

## 95 Years Young!

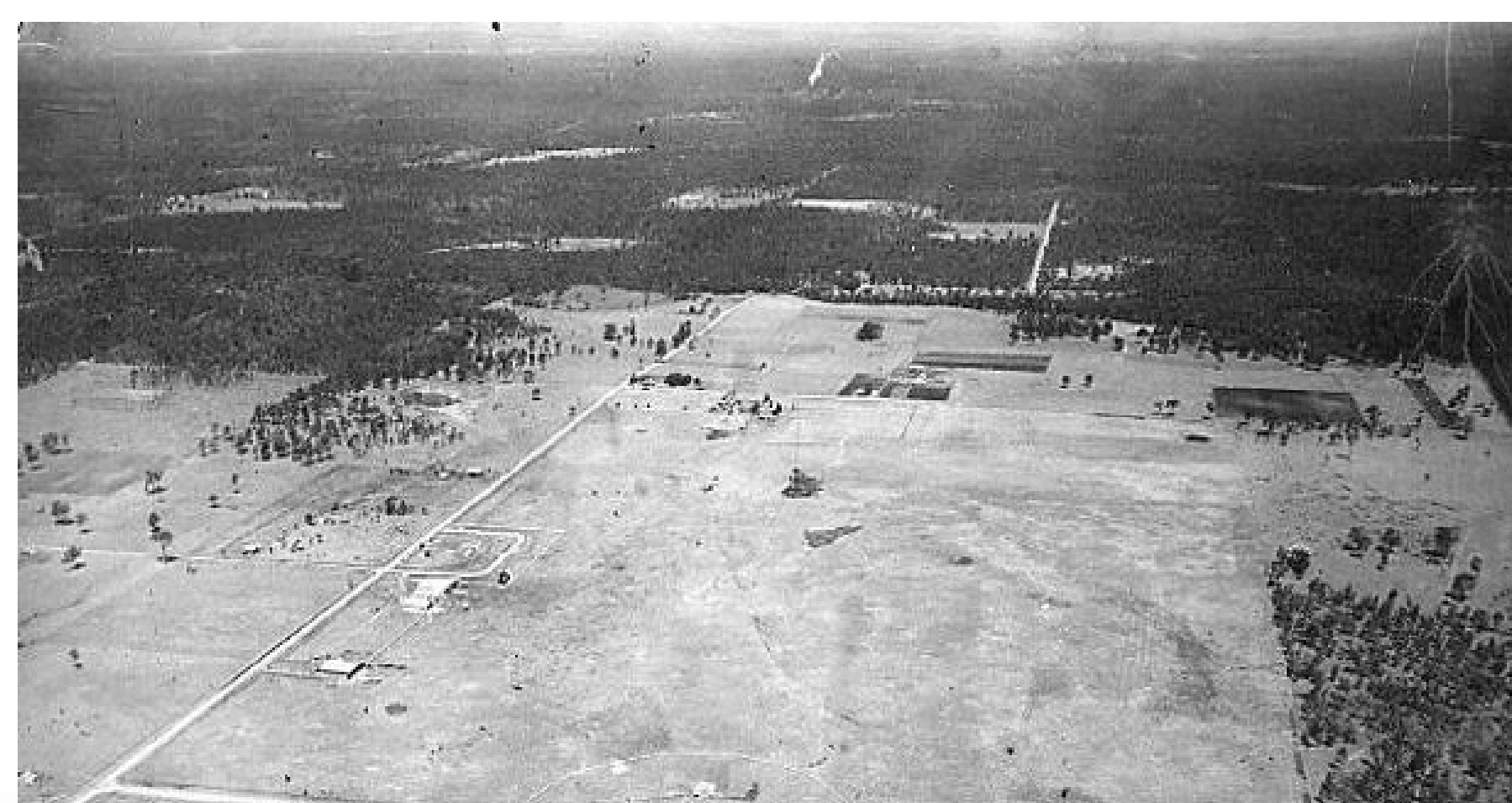
It was a time of innovation and optimism, vision and daring, of confidence in technology and a desire for progress. It was 1 April 1931 and Brisbane had a brand-new airfield: Archerfield Aerodrome.

It wasn't much to look at - 153 acres (62 hectares) of mostly couch grass - but Archerfield's proximity and accessibility, only seven miles from town and serviced by bitumen roads, were major drawcards. The Queensland Government and Qantas had already moved their hangars - at some expense, Qantas executives grumbled - from Eagle Farm that had proven too flood-prone to service an industry that was, literally, taking off.

Plenty of room for aviation to grow at Archerfield Aerodrome in 1931. (Photo: State Library of New South Wales.)

Right from the start, Archerfield's development plans were flexible because no-one knew exactly where civil aviation was going ... except up! As The Brisbane Courier newspaper pointed out: "When really large air liners are used in Queensland, permanent runways may have to be constructed ...." Imagine that!

To celebrate Brisbane's newest public asset, National Aviation Week in April 1931 offered residents a packed program of joy rides, aerobatics, formation flying and a sod-turning for the Queensland Aero Club's new headquarters. School children and Boy Scouts were invited to Archerfield to admire the latest aircraft, while flyovers from Archerfield kept the whole city looking skyward.



## A Life in the Air

John Shuttlewood's lifelong passion for aviation started in an unusual way: as a boy during World War II, he watched American military aircraft come and go from his hometown of Mackay and clambered over the wrecks when their inexperienced pilots misjudged take-offs and landings on the small airfield.

It certainly didn't put John off. He learned to fly in a Victa Airtourer at Archerfield in 1964 when it was an all-over airfield and the Royal Queensland Aero Club, operating from the Terminal Building, was the only training school. His first lesson cost £4 10s and proved to be a good investment.

Since then, John has flown extensively for business and pleasure and has owned five aircraft: two Austers, a Victa Airtourer, a Mooney and a Twin Comanche. As a machinery dealer and tyre importer - his company, Shuttlewood and Larson, employed 160 people at its peak and had branches in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney - flying helped John chase business in regional Queensland and New South Wales. The company operated from premises John built on land adjacent to the airport.

John served on the Board of the RQAC and as its President, and was Queensland Chairman and National President of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) where he advocated for new aircraft and for aerial hospital transfers. He flew to 12 Aboriginal communities around Australia to better understand medical service delivery in isolated areas.

"There are two things I've done properly in my life," John recalls. "One was to marry my wife and the other was joining the Board of the RFDS."

Thanks to his lifelong experience, John knows aviation from recreational, business and emergency services perspectives and he particularly enjoyed the social side of flying with the RQAC. He has witnessed many changes as Archerfield has grown, particularly new aviation infrastructure and the arrival of jet aircraft. He recently watched from the Terminal Building as a couple handed over a dog to a private jet which had flown from Melbourne via Sydney for the very special delivery.

A major highlight was the night flight of a Junkers F13 all-metal, low-wing monoplane, the 'Glorious Queensland', the only aircraft in Australia then fitted with night-flying equipment. There were competitions to guess the height of an aircraft as it released a smoke trail over Town Hall, a photography contest with prizes for aerial and land images that best captured the vitality of this new aerial age, and model aircraft competitions for the kids.

The week culminated in a Queensland Aero Club dance in Qantas's Archerfield hangar featuring Billy Smith's Trocadero Orchestra. Fun for all aviation fans!

Fast-forward 95 years and it's back to the future for Archerfield Airport, poised once again to foster a new revolution in Brisbane transport and liveability by facilitating the introduction of new technologies.

John has passed his passion for aviation onto his grandson and grandson-in-law who both learned to fly at Archerfield.

One of John's last flights was an overnight to Longreach with his grandson in a Cessna 172, during which John provided some old-school problem-solving opportunities: he turned off the plane's navigation aids and changed the destination so his grandson had to map-read and navigate the way John had learned so many years before.

"I was really happy when he managed it," John says.

At almost 94 years of age, John is nearly as old as Archerfield Airport and he visits every Monday with the retired pilots group. He and his wife Gloria recently celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary.



John Shuttlewood took to the skies from Archerfield in 1964 in an Auster, the first of five planes he owned.