



WHAT IS DRY CLEANING?

Dryclean Plus was established in Newark in 2009 on the corner of Northgate and Slaughterhouse Lane, in the area known as The Clock Tower, Bargate. At the end of May 2010 the company was purchased by a local man who, whilst in London, became one of the countries leading silk garment and stain removal specialists. His name is Antony Pollard.

Since his takeover Dryclean Plus has gained a rather good reputation in the specialist dry cleaning field. Whilst in London, Antony worked at the highest levels in the dry cleaning industry with famous London stores such as Max Mara, Hermes and Aquascutum, all using his services. Moreover, Antony has a long list of well know individual clients that have included the pop group Take That, to past Prime Ministers such as Margaret Thatcher, to the entrepreneur, Richard Branson. Such was the standard achieved by the shop he managed in Clapham South named 'Mr. Steeds' that they became the chosen dry cleaner to the very highest members of the Royal Family, including Her Majesty the Queen. Steeds were subsequently awarded the coveted Royal Crest for their outstanding customer services, presentation and services to the dry cleaning industry.

Whilst in London Antony also became a London tour guide and has published a book called 'Tales of Old London Town'. In 2006 he returned to Newark to read history at the University of Lincoln, leaving with a degree in history in 2009. So 'Fernwood Living' thought what better person to ask the question: -

'WHAT IS DRY CLEANING?'

'The term 'dry cleaning' is somewhat of a misnomer, as the garments brought for my attention do actually become 'wet' in the dry cleaning process, but not with water. The solvent used is a non-aqueous solution know as perchloroethylene, or 'perc' for short. Anyone working in the dry cleaning industry should be familiar with the Frenchman Jean Baptiste Jolly, for it is often said that it was Jolly who, quite by accident, discovered the process of dry cleaning in 1855. Jolly, a French dye-works owner, noticed that his table cloth became cleaner after his maid accidentally overturned a kerosene lamp on it. Operating through his dye-works company, Jolly offered a new service which he called 'nettoyage à sec' or 'dry cleaning'. The name has stuck ever since.'

'SO HE DISCOVERED DRY CLEANING FLUID?'

'No, we must first turn to our very own Michael Faraday, for it was Faraday who first synthesized the solution tetrachloroethene as far back as 1821. It was this somewhat volatile synthetic solvent that was used in the dry cleaning process until the 1940s, when it gave way to the more stable and safer chemical, perc. Perc is by far the most aggressive solvent one can use in the dry cleaning process, but it is also the best.'

'SO WHEN DID DRY CLEANING BECOME POPULAR?'

'It was the British company Spencer that introduced the first in-shop dry cleaning machines. They consisted of three models, the Spencer Minor, Spencer Junior, and Spencer Major. The cleaning and drying process was controlled by a punch-card, which fed through the 'Spencermatic' reader on the machine. Spencer continued to produce machines until the late 1980s, when the company closed. Look carefully and you may still spot Spencer machines in some dry cleaning shops today.'

'SO WHEN I BRING AN ITEM OF CLOTHING TO DRYCLEAN PLUS THAT HAS A STAIN UPON IT, WHAT IS THE PROCESS?'

'We have tried and tested chemicals for stain removal that if used correctly do not damage the garments, or spread the stain. Your stained garment shall firstly be tested to see which chemical is suitable to remove the stain without causing any colour damage, although that said, this can never be guaranteed due the fact that colour damage may already have occurred. The stain removal chemical is then carefully worked into the marked area using a very delicate brush under special lighting and a vacuumised table. Once satisfied that the stain is beginning to lift, the garment is dry cleaned, wherein the stain and chemical solution are 'washed' from the garment leaving no trace of the stain. Your garment is then expertly finished and presented back to you to wear at your next occasion or function. Lastly, may I also put a myth to bed regarding the removal of red wine by using white wine. Often we have customers arriving to the shop stating that red wine has been spilt on their clothes and they have put white wine on it but it has not removed the stain. This myth has occurred due to the fact that on a dinning table there is often found red and white wine, thus white wine is the closest clear liquid to hand with which to dilute the stain, which it does, but it only spreads it to a wider area. My advice to anyone who has a stain, no matter how small on their favourite item, is that they should always take it to be treated by a professional.'

'SO ANY MORE LONDON TOURS PLANNED IN THE FUTURE?'

The last couple of tours I have done have been for Newark CAMRA, so they did involve several historic London taverns. All of which, of course, had to be inspected. I am hoping to organise a riverside tour next spring via its old and historic taverns, so anyone wishing to join us just pop into my shop for details.

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- Complete laundry service collected and returned to your Fernwood home
- Stain removal specialists
- Guaranteed same day cleaning service for your duvet's, chemically washed dried and returned all on the same day
- Specialist in cleaning haute couture garments
- We give your garments the tender loving care they deserve
- Repair and alteration, first class service in partnership with Leigh Lovatt Drapes & Garments
- Garment cleaning to the rich and famous

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www.dryclean-plus.co.uk