



NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND

"Dear Ken & Lynn

The following is in answer to your plea for "builder input" to your excellent newsletter.

Hi there fellow Osprey builders. My name is Rex Thompson of Eggletons Road, Bunnythorpe, New Zealand. I wish to start by congratulating Lynn & Ken Zillmer on their initiative in organizing and producing our newsletter, and if the following is of any interest to our readers, I am agreeable to having it committed to print. Since I have no other Osprey builders, within easy reach, to write about, I guess I will have to write about myself. I have been smitten with aeroplane-itis since about the age of 8, when a DeHavilland Gypsy Moth landed in one of our local hayfields to give "quickie" flights to the local farmers -- known as barnstorming in your country. Although my parents could not afford the cost of a flight, I was nevertheless hopelessly afflicted, and the sight of that beautiful gleaming old stringbag in the hayfield, will remain with me forever. This love affair with aviation has survived through the second world war where I flew in many types of aircraft as a radio operator-air gunner, and later on, when "my house was in order" and could afford to learn to fly at our local Aero Club, flying 7EC Champs, Cessna 172's, Cherokee 140's, D.H. Tiger Moths and many others. Overriding all this however was a burning desire to build my own aircraft, and after a lengthy period of "wife conditioning" (any married aircraft homebuilder will remember particularly that very important part of the preparations) I gained rather a reluctant blessing to purchase a set of Jodel D11 plans from Chris Falconar in Canada, followed later by a C85 four hanger Continental from the same firm (Note: This firm has long been extinct.)

That was back in '68 and four years later on the 16th Feb. 1972 an entry in my logbook says simply - Jodel D11 - ZK-CVP self pilot in command. "First test flight, familiarisation and power off stalls". That simple entry in no way could describe the wonderful feeling of pride and achievement. My dream aircraft was bourne.

Leigh, my wife, and I enjoyed many wonderful holidays flying to every corner of our country. The Jodel was a joy to own and fly, and I must say it wiped the smile off the faces of the local pilots who enjoyed poking fun at the "crazy old coot" who was building his own airplane.

And then it happened! I had subscribed to Air Progress for some years and that issue of April 1976 changed by whole life again. There before me was an aircraft that promised to take me to all those remote lakes and waterways, where the scenery is more majestic, the air is cleaner, the water is unpolluted, and the fishing is best, with performance to spare, and capable of hauling enough carefully selected camping gear for a few days stopover. Now this is something the Jodel could not do, so it was, back to the wife conditioning routine again. This time, however, the resistance was very strong and I actually purchased the Osprey plans secretly so as not to rock the boat too much. My little game was soon discovered. One cannot spend as much time in the workshop as I was, milling up miles of spruce and douglas fir without raising suspicion. After all, Leigh had seen it all before and she knew that I wasn't cutting up that be-

autiful wood for tomatoe stakes. Being the understanding wife that she is, she simply accepted the fact that she is married to a nutcase, and is resigned to a second four year period of being a social outcast. We have drawn the line this time, however, on the endless coffee routine for endless sightseers. Only close friends and genuine homebuilders this time.

We are now three years along the way with Osprey 2. It has been a totally solo affair, as was the Jodel. I chose to take the long route, and make nearly everything myself. The items purchased thus far are --- engine cowls, propeller, prop. extension and backplate, rear engine pick up joint fittings, wheels, tyres and tubes, and of course all the AN hardware & bearings, etc.

The engine - an O320 Lycoming from Air Engines in Florida, and I could write a complete book about that. The registration will be ZK-RJT (by request) in the N Z register. Juliet Tango is now standing on her own wheels in the workshop, the bottom and hull, or is it fuselage is ready for foam and fibreglass. Rudder & elevators are ready for fabric. The two main & two secondary outer wing spars are complete, and the outer wing panels will be project for next summer. During the cold weather months which are now upon us, (Editor note: It is winter there now since they are in the Southern Hemisphere) I will mount the engine and connect all the controls cooling baffles, etc. Three years ago I could see my way clear to complete the aircraft for about \$6000 to \$8000, but with inflation running wild, I have now spent in the region of \$11,500, with still some items to obtain. Being so far away from the market place, namely U.S.A., also makes materials both costly and difficult to obtain. To quote an example: The propeller, reasonably priced at \$460 F.O.B. U.S.A. finally cost me \$777.68 landed in my workshop and the fibreglass engine as well more than doubled in price by the time they reached our shores. Furthermore, I am beginning to wonder if I will be able to afford to fly my Osprey when complete, as Avgas here costs .75¢ per litre or \$3.37 per Imperial gallon or about \$22.00 per flying hour for gas alone. To hire a Cherokee 140 from the local flying school costs \$44.00 per hour.

Leigh and I hope to make Oshkosh in 1983, and would hope to meet many of you there. In the meantime we welcome correspondence. My other interests are hunting, shooting and fishing - after all why else would I sell the Jodel and build an Osprey!

Rex J. Thompson
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Bunnythorpe, New Zealand

Editors notes: Note the different spelling of some words common to us - some have been changed to the "Americanized" version for easier understanding for the majority of our readers. Our sincere thanks to Rex for taking the time to write for us - we are very interested in hearing from anyone - anywhere -- don't you drop us a line?

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