

Promoting successful development



IN CHARGE: James (Jimmy) Holt has now taken charge of the company, now known as Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solutions

Parrisianne has grown from a company mainly focussed on service to a thriving sales and service business with a broad portfolio of brands. Now, with a new owner, Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solutions will continue to promote the successful development of both its own and its customers' businesses

Parrisianne, the drycleaning equipment specialist, entered a fresh stage in its development earlier this year. The original owners, Ian and Anne Parris handed the company over to its management team led by James (Jimmy) Holt as managing director and the name changed to Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solutions Ltd.

The company started around 27 years ago and Jimmy Holt joined it five years later. Holt explains that he joined as a director and held shares from the start. He had an agreement with the owners that if the business developed successfully, he would take over when they eventually retired.

At the time that Holt joined the company the emphasis was on servicing rather than selling, although it had already gained the UK exclusive agency for Union drycleaning machines. Holt's background had always been in sales and he had experience in engineering sales and he was therefore well placed to help develop this side of the business.

"You build up contacts and that's how it developed. People trust you and the machines are good and so the business grew."

In the early 1990s, the company broadened its scope by becoming the exclusive agent for the Italian finishing equipment specialist Ghidini.

The combination of Union drycleaning machines, which are fully featured, and Ghidini finishing equipment allowed Parrisianne to supply high quality

machines to meet the main requirements of the retail drycleaning unit shop.

Then in 2003, Parrisianne secured the exclusive UK distributorship for Sankosha, the Japanese manufacturer of shirt finishing and other finishing equipment. This move has taken the company into an additional sector beyond the high street unit shop.

Sankosha machines are intended more for high volume production, factory set-ups and central production units.

This has allowed Parrisianne to expand considerably and through its efforts the UK is now Sankosha's largest European market in terms of sales.

Sankosha's recent acquisition of the Ajax brand has

DIRECTORS: Iain Weir technical director (left) and Mark Catchesides, engineering director complete the management team



added a further dimension, as Ajax by Sankosha machines are aimed more at the laundry sector.

With a portfolio of quality brands that covers all sectors of the market, Parrisianne is now in a very strong position as it enters the next phase of its development. The Union drycleaning machines cover all solvent options and with both Ghidini and Sankosha agencies, Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solutions can cover the finishing and shirt finishing requirements of both small unit shops and larger, more industrial-style operations.

In the past two years it has also become an exclusive supplier for the Jumag steam boiler. It also has some non-exclusive dealerships.

"I see the company as a very strong one. It can supply everything that a business needs whether it is an established one or a new operation," says Holt.

He adds that not only can his company provide machines, but a first class after sales service as well and service has always been a company strength. It has a wide range of spares and it holds £150,000 – £175,000 worth of stock at any one time.

The management team now consists of Jimmy Holt as managing director, with two fellow directors, Mark Catchesides, the engineering director, who was formerly the chief engineer, and Iain Weir, who has been with the company for more than eight years, as technical director.

Holt says the transition to the handover has been gradual, as Ian and Anne Parris began to step back in preparation for retirement, so there are no dramatic changes planned, but he will lead his company by continuing to promote its strengths.

Holt knows that the current drycleaning market is difficult but is well prepared. He says that the sector is seeing a levelling of turnover and that many cleaners are finding it hard to grow the traditional business, so they are looking at other ways of expanding. This, he says, is where the Sankosha brand with its shirt finishing equipment and Ajax by Sankosha laundry presses are gaining custom.

Shirts and domestic laundry are both related services that drycleaners find it easy to promote, and so they are using these extra lines to get more from their customer base.

Indeed, Sankosha now accounts for around 30% of Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solution's sales. In the past, customers may have considered that a shirt service that relied on utility presses was too labour intensive, but this automated equipment avoids that concern and is easy to use. It's also very well made, says Holt.

The Japanese manufacturer is always looking to upgrade its range and has just launched two developments, the LP170 double-buck shirt finisher and the DF100 rotating multi-form finisher. Both are already in stock. All Sankosha machines are held in a bonded warehouse in Amsterdam so in most cases equipment can be delivered in one to two weeks.

Asked how the drycleaning machines side of his business is faring, Holt says that he has always believed in selling a fully-featured machine and Union machines have always met that requirement. The range is always being developed, though at present there are no immediate introductions to talk about. There will be a meeting for distributors later this year in Italy.

The UK market is predominantly perc, although



DIVERSIFICATION:
The Sankosha brand now accounts for around 30% of sales for Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solutions. Many drycleaners want to diversify to maximise profits and a shirt service is a good way to do so

Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solutions can also supply alternative solvent machines.

Looking ahead for the next five years, Holt recognises that it will be a difficult time for many drycleaners and his concern is to make sure that the company is run from a good financial basis and to help customers with any problems that come along.

The story of Parrisianne and the transition to Parrisianne Dry Cleaning Solutions has been one of developing a success. When Jimmy Holt started he was just in sales, but he always wanted to develop the company by building sales and making sure it was known as a respected supplier. "That's what I've done and now it's my company."

He feels that success is a matter of setting and achieving goals. In today's climate of rising costs, if you can say: "I've been here 20 years and will be here in another 20 years' time, that's an achievement." It's a goal he intends to reach. **LCN**



FULLY FEATURED:
Jimmy Holt has always believed in selling a fully-featured machine and Union equipment meets that requirement