

# **WALKER** TALK

Down Under

SERVING LAWN MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS

**28** Walker  
Mower  
enthusiasts  
share their  
stories

**SPECIAL  
ISSUE**



# WALKER TALK

Down Under

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May 2012



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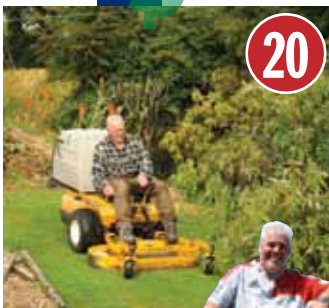


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## Our Friends Down Under



**T**he first Walker Mower made the trip to Australia 28 years ago. Now, more than 10,000 have made the trip "down under" to either Australia or New Zealand. In fact, New Zealand just received the 5,000th machine a few weeks ago, while Australia reached that point in 2011.

It has been a remarkable journey for the Walker Mower to find a home so far away from the factory. And on this journey, we marvel at the wonderful people we have met and the exciting stories that have been told since Walker arrived in your two countries. A few more of these stories will be told in this publication of *Walker Talk Down Under* #3.

Let me make it clear: Australia and New Zealand are important markets for the Walker Mower. To us this is no "excess and surplus" market. It is a main marketplace that puts your markets on par with many of the best markets in North America. In fact, 9.2% of all Walker Mowers built to date are in Australasia. Yet, the importance of the "down under" market is much more than numbers sold, for there have been many other benefits that have come from our work with this market.

An obvious benefit for a manufacturing operation is the opposite season. Since we operate our factory year-round, it helps level out our manufacturing to produce machines for your summer while we are in our winter. A factory that operates on a steady basis is more efficient, and factory workers with a full-time job produce a higher-quality product, so the opposite season is a big help.

Our product design has benefited from being used in the "down under" market. We have learned a lot about mowing and grass conditions as the machine has been used in your mowing conditions. As a result, our overall design for use around the world has been improved, and customers in other places have benefited from our wide exposure. Many times people tend to think, and they tell us, they have the toughest mowing conditions in the world. But there is no doubt that mowing in Australia/New Zealand does put extra stress and strain on some parts of the machine with your preference for mowing at low cutting heights and with some tough strains of grass.

We have learned a lot about marketing our product worldwide after looking at the approach used by our three importer/distributors for Australasia. The Australia/New Zealand distributors have been innovative and energetic in their approach to your market and have not waited for a North American factory to define or create marketing programs. We give our distributors credit for being among the best anywhere in the world. The success they have achieved speaks for itself.

Finally, the best part of the "down under" experience for Walker is the people we have met—distributors, dealers, customers. We enjoy working with you. We find your optimism, self-reliance and can-do attitude are in the mold of the pioneering folks that settled your countries years ago. It is a joy to know you and to be friends with you—our friends "down under". **WT**

*Bob Walker*

Bob Walker, President

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# Homeowner Appreciates Quality

Peter switches to his Multi-Deck for close-in mowing.



"I run all Kenworth trucks because of their reliability and quality," says Peter Hanlon.

**S**hortly after constructing a new home in Junee, NSW, 14 years ago, Peter Hanlon purchased a Walker Mower. "I noticed that the council and several area contractors carried Walker Mowers on their trailers. If these machines were good enough for them, they certainly could do the job mowing around my six-acre property."

The owner of a grain elevator business in town says he made the right decision. "My Walker Mower has the same reliability and quality as the Kenworth trucks I run. When equipped with a large 52-inch mulching deck, the mower does a great job with the out lots, too. Then I switch over to the new Stevens Multi-Deck that is perfect for mowing close-in around the house, swimming pool and patio area."

As much as he likes his 26-hp GHS Walker Mower, Peter says he doesn't often get a chance to operate it. His 82-year-old-father, Leo, does most of the mowing. Like his son, Leo also appreciates quality and the appearance of a well-manicured lawn. **WT**





# Licorice, Anyone?

**S**ince 2001, Neal Druce has been shipping licorice and other candy around the world from his factory in Junee, NSW. When it came time to find a mower to maintain his two-acre property, he looked for a machine that would be maneuverable enough to mow around his outdoor café and seating area, and also provide a look that would be conducive to factory visitors.

"A guy in town had the reputation of owning the best gear," Neal relates. "I simply asked him what mower I should buy and he said, 'The Walker Mower is the best.' I believed him and we've been using one ever since."

Neal adds, "We are the only organic licorice factory in Australia and feel we make the best licorice money can buy. Since we make quality candy, why not own and operate a quality mower, as well?" **WT**

For Neal Druce, quality is quality when it comes to both his candy and his mower.





# Developer Puts Premium on Service

Developer Rod Spooner (right) with gardeners Liam Cooke (far left) and Darren Piper. Caribbean Gardens was one of the first Walker Mower users in Victoria.

**W**hen Caribbean Gardens' developer, Rod Spooner, was asked about his formula for success, he mentioned the word "service." "When any of my 40 or so tenants here has an issue, it gets resolved that day," he emphasizes. "No matter what business you're in, providing excellent service is the key to success."

Part of the service his development provides for clients is having a nicely manicured lawn. Rod's grounds crews see to that with their contingent of half a dozen mowers, including three diesel Walker Mowers equipped with 56-inch,

side-discharge decks.

"We use the Walker Mowers specifically for fine-cut mowing," says Rod, who purchased his first one after seeing it perform at a local field day. In fact, he was one of the first Walker Mower users in Victoria and has been a dedicated user ever since, both at Caribbean Gardens and at his home.

Gardeners Liam Cooke and Darren Piper do most of the mowing at Caribbean Gardens. Says Darren, "I've been here 11 years and especially like the upfront design for trimming around trees and walkways, and their zero-turn maneuverability." Liam agrees, although he admits

to putting far fewer hours on the mowers. "From my perspective, it's the mower's cut that adds to its value." As Rod would say, it's all part of the service package. He adds, "Any mower is only as good as the backup service from the dealers, and ours has been excellent."

All told, the Caribbean Gardens Industrial Park, located in Scoresby, Victoria, covers 510 acres, 200 acres of which are turf. **WT**



# ‘Money Makes Money’

**J**ason Dillon, owner of Dillon Landscaping and Maintenance in Canberra, had the right approach when he started his business 12 years ago. “I wanted to just get into the market and step my way up,” he recalls. “So I started out rather cautiously, getting a few properties and doing the best job I could.”

Twelve years later, he maintains approximately 240 properties, including four area hotels, estates of all

Jason calls his new Super B an “amazing machine,” one that cuts at least 30 percent off his mowing time.



sizes, parks, as well as some domestic lawns. Jason does all this work with five employees and three Walker Mowers: a model MC that can be equipped with a 42-inch GHS or side-discharge deck, a model MB with a 48-inch side-discharge deck, and a Super B with a 60-inch side-discharge deck.

*Walker Talk* caught up with Jason and his crew on the 40-acre Rydges resort just outside of Canberra. “We need a mower that has the versatility to maintain big and small properties alike,” says Jason. “This is a good example of a property that requires a mower that is maneuverable enough to get close-in around the hotel and yet have the ability to mow large, expansive areas.”

The owner employs all three mowers at the resort, including his recently purchased, diesel-powered Super B. “This is an amazing machine,” says Jason. “It’s very fast, and with the wide deck allows me to cut at least 30 percent off my mowing time, something that is very important in this highly competitive market.

“Since the controls on my three mowers here are all the same, my employees can jump on any one of them and feel comfortable,” Jason adds. This owner is not like some who maintain a hands-off approach when it comes to mowing. No, he spends at least three to four hours every day on a Walker Mower. “I enjoy mowing and it gives me time to plan out my week,” he admits. “In fact, sometimes I do my best thinking while mowing away.”

Jason has plenty to keep his mind occupied. He not only provides top-notch mowing, but provides a variety of other services, including installing landscapes and doing some construction, the last of which accounts for roughly 20 percent of his annual revenue.

“It’s very competitive out there,” he adds, “and I believe part of being successful today requires having the ability and versatility to provide nearly any service a customer wants. Everyone on my crew has Horticulture training and it is something that is reflected in the quality of work we do. After all, you’re only as good as your last job.



**Jason Dillon not only enjoys operating a Walker Mower, but makes use of his time on the machine planning out the week.**

“It’s also very important to develop a partnership relationship with customers. If we can help them save money, we’ve actually made them money. With its quality of cut and versatility, the Walker Mowers are helping us do just that.”

Jason notes that when he first started in business, a friend told him that money makes money, so don’t be afraid to spend

it in the right areas. He points to his new Super B. “You know, that mower is pretty expensive, yet it will pay for itself in less than a year, and I will get several more years of work out of it.” In one way, the machine is making money for his customers and in another it’s definitely making money for its owner. **WT**



# It's About Wine and Roses at Domaine Chandon



**W**hen 200,000 tourists visit your property annually, keeping the grounds in pristine shape is paramount. That's the challenge for Domaine Chandon, one of the biggest vineyards in Yara Valley, not to mention its longtime contractor, Programmed Maintenance.

Team leader, Nathan Peterson, has more than surmounted this challenge. He mows the high-profile lawns twice weekly and the rest of the expansive acreage once a week. When not mowing, Nathan, along with gardening apprentice, Mick Benham, tend to more than 600 roses and several attention-getting flower beds, including the vineyard's signature Star Garden.

"We put 30 to 35 hours a week on our

Walker Mowers," says Nathan, who has worked for Programmed Maintenance for 14 years, with most of them spent right at the vineyard in Coldstream, Victoria. "During that time, I've probably put more than 6,000 hours on them myself."

Nathan and Mick operate two model MDs equipped with a 48-inch GHS deck and a 62-inch side-discharge deck. "The vineyard is a tourist attraction," Nathan emphasizes, "and we take personal pride in making sure it looks in top shape every day all year long." He notes that the GHS deck not only keeps the lawns manicured, but also logs plenty of hours in the autumn picking up leaves dropped from the dozens of maple trees that line the property.

"Once I saw the cut, I knew this was

**"Once I saw the cut, I knew this was the mower for this property ... Our client feels the same way."**

the mower for this property," Nathan adds. "Our client feels the same way."

Before *Walker Talk* left the property, Nathan remembered how close the vineyard came to burning down exactly two years ago. "The Black Saturday fire ripped through the Yara Valley claiming more than 150 lives," he recalls. "It was so hot and fast that people literally perished from the radiant heat. The fire came close and actually started several spot fires, but





**In addition to mowing the Chandon grounds twice weekly, Mick Benham (left) and Nathan Peterson tend to more than 600 roses and several attention-getting flower beds, including the vineyard's signature Star Garden in the background.**

the wind changed direction just before it reached the vineyards."

Nathan pointed to several areas with charred trees. "You really cannot see much of the damage caused by the fire," he adds. "After years of drought, we've had so much rain this year that the landscape has responded." The wine, roses and manicured turf are proof of that.

The Programmed Maintenance grounds division has a presence in every state. In Victoria alone, the division employs more than 100 people and the services of a dozen Walker Mowers. **WT**

**Nathan Peterson mows the high-profile lawns twice weekly and the rest of the expansive acreage once a week.**







# Easy in Retirement



A Walker Mower cut Bud Anderson's mowing time nearly in half.

**L**ong Island Retirement Village, located in Seaford, Victoria, features 140 units on 12 acres. "Before we purchased a Walker Mower, it took me four days to mow the property," relates veteran maintenance manager, Bud Anderson. "Now it takes me two and a half days. It was obvious we needed something to make it easier and faster to mow than the old mower that required five-point turns to get around all the landscaping here."

In 2003, one year after he was hired, Bud convinced management to buy a Walker Mower. He laughs, now. "That mower was so maneuverable it almost made me sick to operate it." Not anymore, he says, noting that he truly enjoys operating the 20-hp Walker Mower, equipped with a 48-inch GHS Euro deck. It also saves him time to perform a myriad of other duties required of a facility main-

tenance manager, including edging three kilometers of walks and drives.

"I was a carpenter in my previous life and enjoy doing odd jobs around here," says Bud. "I also enjoy the tenants; many I know by name if not by unit number." That includes his mom and dad who live

at the village. "You probably get to see them every day?" asked the *Walker Talk* editor. "Not a chance," says Bud. "I'm a little too busy for that." **WT**



Lots of landscaping and narrow corridors required a mower that is maneuverable.



# Surfing and Mowing at Bondi Beach



**O**n any given day, Bondi Beach will accommodate 40,000 visitors. “You can look on the beach and literally not see the sand for the people,” says Glen Carter, parks operations supervisor. Surfers, sun bathers and even the curiosity seekers mob the beach seven days a week, along with three other beaches that dot the Waverly shore just outside of Sydney.

“We have four main beach parks to maintain, including nearby Bronte Beach,” Glen explains. “At each one, we have to mow the lawn, pick up the trash, and keep the gardens looking fresh amidst the foot traffic.”

That’s one reason the Waverly Council decided to go with Walker Mowers two years ago, he adds. “They are very small and compact machines, much less obtrusive than the other mowers we used. They also pick up the grass and debris better than their predecessors and leave a better cut.” A high-lift dump may be in the Council’s future to help minimize handling debris.

Being recently promoted to parks operations supervisor, Glen says one of his immediate charges is to take the parks to the next level. “The Walker Mowers will help,” he emphasizes.

Eleven-year park veteran Steve Gilchrist agrees. “I like the mowers,” says the team leader, who notes that the park operates a 26-hp GHS with a 52-inch deck and a model MB with a 42-inch side-discharge deck. “We probably put roughly 20 to 25 hours on them a week. The GHS deck not only does a good job mowing, it also picks up bottle caps, cigarettes and other debris.”

Gilchrist explains that a typical day begins around 6 a.m. with cleaning up the playground areas, public toilets and emptying trash containers. Mowing and gardening starts at 9 a.m. and concludes around 3 in the afternoon. “This is a great place to have your office,” he adds with a smile. “Still, by the time I get home, I’m pretty much beached out.” **WT**

Glen Carter, parks operations supervisor







# Family Values

**Lush Property Maintenance owner Tim Andrew wants to eventually add another crew.**

**T**here are many reasons to own a Walker Mower, according to Tim Andrew, the owner of Lush Property Maintenance in Toowoomba. Not the least of which, he says, is allowing his wife to be a stay-at-home mom with their three children.

“To grow and be profitable enough to support my family, I needed a machine that could efficiently collect grass and make my customers’ lawns look nice,”

Tim says. “The Walker Mower has given me that opportunity.”

A former canvas worker, Tim started mowing lawns on weekends for pocket money, then went full time five years ago. Now he maintains roughly 50 properties, including many large domestic as well as commercial sites, with one Walker Mower and three casual laborers.

Watching Tim mow, there’s no wonder he can do so much with just one

mower. He nearly flies over the turf with his EFI Walker Mower, leaving behind a smooth, well-manicured turf. “I can go fast because I change my blades at least every day and the ones I put on are razor sharp,” he emphasizes. “The EFI is efficient, too, saving me at least \$100 a week on fuel costs. It all adds up.”

Tim notes that what doesn’t add up for some operators is the cost of a Walker Mower. “You have to get over that,” he





says. "First of all, there's not a better mower on the market. Then, it cut my mowing time by one-third, allowing me to more than make up any cost differential within a year." He doesn't back off on his mower's operation during the slow-growing months, either. A chipper attachment allows his Walker Mower to do double duty, helping with the installation of new gardens.

"My goal is to keep growing and get another crew," says Tim. "The potential is there. My best advertising is my ute and the good word-of-mouth I receive from my work." He says his Walker Mower does a fair amount of selling jobs on its own. "Last year, my Walker Mower was in for maintenance and I had to use a push mower on a property. The customer told me not to come back until I could bring my Walker Mower."

That Tim could do, and he did. "The big challenge for me and other contractors is finding the help to get the job done," Tim adds.

In the meantime, he has the satisfac-

tion of knowing that while he's riding his Walker Mower, his wife is home taking care of their children. There's more to growth than money; there's time, too, family time. **WT**

**Tim says his EFI Walker Mower substantially reduced fuel costs and cut his mowing time by one-third.**







# Former Chef Cooks Up Recipe for Business Success

Jim's Mowing franchisee Michael Maguire says job costing and asking "why" are two key ingredients to his success.

**B**efore Michael Maguire purchased a Jim's Mowing franchise in 2000, he worked as an executive chef. "I enjoyed what I was doing, but the hours were difficult," he relates. "There are several gardeners in my family and I enjoy being outdoors; I thought mowing lawns would be a good career move."

Not taking anything for granted, the former chef did his research and chose to buy a Jim's Mowing franchise and its attendant 100 customers. Twelve years later, he operates not one, but three trucks, has a staff of six, and provides a variety of services for his commercial and residential customers.

"I'm a bit unusual," Michael admits. "Many people who buy franchises are satisfied staying small. I not only wanted to grow, but also wanted to diversify into landscape installation and other maintenance services to keep my staff employed and cash flowing."

He credits much of his early success to Jim's Mowing franchisors in Sydney, Peter and Chris Hansen, for their timely advice. Michael says his experience in the kitchen didn't go to waste on his lawns either.

"When you work in a busy kitchen, how you spend your time is important and you're always looking for better and more efficient ways to get things done. That's one of the reasons I purchased a Walker Mower only six months into my new career. I saw that councils were using them, and after seeing them operate at a field day, I purchased a 16-hp model."

Michael still has that original mower, but has since upgraded to a 28-hp Commemorative model, one of 320 built by Walker Manufacturing. The mower features a 42-inch combo deck that can side discharge and mulch. His smallest

crew can mow an average of 14 lawns a day, and Michael saves the Walker Mower for mowing larger properties like any of the 10 schools he maintains.

"Two of the biggest challenges I see in the industry today is that so many contractors either don't know how to cost, or don't have the right equipment for the job," he emphasizes. "Experience is a great teacher. Mowing contractors should also challenge themselves by asking why. Why didn't I get that job I wanted, or why did I get 10 out of 10 properties I bid on?"

As Michael points out, getting everything you bid on likely means your pricing is too low. Conversely, failing to get that plum property might have something to do with not being competitive or not having the right equipment for the application.

**WT**





**Shelby's team**  
(standing left to right):  
David Hughes, Robert O'Connell,  
Shelby and Kylie. Seated are future  
Walker Mower users Calsey, age 9,  
and Mackenzie, age 4.

# 'Shelby Can Do That'

**N**othing is impossible with a little common sense and gravity," says Shelby Robinson, owner of Shelby's Mowing & Landscaping in Brisbane. That's likely the attitude that earned him a "can do" reputation. "We'll do virtually anything a customer wants us to do," he explains. "If it's beyond our expertise, we will out-source the job to a contractor we know and trust."

Shelby started maintaining lawns 16 years ago while working for an area super-market chain. For eight of those years, he juggled both jobs, often push mowing two lawns during lunch hour, seven after work, and finishing up his rounds on weekends. "It felt like he was working 120 hours a week," says his office manager and wife, Kylie. "His schedule didn't leave much time for anything else, but then again he's always on the go."

Indeed, Shelby is still full speed ahead.

Many of his 250 customers receive more than his mowing service. "Average customers may spend about \$1,200 a year with us for mowing and maintaining their lawns," he tells. "By providing an extra service here or there, we can raise that figure to \$2,000."

"Mowing is our bread 'n butter and gives us a healthy cash flow, yet the extra work we get from current customers can be even more profitable," Shelby continues. "We figure that almost 75 percent of our revenue is generated from landscape installation jobs, many of those from existing mowing customers."

Shelby purchased his first Walker Mower six years ago and now operates five, including three with GHS decks and two with combo decks. The latter do most of the work today since Shelby says he mulches nearly 98 percent of his properties.

"I used to have six employees, but

now operate with only four thanks to our Walker Mowers," he adds. "In fact, I went from having six employees and mowing 150 lawns to having four employees and mowing 250 lawns. The mowers not only reduced labor costs and increased productivity, but also allowed me to provide other services and be more selective about the properties I maintain."

Shelby's minimum charge for mowing a yard is \$60. As he explains, one of the biggest challenges the market faces today is contractors who don't understand their cost of doing business, e.g., how much their overhead is, what their break-even point is, and how much money they will have to bring in one day to buy a new mower, truck and trailer.

Being successful is all about common sense, he reiterates, and understanding the natural laws that are inherent in running any business. **WT**





Terry's 31-hp mower with a 48-inch Euro deck makes quick work of his acre of lawn.

# 'Some People Go Fishing; I Go Mowing'

**W**hen citrus grower Terry McMahon discovered how maneuverable the Walker Mower was on his farm, he had to have one of his own at home. "I purchased my first Walker Mower probably 18 years ago," he recalls. "Now I'm on my fourth one right here at our home in Brisbane." His latest one is a 31-hp model with a 48-inch Euro deck.

"We have about an acre of lawn to mow once a week," says Terry. "It does a great job of mowing, and like the one on the farm, its maneuverability comes in handy here." This homeowner thinks so much of his mower that when he built a new home overlooking Brisbane three years ago, he also specified a special garage for his Walker Mower.

"Some people go fishing; I go mowing," he adds with a smile. And like those hobby enthusiasts, he takes care of the tools that give him pleasure. **WT**

Terry McMahon has owned a Walker Mower for 18 years.





With more than 1,800 unique plant species and 45,000 annuals and perennials, Roma Street Parkland is a gardener's paradise and a challenge to mow and maintain.

# From Rail Yard to Garden Oasis

**E**leven years ago, Roma Street Parkland was the site of an abandoned rail yard. Today, the garden oasis, located in the heart of Brisbane's central business district, features 1,800 unique plant species, more than 45,000 annuals and perennials, and the largest subtropical garden in the Southern Hemisphere.

Maintaining the gardens is the responsibility of horticulturist coordinator, Tim Collins, and his staff of 16 gardeners, three apprentice gardeners, and 100 or more volunteers who donate their time and energy. A former greenskeeper, Tim enjoys the variety of flora and fauna offered by the site, along with the challenges associ-

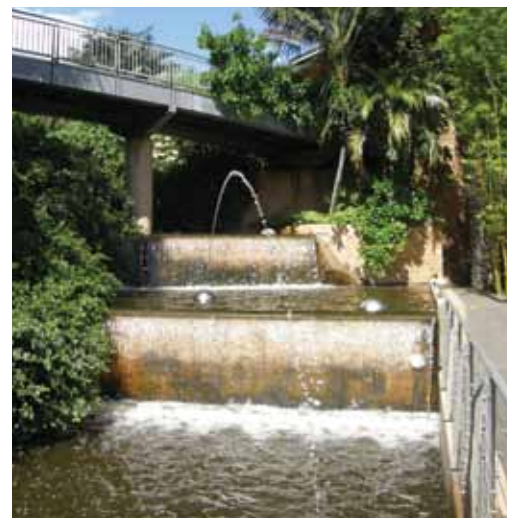
ated with keeping it bright and beautiful for visitors and area residents.

All the turf areas are irrigated and are mowed by two Walker Mowers the Parkland purchased in 2009, both 31-hp petrols equipped with 42-inch GHS decks and high-lift dumps. "We mow every week and compost the clippings to be used later as mulch in the gardens," Tim explains. "The GHS collection decks do a great job of picking up clippings, even in wet conditions." Having the high-lift dump, he adds, saves time by allowing operators to dump clippings directly into a trailer rather than making a run back to the compost pile.

Roma Street Parkland encompasses 18 hectares of turf and elegant display gardens. It hosts at least two major festivals a year, provides a beautiful playground for children, and is a pleasant place to relax for anyone looking for a momentary escape from the city life. Garden tours are

available, or visitors can simply explore the beautiful grounds on their own.

"Visitors often remark how nice the gardens look," Tim reports. "Some of those compliments have to be shared by our Walker Mowers." **WT**



**Roma Street Parkland is a pleasant place to relax for anyone looking for a momentary escape from the city life.**



**Tim Collins (standing) with Reg West, horticulturist and mower operator.**





**Keith and Allison Herbertson purchased their Walker Mower Model B six months ago.**

# Having a Wild Time in Toowoomba

**A**fter operating a push mower for 35 years, you don't just jump at the first riding mower you see." These comments come from Keith Herbertson, who with wife, Allison, lives on 130 acres in Toowoomba, Queensland.

The beautiful expanse includes an incredible view of the valley, two pet bulls (one a purebred Brahma), daily flyovers by wedge-tail eagles, and a yearly visit by Mrs. Cedrick, a 9.5-foot carpet snake. "The birds let us know when she's coming," says Allison, referring to the friendly reptile. Keith and I then meet her down below and walk her to her winter haven in our shed."

The exercise may sound a little far-fetched, but it's far from unusual for these homeowners who moved here almost four

decades ago to live a quiet and peaceful life. "We go to town every Tuesday morning," Allison says proudly. "The rest of the time, we enjoy our land and our animals."

Six months ago, the couple purchased an 18-hp Model B Walker Mower to help tame the "wild". Having gone through two shoulder operations, Keith needed a mower that is easy to operate. "It's more than easy, it's magic," says the retired tractor mechanic and cattle farmer. "I steer with my fingers, not my arms like I would with a typical lever-steer mower. I could never use one of them here. Surprisingly, the mower not only keeps our yard looking great, but it seems to work as good as our tractor with a slasher on tough areas, and there are plenty of them here."

It wasn't the ease of operation and quality of cut that originally piqued

Keith's curiosity. No, it was the mower's low center of gravity that allowed it to tackle their property's hilly terrain. Keith points to a steep incline that drops off near the house. "When Brad (he's referring to Walker Mower distributor salesman Bradley Cooper from Alphaline in Brisbane) demonstrated the machine, he easily mowed the hill. I knew immediately it was the mower for us."

"Not us," Allison quickly adds. "Keith won't let me near his Walker, but I don't really care; my love is my garden." They both quickly admit, however, that there's a definite synergy between a nicely maintained lawn and colorful flowers—whether it's in their tranquil setting or closer to the center of town in Australia's garden city. **WT**





# Saving Time at Brownesholme



**B**rownesholme is a 61-unit independent living community in Highfields, north of Toowoomba. Owned and operated by Queensland Baptist Care, the facility accommodates more than 80 residents who are 65 years old or older. “The garden and grounds are important for our residents,” says Reverend Phil West. “We keep the turf area looking nice and put space around every unit so residents can have their own gardens.”

Phil, who has managed the property since its establishment 16 years ago, mows roughly 15 acres every week with a 26-hp EFI Walker Mower equipped with a 42-inch multi-deck. “This is our

second Walker,” says Phil. “It has the large hopper so we make fewer trips to dump the clippings and a smaller deck to allow us to get in and around the units. Because of the time the Walker Mower saves us, we now install landscaping to accommodate its use.”

He explains further: “This machine has cut our mowing time by three quarters. We only use a push mower on six or seven units, and our edging, blower and trimming time has been substantially reduced.” Phil points to gardeners Andrew Singh and Elliott Welch and adds jokingly, “This gives them more time to maintain the gardens and buildings, even finish some painting jobs, while I sit back and enjoy the Walker.”

Phil emphasizes that his two-year-old Walker Mower does more than save time. “Its reliability is second to none and

there’s the definite lack of fatigue that comes with operating it. I can mow all day without feeling tired, and that often includes removing at least 10 catchers full of grass clippings.” He also uses the same deck to side discharge outlying areas.

The retirement community sits in the center of 120 acres owned by the church, allowing for plenty of room for expansion. Currently, a few head of cattle inhabit the outer acreage and actually run to meet Phil as he dumps a full hopper in the pasture. “We don’t fertilize and use only a bare minimum of chemicals on the property and then only around the gardens,” he emphasizes. “The grass makes great feed for the cattle.”

Since the retirement village will eventually expand to include higher-care facilities for the elderly, the cattle likely won’t be there 10 years from now. If Phil has his way, the same can’t be said for the Walker Mower. **WT**

**Phil West (seated) with gardeners Elliott Welch (left) and Andrew Singh.**







# Neighborly Advice



**W**hen Richard Pierson wanted a new mower, he asked his Christchurch neighbor across the street for some sage advice. Willis (Bill) Gates delivered: “Buy a Walker,” he told the retired butcher. You won’t be disappointed. Sixteen years later, he’s not. In fact, Richard still operates that first 20-hp mower with a GHS deck to manicure his 1.5-acre lot. “It catches the grass beautifully,” he recounts, “and it’s very easy to operate.”

Willis, now 88, couldn’t agree more. His Walker Mower is 21 years old. “It’s been an answer to our prayers and a good friend,” says Willis, long retired from his contract farming days. “My wife and I have been in this house for more than 40 years, and for half that time I mowed the grass with a push mower.” He still spends about two hours a week mowing, but riding instead of walking.

Being around equipment his entire life, Willis appreciates the quality built into his mower. “There’s not a better

mower on the market,” he exclaims. In terms of pure age, there may not be many Walker Mowers older than his that are still in active duty, either. Willis looks at his mower, and laughs. “You know, I don’t know who’s going to make it to the museum first, me or my mower.” **WT**

**88-year-old Bill Gates still operates the first Walker Mower he purchased 21 years ago.**

**When looking for a new mower, Christchurch homeowner Richard Pierson (left) asked neighbor Bill Gates for advice.**





# Keeping a High Profile in Amberley



Chris Chambers has been using Walker Mowers for 15 years.

**D**elta contract supervisor Chris Chambers observes a Walker Mower buzzing around a memorial for Captain Charles Upham, a World War II veteran and two-time winner of the Victoria Cross. “We have somewhere between 10 and 12 Walker Mowers in our Green Space Services department,” says Chris, who has been in the industry for 24 years. “The Walker Mowers are ideal for maintaining our high-profile areas like the one here in Amberley. But we also use them to scarify the turf and even pick up grass around abandoned properties in the red zone.”

Chris is referring to the area cordoned off after the 2010 earthquake. The devastation has kept Delta, a full-service contracting company that specializes in drainage, construction, electrical work and lawn maintenance, very busy over the last 1.5 years.

Delta employs roughly 700 people, and many of them are pitching in to help restore Christchurch. Headquartered in Rangiora, the company has several locations throughout the South Island. In addition to taking care of council properties, the company’s Green Spaces Services specializes in other endeavors, including installing and maintaining sports turf.

“We’ve been using Walker Mowers for more than 15 years,” adds Chris. “It’s a proven machine, one we can count on for getting the job done.” **WT**





# Understanding Value

**“Despite how careful other operators are, no one cares for your mower like you do,” says Ron, noting that’s when the words “robust” and “reliable” become very important.**

**“Y**ou get what you pay for,” exclaims Christchurch homeowner Ron McFadyen. As an owner of an auto parts supply business and avid pigeon racer, he has an eye for quality. “I own a Walker Mower because I’ve tried every other mower on the market,” he explains. “We have four acres of turf to mow here and we put the machine through its paces. I’m not the only one operating it, either, and despite how careful other operators are, no one cares for your equipment like you do.”

Ron purchased a Walker Mower 15 years ago and later upgraded from that first 20-hp model to his current 31-hp unit, equipped with a 52-inch GHS deck. “They’re a very good machine and I get great service from my Walker Mower

dealer in Christchurch, OMC,” says Ron. “I’ve recommended it to my friends and neighbors over the years, too.” Adamant about his feelings, he uses two words to describe his mower: reliable and robust.

These are the same two words he sometimes relies on to describe his racing pigeons, those that speed home from distances as far away as Auckland on race day. Ron is both pigeon breeder and pigeon racer, a sport he’s been involved with for many decades.

“They may all look the same,” he says of his birds, “but they’re not the same and it’s how they perform on race day that counts.” The same can be said about mowers. They all cut grass, but it’s how they truly perform on mow day that counts. **WT**

**Homeowner Ron McFadyen says he owns a Walker Mower because he’s tried every other mower on the market.**







# Two Homeowners, Two 13-hp Walker Mowers

**"The Walker Mower sold itself," says Bruce Mayhew.**

**Homeowner and jet ski dealer Mike Phillips says this about his Walker Mower: "If you've got the money, why not put it to good use and buy one?"**

**C**hristchurch homeowners Mike Phillips and Bruce Mayhew don't know each other, but they share something in common: a 13-hp Walker Model S with a 42-inch GHS deck.

"I purchased mine 10 years ago," says Mike. "This mower has more than answered the call to duty. In addition to mowing two acres of grass, I've even used it to grade the gravel drive. I place a board on the front of the mower and drive it down the driveway."

That's an unusual application, Mike admits, but demonstrates how versatile and well-built the mower is. The jet ski dealer says he decided to try out a Walker Mower after seeing so many on council trailers. "The engineering is great," says Mike. "If you've got the money, why not put it to use and buy one?"

Bruce Mayhew would not disagree with this logic. He purchased his first Walker Mower three years ago. "I tried out a lot of different mowers, but the Walker sold itself," says Bruce. "I knew it was going

to get the job done on my property."

This homeowner doesn't want to spend a lot of time on the mower since he's busy with his many business ventures, including developing and marketing a new brand of dog food. Bruce is also a breeder of champion German Shepherds, something he's been doing for more than 40 years.

The tagline for his dog food is, "Feed your dog's inner wolf." In his mind, Bruce is giving his lawn what it craves naturally, as well. **WT**





# ‘It’s Marvelous’

Being successful is all about being professional, says Allan Mitchell.

**A**fter working 28 years as an export meat inspector, Allan Mitchell developed a form of repetitive-motion syndrome. “I couldn’t even lift my arm to drink a glass of water,” he explains. “I had to find another way to make a living.”

That was nine years ago. Today Allan owns a CrewCut franchise in Levin, mows 94 lawns a fortnight, and enjoys working on his own. When asked what it

takes to be successful in his line of work, he says, “It’s all about being professional.” Part of his success formula is operating a Walker Mower.

“When I purchased the franchise, I talked with K.C. Motors here in Levin about a Walker Mower. They told me I couldn’t go wrong and they were right. I purchased a 16-hp Walker Mower and then upgraded to the 20-hp model.” Allan says he uses the Walker Mower on any

property that takes more than 15 minutes to mow. “It’s marvelous,” he says in reference to his mower.

“My customers want a nice mowing job and I want to save my legs. Without my Walker Mower, I would be walking 16 kilometers a day—that’s something a 57-year-old should not be doing.”

CrewCut is headquartered in Auckland and has approximately 250 franchises throughout New Zealand. **WT**



# The Rolls Royce of Mowers



Jim hired a gardener to maintain his landscape, but Jim does the mowing.

**W**hen you've been in the construction business for 50 years, built hundreds of commercial facilities, and



then locate to a second home to enjoy retirement, what do you purchase to mow your lawn? For Jim McGinness, the answer was a Walker Mower. "It's a bit more expensive than other mowers on the market," he notes, "but when it comes to automobiles, so is a Rolls Royce."

Jim retired this past Christmas and looked to buy a holiday home in Waikanae. "This former bed and breakfast property has a beautiful lawn and beautiful landscaping," he exclaims. "I wanted to keep it that way. K.C. Motors came out and demonstrated a Walker Mower for better than two hours, and I immediately knew it was just what I wanted. It not only leaves a

**Jim McGinness says a Walker Mower is a bit more expensive than other mowers on the market, but when it comes to automobiles, so is a Rolls Royce.**

great cut but the front deck design allows me to trim close around the garden beds and other landscaping elements."

With only 20 hours on his mower, equipped with a 42-inch Stevens Multi-Deck, this homeowner has discovered two other reasons why this was the mower for him. "I love the catcher," he says. "There's no double-handling of clippings. Just look around at all the trees, too. This property is full of leaves and the Walker Mower picks up everything, including leaves on the tennis court."

A true testimony to how much this homeowner likes his new mower is this: Jim hired a gardener to maintain his landscape, but Jim does the mowing. **WT**





# 'This Walker Mower Has to Work'

**Ground Effects NZ Ltd. owner Matthew Southwick puts more than 40 hours a week on his Walker Mower. Best of all, most of his customers wouldn't ever allow a different mower on their property.**

It's not easy to relocate your business, and it's truly difficult when you decide to move it and your family from England to New Zealand. That's just what the owner of Hastings-based Ground Effects NZ Ltd. did five years ago.

"I operated a mowing company in England for 13 years and then decided I needed a change of scenery," tells Matthew Southwick. "So I applied for a New Zealand business visa." After meeting several stringent requirements for starting a business here, Matthew has become a resident and soon will be a proud New Zealand citizen.

"The easiest way for me to start a mowing business was to buy a small company," Matthew relates. "The move gave me 20 instant customers." He has more than doubled that number now, and divides his time 50/50 between large commercial properties and substantial residences.

"Compared to where I lived in England, this is a small community," says Matthew. "Word travels fast if you do a good job and travels even faster if you do a poor job. So I've always strived to do excellent

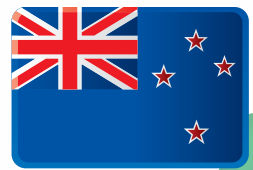
work, show up at the same time for my customers, and get in and out with as little disruption as possible."

His tool of choice from the start was a Walker Mower. This contractor started out with a 20-hp model and quickly upgraded to a 31-hp Walker Mower with a 42-inch Stevens Multi-Deck. "The deck, which can collect grass, side discharge clippings and mulch, saves carrying around another deck," he explains, "and its size allows me to get through most gates." Matthew says he wanted the big engine so he could tackle any size job.

He continues, "For me to be profitable, this mower has to work—and it does. I put more than 40 hours a week on it. Best of all, most of my customers wouldn't ever allow a different mower on their property."

Matthew is an owner/operator. His wife, Sharon, does the paperwork for the company. The Walker Mower, he says, comes with an additional benefit: It allows him to finish jobs quickly and spend more time at home with Sharon and their four children. **WT**





# Coming Up Roses in Cheops Gardens

Georgina and Gary sponsored a fundraising garden showing last year for the Christchurch earthquake victims. Their unique pyramid home sits in the background.

**N**ovember is paradise at this display garden located in Hastings. It's a time when more than 2,500 rose bushes are in full bloom. The star of the show is the McCredy collection, the only one of its kind in New Zealand. The roses have plenty of company, however, sharing the blooming stage with many other rare perennials, along with a productive feijoa orchard. Owners Gary and Georgina Campbell purchased the property six years ago.

"We owned a beef and dairy farm about two hours south of here and wanted to change our lifestyle," explains Georgina. "We sold the farm and moved

up here." The gardens are Georgina's passion, with many of the perennials coming with them. The orchard, which lies more in Gary's domain, produces roughly 60 ton of the popular feijoa fruit annually and helps pay the bills.

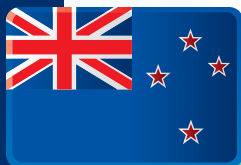
To maintain the 4.9-hectare site, Gary purchased an 18-hp Walker Mower Model B. "I wanted something that was maneuverable enough to mow around the gardens," he relates. "The outfront design is also ideal for grading the turf under the feijoa trees, something we do yearly to facilitate harvesting."

Georgina says they don't spray and don't water, keeping the property completely organic and natural. Not being

a formal display garden, it's not open to the public, although last year the couple sponsored a fundraising showing for the victims of the Christchurch earthquake. Georgina has hosted several educational events, showcasing her McCredy collection, and the gardens have been highlighted in several regional and national gardening publications.

The perennials and orchards share the stage with a unique pyramid home that, Georgina says, is exactly 1/13 the size of its counterparts in Egypt. The Walker Mower, too, sits behind the scenes, but they both have a role to play in this unique property. **WT**





# Be Careful What You Wish For

For John Bellingham, being successful means operating the right equipment for the job and creating a logical flow to work.





**T**en years ago, John Bellingham innocently purchased a used Walker Mower to maintain his property. Then, to pay for it, he started a part-time mowing operation. Today he operates Galashiels Lawn Mowing near Te Awamutu, providing mowing and maintenance services for lifestyle blocks and commercial properties. Among his clients are 13 churches and several schools.

It's a familiar story, John relates. "My neighbor had a Walker Mower and I thought it was just the ideal machine for my property, and 'why not work part-time to pay for it?' I asked myself." Well, part-time has since grown into a full-fledged mowing service. Since that initial purchase, John has owned four other Walker Mowers, including the three he now operates: a 28-hp Commemorative model and two 26-hp EFI units. He equips two with a 48- and 52-inch GHS deck and has two side-discharge decks.

Before getting into mowing full-time, John worked for 20 years as a government

property evaluator. It didn't take him long, however, to get a grasp on the business of mowing. "To be successful, you have to be smart and economical," he emphasizes. "That means operating with the right equipment for the job and creating a logical flow to your work."

He recounts an incident seven years ago when a homeowner called for a one-time cut because his mower had broken down. "Could you mow my lawn until my machine is fixed?" the homeowner asked John. Guess who's still on the property? "Once people see the quality of cut the Walker Mower delivers, they're sold on the work I do," John adds. "That homeowner, for example, saw what I could do with the Walker Mower and he sold his machine."

John says he originally purchased the Walker Mower because it was maneuverable and delivered a quality cut. He has since discovered how well-built the mower is. That's a good thing, since this operator puts nearly 800 hours on his mowers annually, and likes to trade them

in around the 2,500-hour mark.

The old saying, "be careful what you wish for", only partially applies to this business owner. When he purchased the used Walker Mower, he didn't expect to be in the mowing business, but by being smart and economical, he has since turned part-time employment into a full-fledged career. **WT**







**Auckland's Phil Keane says he needed a versatile machine to maintain a wide variety of properties.**

# Keane On Gardening

In 1999, Phil Keane, owner of The Keane Gardener in Auckland, helped out his son who operated a small mowing business. At the time, the two were bringing in approximately \$260 per week. The former grocery retailer liked the work and decided to make it his second career. More than a decade later, he and son James bring in between \$5,000 and \$6,000 a week, with three full-time employees, one part-time employee, 250 customers and two Walker Mowers.

"We maintain a variety of properties, everything from small residential properties to large industrial locations," Phil relates. "I believe part of our success derives from the fact that we do lawns the way we would want them done ourselves."

The other part of his success formula is the Walker Mower. "We purchased our first one soon after I became involved in the business," Phil explains. "I saw

another contractor with a Walker Mower on his trailer and thought it would be good for our lawns."

The company's first machine was a 16-hp model, but it didn't take them long to upgrade. Their next purchase was a 26-hp model and today they operate two machines: a 26-hp unit equipped with a Stevens Multi-Deck and the other a 31-hp mower with a GHS deck.

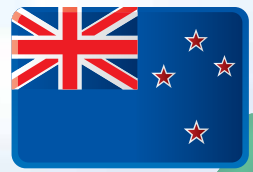
"We need a versatile machine," Phil emphasizes. "Our company maintains properties as small as 100 square meters to those that have more than 15,000 square meters to mow. The Walker Mower is very maneuverable, and we use it on almost every lawn. The 42-inch deck is ideal for our small domestic properties, whereas the 48-inch deck comes in handy on our larger properties. We also employ a Stevens edger for edging walks and flower beds."

Phil explains that his mowing crews mulch nearly 80 to 90 percent of the time with the Stevens Multi-Deck, which also comes in handy to pick up leaves. "They're a good, well-rounded machine," says this user.

When asked how business is, Phil smiles and says, "At times, it's too good," which is a testimonial to his operating philosophy. "As we move forward, we're planning on paring down our customer list, keeping our larger, full-service properties. Over the years, we've been doing more spraying, hedge trimming and gardening, and look for customers who want us to deliver a full array of services."

The Walker Mower is still part of the plan, he adds quickly. As Phil said, they want to maintain properties the way they would want them maintained, and that's with a Walker Mower. **WT**





# Super B to the Rescue



Kevin Dilberth puts the Super B through its paces.

**W**hen Kevin Dilberth became maintenance manager for Orewa College in Auckland, the 10-acre site was being maintained by a tractor and a small garden tractor. The tractor, equipped with a rear-mounted rotary mower, maintained the sports field while the small garden tractor mowed around classrooms. They did an adequate job, Kevin explains, but weren't maneuverable and didn't leave

the hand-mowed look he liked.

One of his first moves was to purchase an 18-hp Walker Mower Model B for mowing around classrooms. Soon thereafter, he replaced the tractor with a 27-hp Model Super B.

"I've been blown away by both mowers," says Kevin. "They've cut the mowing time in half and leave behind a cut that looks like you've mowed the lawn by hand."

Even more important for a school is

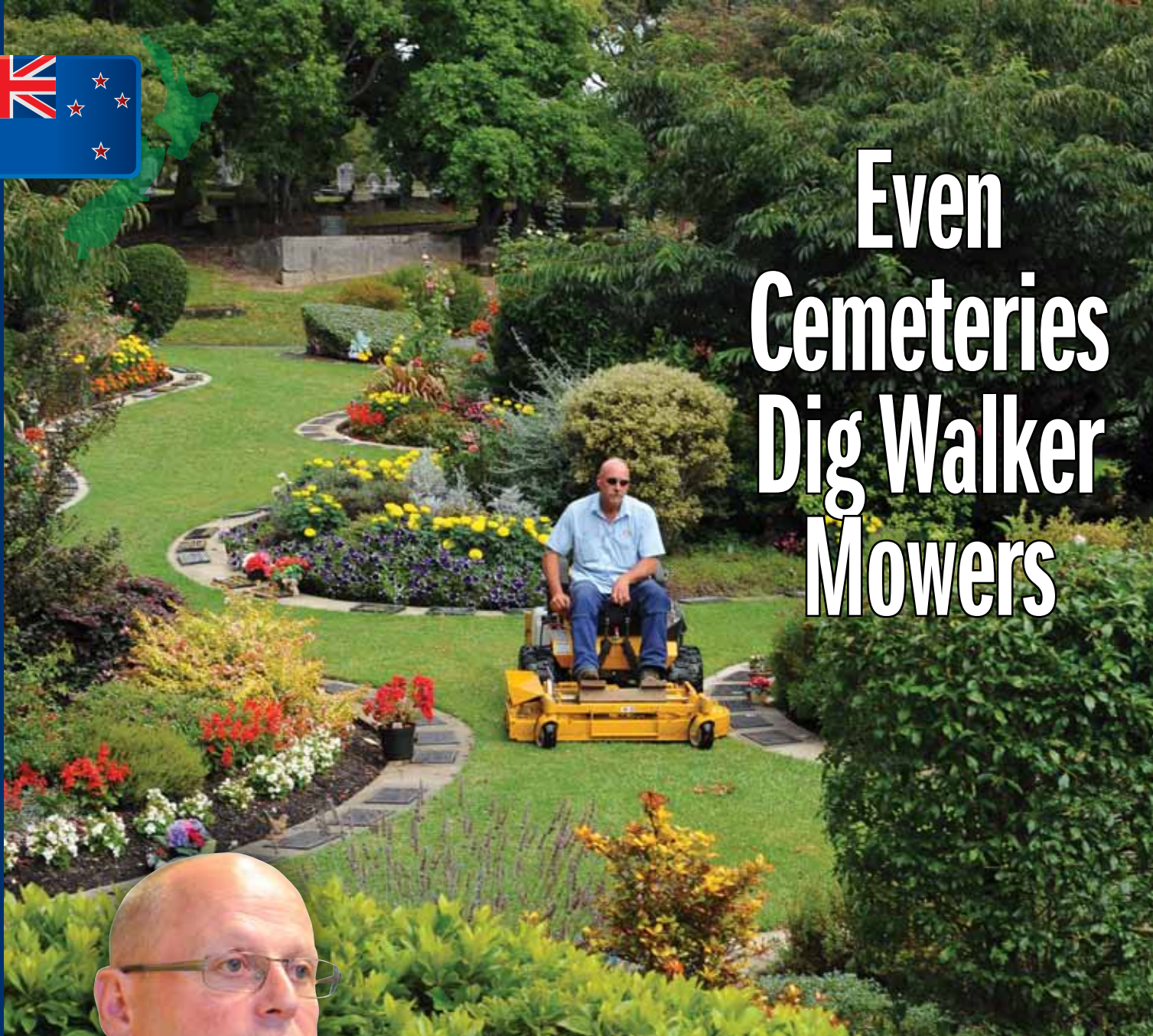
safety. The mowers are so maneuverable and easy to control that operators can quickly avoid a situation if one arises.

That doesn't mean they're not fast, Kevin emphasizes. "When you think how long it took the tractor to mow the sports field vs. the Super B, there's really no comparison in time." He points to the turf, as well, and says, "That goes for the hand-mowed look, too. There's no comparison." **WT**





# Even Cemeteries Dig Walker Mowers



**P**ūrewa Cemetery and Crematorium has been a tranquil resting place since 1899. Today the 55-acre site in Auckland has close to 4,000 ash and burial plots, and room to add another 2,000.

“Certainly, things have changed since the first burial,” says the cemetery’s general manager Clifton Thomson. “As one can see, the old section has lots of large stone monuments and lacks the planning that has gone into the new sections, including the memorial gardens that feature 16 individual garden displays.”

**Clifton Thomson switched to Walker Mowers to cut down on labor costs.**

But it’s not just the cemetery that has evolved with time. “I first started as grave digger, not here but at another cemetery,” Clifton tells. “We didn’t have any mechanical way to dig the graves, so we dug by hand. It would take maybe 2.5 hours to dig one and by the time you finished with three, digging and filling them in, you knew you had done a day’s work.”

One didn’t find a Walker Mower deftly maneuvering between the grave sites back then, either. Today, however, there are four, all 21-hp diesel units with 48-inch side-discharge decks.

“This cemetery needs to be kept





looking nice and well trimmed,” Clifton adds. “When I came on board 12 years ago, the cemetery was using mid-mount mowers that left behind too much trimming. We changed over to the Walker Mowers, in large part because of their maneuverability and outfront design that would minimize the extra labor. Of course, they also deliver a nice cut, which we require.”

The mowers help maintain the entire cemetery, from the hilly and rough terrain that characterizes the old section to the memorial garden that highlights the newer section. Nigel Holmes is the cemetery’s full-time gardener, responsible for installing and maintaining the gardens’ beautiful pallet of seasonal and perennial color.

“There’s not a day that goes by that I don’t get compliments on the gardens and how the cemetery looks,” says Nigel. “It makes one feel good to know that people notice and appreciate your work.”

Purewa Cemetery and Crematorium has enough space to accommodate new burial and ash remains for another 24 years. Who knows what changes the next two decades will bring, but more likely than not, Walker Mowers will be working on site to keep the cemetery looking neat and tidy for visitors. **WT**

**Nigel Holmes is the cemetery’s full-time gardener, responsible for installing and maintaining the gardens’ beautiful pallet of seasonal and perennial color.**



One of the cemetery’s four Walker Mowers makes its way through the memorial gardens.





# Turning a Paddock Into Paradise

The 27-acre reclaimed paddock features rare birds, gardens, a beautiful lake, three ostriches, and expansive areas of turf.

**T**win Lakes Country Gardens owner, Jim Nilsson, didn't expect to operate a display garden in retirement, but that's just what happened. When the former engineer looked for a place for him and his wife, Faye, to relocate, they found a 27-acre paddock outside of Auckland. "It was just what we wanted," says Jim. "The parcel was in the country and gave us space to raise ornamental birds, my passion, and grow flowers, my wife's passion."

Being almost all paddock, it provided the engineer and his wife a blank slate, an opportunity to turn the acreage into virtually anything, which they did. Today it's a display garden and home for ornamental pheasants and parrots, among other birds. There are also three ostriches that entertain visitors, along with a beautiful lake with eight graceful swans and several more ducks.

"This just evolved," Jim explains. "One thing led to another and now we even have buses that bring in visitors to enjoy

the surroundings." What they don't see is probably just as important to this owner as the flora and fauna that highlight his property. Behind the scenes, Jim spends most of his time in his workshop, still plying his engineering trade. And from time to time, one may find him on his Walker Mower.

"Once we had the gardens in place, I knew we needed a mower that could maneuver around them, but still be able to get the entire property mowed in a reasonable amount of time," Jim relates. Over the years, he has owned four Walker Mowers. Five years ago, he purchased a Model MB, and still operates an MB to maintain his acreage.

"With people coming to visit, we want to keep the property looking nice," Jim adds. "I also don't want to spend every day mowing. There are places I would rather be, not the least of which is my workshop." The mower has not only been a pleasant surprise, but a means to that end, as well. **WT**



With newly constructed gardens in place, Twin Lakes Country Gardens needed a mower that could maneuver around them, explains owner Jim Nilsson.



# Rare Plants and Mint Turf Welcome Garden Visitors



Peter and Jocelyn Coyle. Peter says their Walker Mower is as much a part of Totara Waters as the rare plants and parrots that visitors flock to see.

**H**e who plants a garden plants happiness.” This Chinese proverb sets the tone for visitors to Totara Waters, a subtropical garden in Whenuapai. Owners Peter and Jocelyn Coyle began developing the garden in 1999 with extensive plantings of rare and unusual plants. Today the venue is a welcome stop for garden and social clubs, bus tours, and individuals who simply enjoy the beauty that nature has to offer.

Unusual pots, garden art, and more than a few parrots on display (one that casually greets visitors with a “what’s up” or “hello”) add to the unique setting. “We’ve been here 12 years and owned a Walker Mower for 12 years,” says Peter.

As he points out, even though the rare plants are the highlight of the garden, the turf also has to be in “mint” condition.

“We have 2-1/4 acres to mow at least every week and our Walker Mower with its grass-handling capability, maneuverability and cut is ideal for the property,” Peter emphasizes. “I do all the mowing, as well. I enjoy it, and being on the mower gives me an opportunity to inspect the plants.”

The gardener isn’t “blowing smoke” when announcing how important the turf is to their garden’s appearance. “When a garden club or tour bus stops by, I position my Walker Mower right out front so visitors can see it,” Peter relates. “If they don’t know what a Walker Mower is, I tell

them, and then explain that it’s as much a part of the garden as the rare plants they’re about to see.” He says his little lecture has helped the local Walker dealer sell at least two mowers, maybe more.

Peter’s Walker Mower features a 42-inch GHS deck. In addition to its maneuverability and cut, he says one of his favorite features is the easy deck adjustment that allows him to quickly change mowing height to accommodate different garden settings. In addition to tours, Totara Garden offers Bed & Breakfast accommodations for garden visitors. Joyce and Peter also have a large selection of 6,000 bromeliads for sale. **WT**



# WALKER MOWERS

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