



Simon Weston



ABOVE: Kleen-Tex at work - Neil Foster (left) and Paul Noone



RIGHT: Marianne and Peter Wennekes - CINET secretary general

LEFT: Kevin Vara (left) White Rose Dry Cleaners, Brian Antrobus and Christine Antrobus (HMP Wellingborough)



JOINT CONFERENCE

replaced by this legislation and it is very important that individual operators assess and put in place the rules as they now apply.

You no longer need a fire certificate as they have been abolished. They have been replaced by The *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005*, into effect, October 2006. If you haven't studied the changes and you have a disastrous fire you may not be in good shape when the consequences and costs of that occurrence are examined post facto.

The key legal requirement is as follows: Fire risk assessments are mandatory. Secondly you must remove or reduce the fire risk. There are several other mandatory requirements and all of these make good business sense. They also draw attention to the duties of 'The Responsible Person' who in many cases will be the business operator – quite possibly you! The first businessman to be tried in Court for his failure to obey the Fire Safety Order 2005 was fined £27,500 and sent to prison for nine months.

To ensure that you and your premises comply there are full details for both England and Wales on: www.firesafetylaw.communities.gov – or in Scotland on: www.infoscotland.com/firelaw.

Murray Simpson, CEO of the TSA, reported that a review of the workings of the SED was now underway and some costs would be brought down. Sadly he also drew attention to the return, to poisonous life, of the Soil Framework Directive, which is now back on the agenda in Brussels. Please make your MP/MEP/MSP aware of the dangers to almost every business if this is enacted.

Ken Cupitt is a senior member of the GCL and he showed how the Guild had become the authority in the UK for the training, testing and examining of all levels of staff in the drycleaning and laundry industries. The Guild is dedicated to improving quality and performance standards in every area of textile care and every staff member should be encouraged to become much better qualified to look after the garments brought to them for care and cleaning.

Many text books and monographs are available from the Guild, written by experts in their field, specifically for home study. The culmination of this study is the presentation of a Q Star award as recognition of achieving the required standard. Without the constant encouragement of the nationwide members of the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers the clothes care industry

would not be in a position to maintain quality standards in many of the best cleaning businesses in the country.

Upping the Game was the paper given by Adrian Redgate and Ian Parris and was concerned with their noble attempt to create a new, nationally recognised standard qualification for drycleaners. As envisaged, the creation of an Association of British Dry Cleaners – ABDC – will be self funded and fee-driven, and will become the quality standards body leading to IAQS, an Industry Applied Quality Standard.

It is proposed that this new body will charge appropriate fees for overseeing the twice yearly retail premises inspections which will be required and also invest the appropriate hundreds of thousands of pounds to make UK consumers aware that the new standard is good for their garments. The 'noble' attempt referred to was that enormous cost is the main difficulty that will inevitably meet those who agree to try and set up the new qualification in the format envisaged.

For the future adoption of these proposals the best route forward would be to see where the GCL and TSA could absorb some of the many sensible ideas presented and – very

importantly - where the money to fund the scheme was coming from. Brussels would seem to be the only possibility in the present economic climate. (Peter Wennekes please note!)

James Timpson was last up from the trade speakers and he ran through his father's well-known philosophy which he calls 'Upside Down Management'. This system sets out how the delegation of nearly all decisions affecting customers is to the front line – the staff in the branch. As there are over 600 Timpson branches in the UK this is a very interesting management concept which we feel that others of approximately similar size should contemplate implementing!

Bright, breezy and a 'chip off the old block', James Timpson exudes enthusiasm, and confidently expects that Timpsons' drycleaning adventure will bear fruit and he hopes also, that 'all the b..... money will go in the till!'

Simon Weston needs no introduction to anyone in the UK. His appalling injuries sustained on the Sir Galahad at Bluff Cove in the Falklands, which resulted in excruciating pain from his burns, especially to his face and hands and to his enduring of 85 serious operations. Over a long period these operations

resulted in his almost complete recovery and, although classified seriously disabled, he now spends most of his time working energetically with youth charities in South Wales and Liverpool.

Weston's story is uplifting, as well as deeply moving and his initial feelings post-hospital of 'letting down my comrades' cannot be further from the truth. The legendary history of the Welsh Guards has actually been boosted by this former guardsman who lived up to the Guards' reputation - not by firing a shot in battle - but by scoring a crucial and exemplary victory over his serious and savage wounds. What a man this is and what a remarkable example to look up to!

This was a good Textile Care Professional's conference, made all the more valuable by the parallel exhibition by an important selection of supplier businesses. The word on the street is that most of these companies will be 'on their tables' at the forthcoming Scottish Drycleaners event later in the year. Don't miss it – you will certainly learn more and very probably earn more as a result. Many congratulations also to Murray Simpson whose 'Trade Show, Marriott Marketplace' idea was a resounding success for the TSA/GCL.