been a member of Repair Cafe London before moving back North, and approached us with the idea of being the big brother or sister organisation for RCE. We already had spaces, equipment, skilled volunteers and community connections. Thanks to Steve and our volunteer repairers, we were able to get up and running relatively quickly, running an event every month throughout the year, starting at the Craigmillar Festival. In the 2022-23 year they ran 8 events, getting members of the public up close and personal with fixing and repair of items such as small electricals, bikes and textiles. For more information on the group and to see their upcoming events, check out their page on the [Restart Project website](#). As of **November 2023 they have completed 15 events, helping 184 people and preventing 3.5 tons of CO2** being produced by repairing things that would have gone to the dump.

Volunteer Assemblies

We completed five volunteer builds this year, with our amazing Tooligans and some one-off volunteers helping to make DIY magic over the course of five weekends throughout the year. We supported:

- Bridgend Farmhouse to build a childrens buildable water feature
- Community Renewal in Bingham with workbenches and tools for their community shed
- Gull's Grocery on Ferry Road to revamp their fresh veg shelving and displays with reclaimed timber
- The Ripple Project in Restalrig to make planters and develop a growing space
- Sunshine on Leith Community Garden to repair and revamp their garden

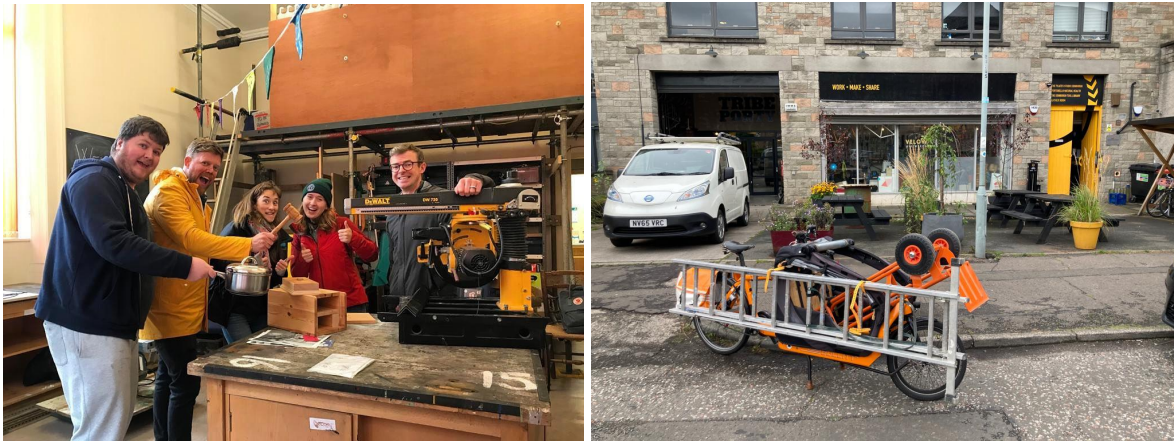
All in all 66 people volunteered their time over the weekend to make these community projects happen. They learned new skills, made new connections and friendships, and had a great time doing it. We have now developed a process where we have a rolling application process for community groups to put their idea forward. If, reading this, you have something that could do with some Tooligan power, or know an organisation that could benefit from a weekend blitz, you can refer them to our application form on our [website](#).



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Repair Lair and Tool Transport

In October of 2022 we moved our repair operation to our new “Repair Lair” at Custom House in Leith, just opposite our Custom Lane workshop. This was a much more volunteer-friendly space for our amazing repair team, but it did raise a few logistical issues in getting tools to our repairers. The answer was using our tool transporters - cargo bikes, to move tools in need of repair, and those that had been fixed, to the right location. We developed systems of working, volunteer training and used a new facility in our inventory system allowing us to transfer things from location to location. It had teething issues, and is by no means perfect yet, but we now have a workable system of fault reporting and repairing which means our repair is as quick as possible and information on what the faults are are recorded effectively and efficiently, allowing us to keep more tools in circulation longer and ultimately extend their lives for our members to use them.



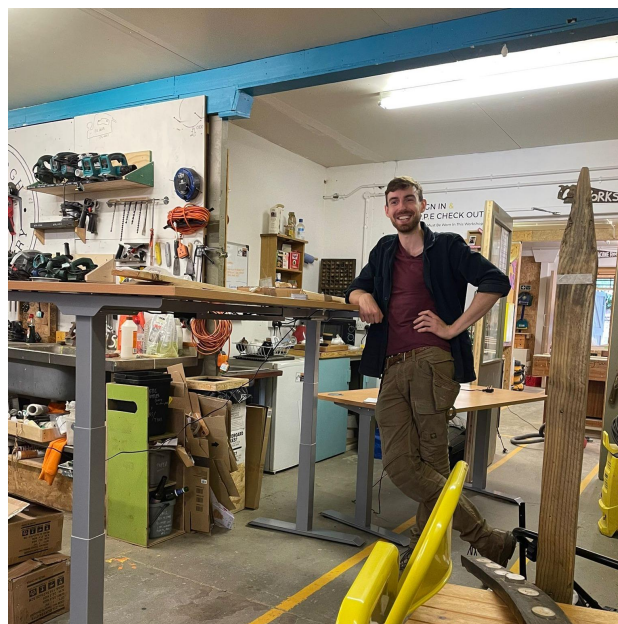
The Edinburgh Remakery Tech Donation Box

We took delivery of a Tech Donation Box from The Edinburgh Remakery, which is housed at our Meadowbank Tool Library. This is somewhere for people donate old unwanted laptops, tablets and small tech where it can be collected, wiped and resold or donated to people in digital poverty. It has, rather predictably, been a big hit with our members and has been emptied three times in 2023!



Improving Access

This year we had a focus on making our spaces as accessible as possible, with our focus being on our Porty workshop initially. We brought in various visual aids, changed light bulbs, bought a hearing loop and got adjustable height workbenches so we can welcome people with different needs. Our staff member Rosie also produced a guide to our Portobello space to address some of the questions people with access needs may have. As always, we are happy to answer any questions you may have, and can send you out the guide if you think it would be helpful.



Moving forward

2024 marks ten years that ETL has been in existence. From once a week at the Leith Walk Police Box to lending thousands of tools to thousands of people, a lot has happened and we have achieved so much. We want to spend 2024 reflecting on what has gone on before, but we also want to look forward. The Scottish Government wants to achieve net zero by 2045 and the City of Edinburgh Council is aiming for 2030. This won't happen without a continued and much-accelerated move towards a circular economy and more sustainable ways of living. Please help us to celebrate ETL and to amplify its voice to reach as many people as possible in 2024 - from your neighbour to your MSPs, your workplace to your social media. Let's get Edinburgh sharing.

Much love,

Chris Hellowell

ETL Director