



Kevin Osborne's CX4

In 2006, Kevin Osborne retired from his profession as an electrical technician specialising in industrial controls. Kevin lives here in sunny Brisbane after emigrating from Ireland in 1985. Although he has only recently joined the Brisbane Valley Sport Aviation Club, Kevin has been into aviation for a long time. He actually started building his first aircraft, a VW powered Corby Starlet, from plans, in 1987. This project took him ten long years and the aircraft was first flown by Barry Hempel out of Archerfield in June 1997. Kevin owned and flew this sporty little taildragger to places such as Narromine, Gladstone, Old Station,

Bundeberg and most airfields in the South east Qld area, before finally selling it in 2006. Kevin then got the boating urge and built a 16ft Hartley cabin cruiser. As a Hartley man myself, I can confirm that Kevin did a truly magnificent job on this boat. I have never seen such a well finished Hartley (see page 12).



However, by 2008, Kevin had lived through the boating stage in his life and returned to his main passion, constructing and flying aeroplanes. This time he chose to build a Thatcher CX4, one of the most exciting single seat designs to hit the market in recent years. Kevin chose the CX4 because it has a similar configuration to the Corby but with longer dimensions, particular in regard to the yaw moment, which should make it a very controllable, stable aircraft, both on the ground and in flight.

Although powered by a 1915cc, 65hp VW motor, exactly the same type of motor that Kevin had in his Starlet, this plane is expected to cruise at over 100kts. The 1000 hours TBO

engine is fully modified for aviation use with dual ignition (magneto and CDI), and sits in front of a 50 litre fuel tank which, at 15 litres per hour, should give the plane over two and a half hours endurance with normal reserves. The motor will be driving a 56" x 42" Sweetapple propeller. Kevin chose Richard Sweetapple to make his propeller, not just because they are good friends, but because Richard's laminated mountain ash wooden propellers are aerodynamically efficient, lightweight, fatigue stress free and totally reliable.



When I walked into Kevin's home workshop and first laid eyes on the CX4, I thought I was looking at some kind of scaled down World War Two fighter plane. It has those kinds of lines. It is one of the most aesthetically pleasing little aircraft I have ever seen and Kevin has done a meticulous job of putting it together. This plane has been built entirely from plans but with the same care and precision as Kenny Edwards' Courier, an aircraft that featured in our newsletter some time ago. It is in the same class as Steve Donald's Aeropup. How else can I describe it? It is a totally first rate job, absolutely outstanding, and the most amazing thing is that Kevin has relatively few standing machine tools in his workshop; just a band saw, a cut off wheel and a vertical drill press. Every other tool is hand held and operated.

Kevin Osborne's CX4 (continued)



Fitted inside the CX4's streamlined wheel fairings are toe operated hydraulic disc brakes. Both the main and tail undercarriage assemblies are impressively substantial without appearing out of proportion to the airframe. The wings have full span ailerons and there are no flaps (the aircraft's stalling speed is expected to be just under 40 knots). There are two separate luggage lockers behind the pilot's seat, an upper one for smaller items and a very capacious lower one in which a complete camping set would fit. Kevin has yet to do a full weight and balance on the plane, so he is not yet quite sure of how much weight he will be able to carry in these compartments.

The CX4 is stylishly finished in polished metal and canary yellow two pack aviation paint. In the next few weeks, Kevin will be taking his new bird out to Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield on the back of a friend's trailer.



Once there it will be hangared, fully assembled and weighed. Then Kevin's L2, Kevin Haase, will conduct a final inspection before flight testing begins early in the new year.

Kevin chose Watts for safety reasons. It has a cross strip and there are plenty of nearby emergency landing areas. He has not yet decided to do the test flying himself, as he has been out of the cockpit for about 4 years and will need to get currency in another aeroplane first. Whoever is at the controls that day, I hope to be at Watts to watch this splendid little aircraft take to the skies for the first time, and will be reporting those events in a following article. Well done, Kevin Osborne!