

# Fafner

*–Winner original gold cup 1937*

*–Competed in 60th Gold cup,75th in San Tropez*

*–Ready for 2021 Gold Cup*

## About the Surveyor

Don Street(streetiolaire@hotmail.com) is not a licenced surveyor, but at age 90 he probably has forgotten more about wooden Dragons and wood construction than most modern surveyors will ever learn. He has, for 35 years, owned, raced, cruised and maintained Gypsy a 1933 Anker and Jensen for 35 years.

He sailed Gypsy from Ireland to Brest and back to Ireland to take part in the 1994 Brest Festival. He raced Gypsy in the Dragon 90th regatta. In the All In race, 165 starters Gypsy finished with 71 boats astern and he has a photo to prove it.

He knows and understands old wooden boats as for 52 years he owned lolaire a 46 foot engineless wooden yawl built 1905. On lolaire he cruised, raced, chartered, chartered and wrote about the Easter Caribbean. He sailed the engineless lolaire seven times across the Atlantic and raced in the Fastnet 75,95 and 05.

## Fafner: A History

Fafner, Johannsen 1935, won the original gold cup in Hanko Sweden. Immediately after the race she was bought by a Scotsman and joined the Clyde Dragon fleet . In the late 1950s she went to Ireland to the Belfast fleet, then on to Dublin and then to Cork. She was brought to Glandore in 1977 where she was raced hard until 1994 when she was stuck in the field and pretty much abandoned. In the beginning of April 1997 Donald Street III henceforth referred to as D3 pulled Fafner out of the field and into his boat repair shop.

## Shipwrights and Owners

D3 had done a 18 month boat building course in International School of boat building, Lowestoft, UK. He had been racing dragons for 13 years. In 1994 he had set up a shop to maintain and repair the wooden dragons of the Glandore Dragon fleet and any other boats that needed repairing

He got to work on Fafner. Since she was Johannsen built she had all full-length pine planking secured to frames with copper rivets. Two planks one port, one starboard, in the bilge are joined by a butt block, properly riveted to the ends of both planks. A joint that will obviously never leak.



A careful check on the boat showed absolutely no rot except in the mast step which D3 replaced. The following is a description of the work D3 did on Fafner.

## Work Carried out by D3

He knocked out the two bolts holding the jib stay fitting, recessed a stainless plate into the stem and re bolted the jib stay fitting with new bronze bolts. On all dragons the floors are secured to the fore keel and horn timber with iron bolts. These D3 knocked out and replaced with silicon bronze carriage bolts.

Frames were checked and being Johannsen built circa 1934, she was completely copper riveted so no broken frames. The frames in the tuck of the bilge were in good shape. In his years of sailing dragons, and three years maintaining and repairing them, he noticed that at the end of the season, on almost all dragons, forward of the mast, the paint was crack along seams.



For this reason D3 reinforced two frames. The first reinforced frame is about 3 feet aft of the stem and another 5 feet aft the stem. He laminated top of the existing frames . The after frame is slightly delaminated. This can be easily repaired by trowling into the gaps thickened epoxy and pulling laminations back together with screws.

D3 installed full bulkheads forward of mast. He installed half bulkheads/hanging knees about 2' aft of the full bulkhead. This enabled him to install a fore and aft stainless pipe to carry the shrouds and diagonals jock straps to the mast step. He also moved the backstay runners from the quarters to on center as per the latest pettigrows.



The runners were tensioned in the latest fashion with block and tackle, coarse and fine tune tensioners, slack pulled in by shock cord.

Sometime in the past the original deck had been removed and replaced with a plywood deck. D3 removed the plywood deck. Any deck beams that were the least bit suspicious were pulled out and replaced. A new plywood deck was installed, screwed and epoxy glued to the deck beams.

**He pulled this all together in time to take part in the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Gold Cup regatta in Dunleary**

## San Tropez Dragon 75<sup>th</sup>

He trailed her to San Tropez for the dragon 75<sup>th</sup>. Fafner was the oldest boat in the regatta. The next oldest boat was an Abeking and Rassmussen 1954, thus 20 years younger than Fafner. Fafner was, crewed by the street family, D3 bow, his father Don age 74 midships, his younger brother Mark helm. An excellent picture is in the magnificent book 75 Years of Dragons by Hect and Halbe on page 342.

In the first race she blew the portside runner immediately after the start. It was blowing fairly hard so we just we heaved hard on the permanent backstay and continued. We replaced the runner before the next race. At the end of the series Fafner was in the top third of finishers in the classic division

D3 spent a lot of effort fine tuning and improving Fafner. He installed a mast ram below deck so it did not disturb the on deck look. He moved the runners to center line a la Pettigrow. The rudder tube was removed and replaced with stainless steel rudder tube. bearings top and bottom. Rudder stock was replaced with a stainless stock with a bearing in the heel of the keel. He attached to heavy stainless plates to two keel bolts. The stainless plates had holes drilled in them for big shackles so that a synthetic lifting strap could be attached to the shackles. Thus Fafner comes up level when she is lifted by a crane.

He was able to prove, racing in the hot Kinsale Dragon fleet, that when he had a good crew on board, in light and moderate weather Fafner was just as fast as the modern Petticrows. In 2010 D3 left Ireland to head to the states where his boat building skills were appreciated. He sold Fafner to Bud O Connel





## Bud O'Connell

Bud took Fafner to Jim Walsh's boat shop. Jim had also trained at the International School of boatbuilding at Lowestoft. Jim did extensive work over a number of years. Jim removed D3's plywood deck. With the deck off Jim went over the boat with a fine tooth comb

Jim carefully checked every frame. He found 3 broken frames. He cut out the wood above and below the break, laminated up, scarfed and glued in a new section of frame. Then he copper riveted the new laminated section to the old frame.

In all Dragons there are six frames, actually 12, six port, six stb, in the bilge that are bent in a tight curve' These give trouble in all dragons. Jim found five that looked suspicious. He removed the section that had the tight tuck. Laminated up and scarfed in a new section, then copper riveted it all together.

The first frame aft of the rudder tube Jim installed a new floor, and first frame aft of the new floor, Jim tied the two frames together with another short frame on top of them. He fastened it to the two frames and also to the horn timber. This stiffened the area aft of the rudder tube.



Jim removed D3 bridge deck and its complicated arrangements where almost everything could be adjusted by lines coming up through holes in the bridge deck. Jim removed the bridge deck and installed the traveler on a beam level with the fore and aft cockpit seats. Jim had the rigger simplify the twigs and jigs.



While the deck was off, the areas painted white were well sanded. Any loose paint removed and repainted. The varnished area was given a really good sanding and a couple of coats of varnish. The keel was removed, all paint removed, keel fared, repainted and reinstalled with new keel bolts. D3's lifting plates were secured to the new keel bolts and shackles for lifting strap installed. Thus Fafner lifts on the crane level.

The original cockpit combings were scraped and beautifully re varnish and new cabin top built.

A new plywood deck was laid, mahogany covering board and king plank installed, beautifully varnished, which constrats it against a beautifully laid bare teak deck.



D3 had done such a good job stripping and painting Fafner that Jim only had to sand then refinishing on the existing good base photo . The new owner does not have to paint the topsides. The bottom needs a good sanding and a coat or coats of anti-fouling bottom paint.

Fafner is ready to go as she is sitting on a good solid well painted trailer. This is the trailer that was used to trail Fafner to and from San Tropez for the Dragon 75<sup>th</sup> Ave.





Fafner has two rigs. The aluminum mast and boom that D3 used when racing in Kinsale. This rig is to be used when racing in Dragon regattas, either normal Dragon regattas or the special Dragon classic regattas.

The second rig, for racing in mixed classic regattas, is a wooden mast and boom built by Jim Walsh to the original Dragon specs. This mast is complete with custom-made stainless fittings.

Des McWilliams, McWilliams/Ulmer/Kolius sails Cork, carefully bent the wooden mast, measured the bend very carefully, then specially designed a main sail to be used with the wooden mast

Fafner is sitting in a good solid well painted trailer that made the round-trip from Glandore Ireland to San Tropez and return.

The fact she has been out of the water for a couple of years is no problem. Back aft few seams are showing but the story of the Belfast fleet should be remembered by all sailors of wooden dragons.

The Belfast fleet was created with 13 Johannesen dragons specifically built for the Belfast fleet and delivered in time for the 1938 season. They raced in 38 and 39. When war arrived, they were stuck in Barns until they were pulled out for the 1946 season. It was said they look like Venetian blinds!! The debate started, caulk all seams? rout out the seams and glue in splines?

But someone had the sense to contact Johannesen. Johannesen said "get old wool blankets, cover the inside of the boats with the wool blankets, keep the blankets wet for two weeks and the boats will swell up perfectly". They did this and boats swelled up perfectly.



My 1933 Anker and Jensen, Gypsy, the oldest Dragon in the world regularly racing, is filled with salt water during the winter almost up to the floorboards.

That section of the boat stays tight. However back aft and up forward above the level of the water the ends of the boat, tends to dry out. Two weeks before launching I spread old bath towels in those areas. I keep the towels wet. When Gypsy is launched there is little or no leaking. What small leaks there are stop within 24 hours. The same could be done to Fafner two weeks before she is to be launched.



## **Fafner is for Sale, and ready to go**

Why renovate/ reconstruct at considerable expense when Fafner is available and ready to go. All she needs is recommissioning, bottom sanded and painted, running rigging reconnected to new owners specification.

Each Dragon owner has different ideas as to how sheet adjustment, and Runner tensioners should be rigged.

She can be recommissioned, as a true classic Dragon, with a wooden rig, or as a modern classic with the aluminum rig.

She is ready to go, on a trailer 20 miles west of Cork City Ireland.

### **Contact Don Street**

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