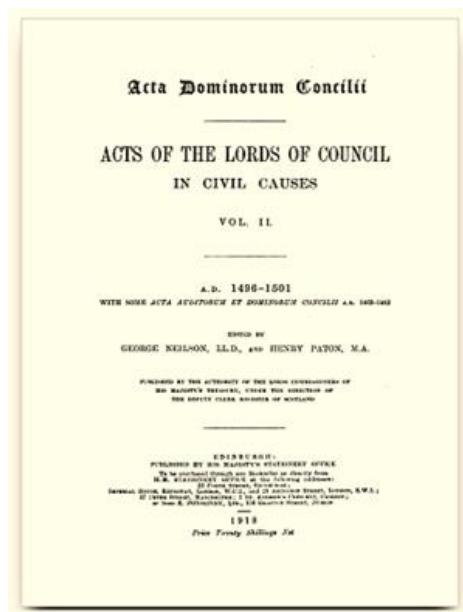


Household Effects in 1500, followed by an Analysis thereof

From: The Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes. Scotland 1496 – 1501 Vol.1, Ed. G Nelson & Henry Paton, Edinburgh 1918.



**Acts of the Lords of Council
in Civil Causes**

In February 1500 **Janet Makdowell**, widow of deceased **Gilbert McDowall of Freugh** and her son **Fergus**, brought an action to be heard by the Lords of Council, against **John McDowall**, called '**Garioch**', and **Gilbert McDowall of Ernoch**. Also involved were **Uchtred McDowall of Derregill**, as executor of Gilbert's estate and tutor testamentary to Fergus, and **Marion**, Fergus's sister.

John and Gilbert had assumed possession of the lands of **Aremoid** and taken the rents, amounting to £5, from the tenants. The Lords found for Janet and '*assigned 3 July next for her to instruct her losses*'.

However, things appear to have escalated. In December they brought further action against John and Gilbert for:

'spoilation of 8 x 12 bolls of oats (4s per boll), 20 bolls of bere and other goods.

The Lords ordain that John McDowell restore to Janet and Owchtre 8 x 12 bolls of oats at 2s, 20 bolls of bere a 6s, 5 oxen, 20s each, 'ane brew caldron (10s), a fedder bed with bowster and 5 coddis (10s), a bassing with ane laware, (6s), 8 pots, (6 marks), 2 spetis, a rak with ane fryane pane (8s), 5 tubs (4s), 8 barrels, 2 pipes and 5 brasin chandillaris (30s), a gyrdill (4s), metal mary (5s), a cruk (3s), a pair of double blancatis with a pair of schetis (13/4p), 3 silver spewnis, the price 30s, ane kyst with twa arkis (15s), ane cellat and ane gorget (13/4p), ane jak with ane fald of mailye (15s), ane knap-skall (5s), ane burdeclaith with canwes of 9 eln (6s), the which goods were spulyeit and taken by the said Johne firth of the lands of Aremord.

John was also required to remove himself from the lands and to pay £5 Scots for the rent and profits for the year 1497, as well as 5 merks '*for their expense of plea*'

The above provides perhaps a unique view of household effects in the year 1500. James IV had assumed the throne in 1488 at the age of 15, bringing some stability to the country, but not before waving a stick at England. In his reign the Renaissance reached Scotland bringing prosperity and progress. In Galloway, local conflicts continued!

Interpretation is offered for the following:

Spoilation, spulyeit – plunder or stealing of moveable possessions.

boll – a measure of 12 Scots gallons or 6 bushels (218 litres) and about 140lb (approx. 64kg.)

bere – type of barley

ane brew caldron – one large boiling vessel

a fedder bed with bowster and 5 coddis – a feather bed with long pillow and 5 cushions

a bassing with ane laware – a basin with a drinking/measure cup (cf. Lawin – a session of drinking or entertainment)

2 spettis – skewers?

a rak with ane fryane pane – a rack with a frying pan

5 *brasin chandillaris* – brass chandeliers or candleholders

a *gyrdill* – a girdle, iron plate used for baking.

metal mary – bain-marie

a *cruke* – a pot hook

a pair of double *blancatis* with a pair of *schetis* – blankets with sheets

3 *silver spewnis* – silver spoons

ane *kyst* with twa *arkis* – one chest, trunk or large box and two large chests

ane *cellat* and ane *gorget* – one light helmet and an iron collar

a pair of *splentis* – a pair of splints

ane *jak* with ane *fald of mailye* – possibly a padded jacket, with a fold of chainmail

ane *knapskull* – one metal skullcap worn for protection under a bonnet

ane *burdeclaith* with *canwes of 9 eln* – one broadcloth, 9 ells (1ell=3'1", 6 ells=1 fall) of canvas.



**"ane cellat and ane gorget"
one light helmet and an iron collar**

M G McDowall, March 2000

The Analysis

This paper attempts to expand on and analyse the information contained in the above record.

Gilbert McDowall of Freugh died on or before 1497. His estate reverted to the Crown (James IV) and by letter of 15th Sept 1497,¹ the service due from the lands and the right of patronage of the church were passed to John Dunbar of Mochrum,² who was the Chamberlain of Galloway (the King's representative). It should be noted that the royal letter has Gilbert's name spelt 'Makdowell'.

McDouall family history, records that Gilbert, the son of Gilbert of Ravenstone, etc, married Katherine MACGILIGH (MacCulloch?) in 1445. Their son Fergus is recorded as having pre-deceased his father,

It might be worth noting here that this early history is based on the narrative provided by Alexander Nisbet in 'A System of Heraldry.' in 1722. He records having seen the following charters:

A Charter, 1445, of the lands of Ravenston to Fergus McDowall of Freugh who had married the heiress of Gilbert McLelland of Ravenston and to Fergus McDowall, his son and heir apparent.

Of the same charter, he states 'it is clear that Gilbert McDowall of Ravenston gave the lands of Urle, in the Lordship of Craighlaw, to John Macgiligh, who, it seems, having only a daughter, or heir female, bestowed her in marriage, with his estate, on Gilbert McDowall, son and heir, as he is designated, of Gilbert McDowall of Ravenston. He gave him and Katherine Macgiligh, his wife, a charter of the lands, dated 8th November 1445.'

A Charter, 1473, by James III, upon the resignation of Gilbert McDowall, then designated of Ravenston to Gilbert Mcdowall, his son, wherein several lands are contained . . etc.

Of the same charter, he states: 'which he (Gilbert) in the decline of his age and years, resigns in the Sovereign's hands in favour of Gilbert McDowall, his grandson "nepoti suo et haeredi apparenti" (to his nephew and heir apparent). Charter under the Great Seal dated 17th January 1473/4.

He goes on to say that ‘His own son, Fergus, (m. Agnes McCulloch) had died in the life of his father, but he left a son, we see, his grandfather’s heir apparent. His grandfather died at a great age in 1496, and was succeeded by his grandson Gilbert McDowall of Freugh (m. Isobel Gordon) who was slain . . . Flodden, 9th Sept. 1513.

Unfortunately, neither of these two charters are recorded in current transcripts. In fact, only one charter survives for 1445.

There is always a shadow of a doubt which grows as time goes on, but there seems no reason to deviate from the current and accepted narrative. The probable explanation, therefore, is that Janet Makdowell may have been Gilbert’s (Sr.) second wife. With his first wife, Katherine, he had two sons, Fergus, (named for his grandfather) and Gilbert (Jr. - named for his father). When Fergus died (before 1496), Gilbert (m. Isobel GORDON) succeeded to Freugh.

Gilbert’s (Sr.) second wife, Janet, and her young³ children, Fergus and Marion were left with lands of Aremoid, and perhaps others. It would seem, however that this was not her residence, but was tenanted. Her possession was obviously disputed by John and Gilbert.

The lands of ‘**Aremoid**’, is most probably Ardemorde (McKerlie), Ardnimord, Ardnamoird (Maxwell) and is spelt as ‘Arynamoirt’ on Pont’s map. Meaning ‘hill of the oxen’ it lies in Kirkcowan parish, close to Carseriggan and other Freugh lands.⁴ In 1527 Fergus, Gilbert’s son, obtained the 5 merk lands of ‘Arenemord’ from James Kennedy of Blairquhan.⁵ (presumably having obtained it from Janet McD.) Freugh continued to hold this land until 1693⁶ when it was passed to James Ross, a merchant in Stranraer. It remained in others hands except for five years, 1735-40 when John, 11th of Freugh had sasine.⁷

John McDowall called ‘**Garioch**’ may be a placename – Galdenoch, Gannoch, Garroch, Garvalloch or Genoch in Galloway, or ‘Garioch’ in Aberdeenshire. Alternatively - in the Gaelic, ‘a place of roughness’, may refer to his character.

Gilbert McDowall of ‘**Ernoch**’. There is an ‘Enoch’ in the parishes of Stoneykirk, Glasserton and Whithorn.

Uchtred McDowall of ‘**Derregill**’ is Dalreagle in Kirkinner parish. On Pont’s map, ‘Dyreygill’, sitting on the south side of the river Bladnoch, opposite Torhouse in Wigton parish. In a charter of 14 Feb 1449⁸ the ‘overriding superiority’ of the twelve merk land was granted to John Dunbar of Mochrum. According to McKerlie the tenant in 1484 was Uchtred McDowall. The land passed through the family to David, Uchtred’s 5x great grandson who sold it to the Agnew family in 1679.⁹

From the evidence, including extant charters and the findings of earlier historians, we can conclude that Janet was probably a second wife to Gilbert. Her son Fergus must have been born after Fergus, the eldest son of Gilbert and his first wife Katherine, had died. As a ‘pupil’ with a guardian (Uchtred McDowall of Derregill), and a younger sister, Marion, he would be between 1 and 14 years old in 1500. Born, therefore no earlier than 1486 and no later than 1498. Conversely, Fergus could have died, possibly before 1486. Gilbert married Kathrine in 1445 (unconfirmed), so Fergus was perhaps in his 40’s when he died.

The land of ‘Aremoid’ (Ardemorde) was one of a number of adjacent lands in Kirkinner Parish owned by the McDouall’s of Freugh over many years.

The Lords of Council found in Janet's favour, and fined John McDowall a total of £27,11/- Scots in compensation with another £5 for the rents and profits for the year 1497, as well as 5 merks (£3, 6/8d) for expenses.

Janet had also, a year previously ¹⁰ brought an action against Allan McKee in Kilcoykill (Kilquhockdale) for wrongful occupation of a merkland called 'the Ryneddir and Daws' which was presumably in Kirkcowan parish but can no longer be identified. McKee produced a letter of ownership from Gilbert McDowall of Remiston. It was rejected by the Council on the grounds that the three witnesses had died years before the seal was fixed.

MG McDowall, August 2025.

NOTES

1. Register of the Privy Seal Vol 1 No. 133. 'A letter of the gift of the ward and mariage of the landis and tenandris with advocatioun of kirkis to Johne of Dunbar of Mochrum, being in the king's handis be the deces of Gilbert Makdowell of the Freuch.'
2. Sir John Dunbar of Mochrum, c1445 – 1503, was Chamberlain of Galloway, responsible for all legal matters relating to feudal tenantry. Mochrum is a parish on the east side of Luce Bay. His son, also John, was killed at the Battle of Flodden, 1513. His third son, Gavin, was appointed Archbishop of Glasgow in 1524 and served as tutor to James V.
3. A tutor testamentary (guardian) was appointed for children who were 'pupils' until the age of 14 (boys) and 12 (girls). After that age they were 'minors' until 'majority' was reached at age 21.
4. Other lands mentioned by McKerlie are Urrall, Kilquhockdale, Shennanton, Barneight, Carsbuie, Barfad and Crisberie, all in the parish of Kirkcowan.
5. Register of the Great Seal, James V, Edinburgh 5 Oct 1527, No.500.
6. The lands of Ardenmord, Carsriggan together with Urrall and Kilquhockdale, worth ten pounds of old extent, comprised houses, biggings, yards, orchards, teind mills, woods, fishings, muirs,tc, were later forfeit to John Graham of Claverhouse from 1681 to 1687.
7. McKerlie, P.H. A History of Lands and the Owners in Galloway. Vol 1 pp.640-2.
8. Register of the Great Seal, James IV, Stirling 14 Feb.1499. No. 2521. .
9. McKerlie, P.H. A History of Lands and the Owners in Galloway. Vol. 2. pp. 229, 231, 445.
10. Acts of the Lords of Council. Vol 2. 1496-51.pp 378, 379, 460,467, 468.

The Acts of the Lords of Council

"The Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes 1496 – 1501" refers to a historical record documenting the proceedings of the Scottish Lords of Council in civil law cases during that period. It is a valuable source for understanding the legal and social landscape of Scotland at the turn of the 16th century.

The publication, often referred to as 'Acta Dominorum Concilii', provides insights into the types of cases brought before the Lords of Council, the legal arguments used, and the decisions made. It includes not only the formal acts of the council but also some records from earlier periods, specifically some Acta Auditorum et Dominorum Concilii from 1469-1483.

Link: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.30000047784453&seq=7&q1=Janet+Makdowell>

[Extracts from the original book follow]

M'Dowell.
M'Kee.
Procuratory.

Janet M'Dowell, widow of Gilbert Makdowell of the Fruch, appoints Mr James Henresone her procurator in her action against Allan M'Kee in Kiltokytill for wrongful occupation of a merkland called the " Ryne eddir Dawskland."

Fol. 65a.
M'Dowell.
M'Kee.
Wrongous
occupancy.
Tack.

Action by Janet M'Dowell, widow of Gilbert M'Dowell of the Freuche, and Ochtre M'Dowell of Dargegill, tutor testamentar to Fergus M'Dowell, son and heir of the said Gilbert, against Allan M'Kee in Kiltokytill for wrongful occupation of a merkland called " the Ryneddir and Dawsk," lying in the sheriffdom of Wigton. The said Janet being personally present, and Ouchtire compearing by Mr James Henresone, his procurator, but the defender being absent, the Lords ordain the said Allan to desist from occupying the said merkland, that the said Janet may possess it for the terms yet to run of the tack thereof made to her by Gilbert M'Dowell of the

Freuch, produced; and they assign 3rd July next to her to instruct her losses.

Action by the said Janet M'Dowell, widow foresaid, and the said Ouchtire as executor to the said deceased Gilbert and tutor testamentar to the said Fergus, and to Marion M'Dowell, sister of the said Fergus and daughter of the said Gilbert, against John M'Dowell, called Garioch, and Gilbert M'Dowell of Ernoch, for detaining the sum of 5l. " takin up and intromettit with be the sade Jhone fra thame, thair tennentis and servituris out of thair tak and maling of the landis of Aremoid." Janet being personally present, and Mr James Henresone compearing for Ouchtire, but no others compearing, the Lords ordain the defenders to cease from uplifting the rents of the said lands of Aremoid, that the said Janet and Fergus may enjoy the same conform to an assedation produced; 3rd July next being assigned for proving costs and damage.

Fol. 65b.
M'Dowell.
M'Dowell.
Rents.
Tack.

Fol. 224a.
M'Kee.
M'Dowell of
Freuch.
Reduction of
decree.
See p. 378.

Action by Allan M'Kee in Kirkcotill against Janet Makdowell, widow of Gilbert Makdowell of the Freuch, and Uchtire Makdowell of Derregill, tutor testamentar to Fergus Makdowell, son and heir of the said deceased Gilbert, for reduction of a decreet given by the Lords of Council at Stirling, 6th February 1499, ordaining the said Allan to desist from occupying a merkland called Rynedder Dawsk, lying in the sheriffdom of Wigton, to be possessed by the said Janet for the time of her tack from the said Gilbert. The said Allan and Janet compearing personally, and the said Uchtire by Mr James Henresone, his procurator, the said Allan produced a letter of assedation made by Gilbert M'Dowell of Remystoun to him of the said lands, but Mr James as procurator foresaid alleged the assedation to be " fals civilye in the self because it was contenit in the sade letter that the sele of his armes was thairto affixt before ane part of the witnes, that is to say, Alan More M'Kee, Jhone M'Kee of Glassauch, Gilbert M'Dowell of Kilkadedaile, Gilbert M'Kee in Aibord, and Finlaw M'Incharg, of the daite the ten day of Aprile j^miii^j aucti and aucht yeris, and allegit be him that thai war deceist a lang tyme before the affixing of the sade sele, and als that the sade sele was new affixt with walx as apperit as he allegit." The Lords therefore assign to the said Janet and Uchtire 18th January next to prove the falsity of the said deed.

Fol. 224b.

Action by Janet Makdowell and Owchtre M^cDowell, "as executour til ^{M^cDowell.}
umquhile Gilbert M^cDowell and als tutour testamentar to Fergus ^{M^cDowell.}
M^cDowell, the son and aire of umquhile the sade Gilbert, and als tutor to ^{Spuilzie.}
^{See pp. 379, 459.}

Fol. 244b.

Fol. 245a.

Marione M^cDowell, his dochter and sister to the sade Fergus," against John M^cDowell, called Garroch, and Gilbert M^cDowell of Ernoch (*sic*), for spoliation of eight score bolls of oats at 4 s. the boll, 20 bolls of bere, and other goods. The said Janet compearing personally, and Owchtre compearing by Mr James Henresone, his procurator, John M^cDowell compearing by William Colville of Ravinniscraig, his procurator, "the quhilk Jhone M^cDowell had made thame til be summond til haf hard ane act and decret gevin for thame agane him at Striveling retreit be vertew of ane compromys compromyctit betuex thame, the quhilk Wilyeam as procurator forsaide, renuncit the sammyn and was content til ansuere til the first summondis rasit be thame apone him," the Lords ordain the said John M^cDowell to restore to the said Janet and Owchtre eight score bolls of oats at 2 s., 20 bolls of bere at 6 s., 5 oxen at 20 s. each, "ane brew caldrone, the price x s., j fedder bed with ane bowster and five coddies, the price x s., j bassing with ane laware, the price vj s., viij pottis, the price vj merkis, twa spetis, a rak, with ane fryane pane, the price viij s., five tubbis, the price iiij s., viij barellis, twa pypis, and five brasin chandillaris, the price xxx s., ane gyrdill, the price iiij s., ane metalmary, the price v s., ane cruke, the price ij s., ane paire of double blancatis with ane pare of schetis, the price xiiij s. iiij d., thre silver spewnis, the price xxx s., ane kyst with twa arkis, the price xv s., ane cellat and ane gorget, the price xiiij s. iiij d., a pare of splentis, the price xiiij s. iiij d., ane jak with ane fald of mailye, the price xv s., ane knapskall, the price v s., ane burdeclaith with a canwes of ix eln, the price vj s., the quhilkis gudis war spulyeit and takin be the sade Jhone furth of the landis of Aremord"; and he is also to pay to them 5 l. Scots for the rent and profits "of the Witsonday and Mertymes termes of the sadis landis in the yere of God j^miiij^o nynti and vij yeris," and 5 merks for their expenses of plea. He is also to remove from the lands and allow the same to be possessed by the said Janet and Fergus, her son, conform to assedation produced made by Gilbert M^cDowell of Freuich to them, because her lawful entry to the lands was prior to the date of entry of John M^cDowell's letters of assedation also produced. They also ordain the said Gilbert to warrant and defend the pursuers in their possession.