

# University of Guelph, Department of History

**Alice Glaze**

## PhD Final Oral Examination

Women's Networks of Family, Work, Support and Slander in  
Canongate, 1600-1660

### *A B S T R A C T*

**Date: Mon., Apr. 24/17**

**Time: 9:00 am**

**Location: MACK132**

**Advisor:**

**Dr. Elizabeth Ewan**

**Examining Committee Members:**

**Dr. Peter Goddard**

**Dr. Susannah Ferreira**

**External Examiner:**

**Dr. Alexandra Shepard (University  
of Glasgow)**

**Chair: Dr. Matthew Hayday**

This dissertation examines women's lives and relationships in Canongate, a burgh (town) neighbouring but independent of Edinburgh, over the first sixty years of the seventeenth century. It explores women's contributions to their families, local economy and community as captured in the rich social records of the Canongate kirk session (church court) records, burgh court records and individual wills and testaments. The dissertation focuses on the four interconnected areas of family, work, support and litigation, arguing that women played critical and complicated roles in these areas. Many women strove to provide for their families, honouring both close and extended relations. They engaged in a diverse spectrum of work both within and outside the household, actively contributing to their local economy. Women both gave and received charity in the kirk-sanctioned and -controlled poor relief system, but many others also participated in illicit networks of support at the margins of society. Women were also active quarrellers in the streets and the courts, using both arenas to police neighbours' behaviours and defend their own. The study's comparative approach of both records and relationships deepens and clarifies our understanding of women's lives in an early modern town. It also fills an important historiographical gap, placing the women of Canongate in their wider Scottish and European contexts. The dissertation demonstrates the complexity of women's lives and relationships, the boundaries of their agency, and the variety of their contributions to their families, economy and town.

