

# ASGARD: COIMISIÚNÚ AGUS DEARADH

*‘Could you write to me & tell me if you could build a sailing yacht to my order on the lines of a Norwegian pilot-boat, of about 15 or 17 tons registered – very strong & able to keep the sea in bad weather, and at the same time comfortably fitted out below’.*

B’in a scríobh Erskine Childers chuig Colin Archer, an t-aitire cabhlaigh iomráiteach ón Iorua, an 11 Lúnasa 1904. Bhí Archer sna seachtóidí um an dtaca sin agus cáil mhór air i measc lucht báid. Bhí go leor aistear mara déanta ag Childers in uiscí na hIorua agus eolas maith aige ar dhearthaí Archer, go háirithe na báid pháilóla. Éacht ab ea na báid théagartha sin a thuill cáil d’Archer ar fud na hIorua.

Nuair a pósadh Erskine agus Molly Childers i mBostún in Eanáir 1904 thairg an Dr. Hamilton agus Margaret Cushing Osgood, tuismitheoirí Molly, luamh a cheannach mar bhronntanas pósta don lánúin. I mí Dheireadh Fómhair 1904 thaistil Erskine, Molly agus an Dr. Osgood go Larvik i ndeisceart na hIorua, chun an luamh beartaithe a phlé le Colin Archer. Mar gheall ar a thaithí fairsing ar an tseoltóireacht bheadh tuairim chruinn ag Childers faoin gcineál luaimh a bhí uaidh. Léiríonn an comhfhreagras scríofa idir Erskine Childers agus Archer go raibh páirt ghníomhach ag Childers i ndearadh an luaimh agus i roghnú an ghiair agus an trealaimh. Smaoinigh sé ar riachtanais Molly go háirithe: ní raibh an siúl go maith aici i ngeall ar thimpiste a bhí aici agus í ina cailín óg. Bhreac Molly ina dialann ‘E(rskine) and I planned the inner space’.

# ASGARD: COMMISSIONING AND DESIGN

*‘Could you write to me & tell me if you could build a sailing yacht to my order on the lines of a Norwegian pilot-boat, of about 15 or 17 tons registered – very strong & able to keep the sea in bad weather, and at the same time comfortably fitted out below’.*

So wrote Erskine Childers to Colin Archer, the great Norwegian naval architect, on 11th August 1904. Archer was then in his seventies, with an enormously successful career behind him. Childers had cruised in Norwegian waters and would have been fully acquainted with Archer’s designs, and in particular with pilot boats. These stout vessels were Archer’s great achievement, for which he was famous throughout Norway.

When Erskine and Mary (Molly) Childers married in Boston in January 1904, Molly’s parents, Dr. Hamilton and Margaret Cushing Osgood of Boston, offered to pay for a yacht as a wedding present to the couple. In October 1904, Erskine, Molly and Dr. Osgood travelled to Larvik in southern Norway to discuss the proposed yacht with Colin Archer. Given his extensive sailing experience, Childers would have known exactly what he wanted in the vessel. The written correspondence between Erskine Childers and Archer reveals that Childers was actively involved in the design of the yacht and in the selection of gear and equipment. In particular, his thoughts were of Molly’s needs: she had difficulty in walking due to a childhood accident. In her diary, Molly also noted that ‘E(rskine) and I planned the inner space’.

18 Rindarstrand Grog  
Childers  
London  
Feb 1905

Dear Mr Archer  
Thank you  
for your letter of the 9th which  
you was greatly delayed  
by our being abroad & moving  
from place to place. I am  
quite satisfied with the  
form of agreement and the  
specification & am enthusiastic  
with all the details of the offer  
you make & I am very anxious  
to conclude the matter as soon  
as possible for the spring of 1905

18th  
The agreement should be signed  
and paid for & I should have  
also, it is incomplete in one or  
two respects (viz. capacity of boat  
and then one or two details)  
I wish to refer to presently,  
but to avoid any further delay  
we shall have that in all details  
I am satisfied & I herewith  
send you a cheque for £200  
and ask you to make your  
arrangements & start work  
on the hull (which design may  
be considered fixed) as soon as  
you possibly can. Let it be



Thuas: Litir ó Erskine Childers go Colin Archer, ina sonraítear a riachtanais fearais agus trealaimh le haghaidh *Asgard*, 19 Feabhra 1905.

Cartlann Colin Archer, Foreningen Larvik Sjøfartsmuseum, Músaem Larvik/Vestfoldmuseene, an Iorua. Griangraif: Mekonnen Wolday, Vestfoldmuseene, an Iorua.

Thíos: Erskine agus Molly Childers ar dheic *Asgard*. Bord Choláiste na Tríonóide Baile Átha Cliath.

Above: Letter from Erskine Childers to Colin Archer, outlining his requirements for *Asgard's* gear and equipment, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1905.

Colin Archer's archive, Foreningen Larvik Sjøfartsmuseum, Larvik Museum/Vestfoldmuseene, Norway. Photos: Mekonnen Wolday, Vestfoldmuseene, Norway.

Below: Erskine and Molly Childers on the deck of *Asgard*. The Board of Trinity College Dublin.