

**University of Guelph
Department of History**

Major Paper Presentation



Student: Alexandra Logue	Date: Fri., Sept. 16/11
Time: 2:00 pm	Place: Room 2020, MacKinnon Extension

Title:	‘Sharper than swords, sturdier than stones’: space, language, and gender in fifteenth-century London
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Abstract:
<p>Through an examination of neighbourhood conflicts over property boundaries, marriage contracts and defamation, this thesis argues that the dichotomy of public and private is an anachronistic and untenable division in fifteenth-century London. Instead, Londoners were concerned with degrees of visibility and control over space, rather than the maintenance of a strict separation of public and private. The tensions that resulted from shared, often subdivided space could culminate in a legal battle before the assize of nuisance, a secular court where individuals complained that their neighbour’s property encroached upon their own and that, through those encroachments, a neighbour exposed the plaintiff’s household to public scrutiny. Marriage conflicts and defamation suits brought before the ecclesiastical Consistory court were similarly concerned with public knowledge, as both relied on a certain degree of publicity in order to be effective. Witnesses were required to see and hear both the exchange of consent and the exchange of insults. Using these two London courts, this thesis explores how the house and household lives were open to others and how Londoners lived their lives in varying degrees of publicity, rather than in public or private.</p>

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