



Caption: From left to right: Ben Walker, David Walker, Peter Walker.

Climbing the ladder of success for 4 generations

At Insight DIY we come into contact with a lot of different Home Improvement businesses on a regular basis; including retailers, suppliers, agencies and service providers. But I'm always interested and intrigued by companies that have not just survived all the changes that our market has experienced over the last 50 years, but actually thrived through those years and yet have still managed to remain family owned.

Ladder and Fencing Industries (Newent) Ltd is one of those businesses, a fourth generation company located in Newent, a small market town around 10 miles northwest of Gloucester and on the northern edge of the Forest of Dean.

History & Background

LFI have been in existence since 1947, when Trevor Lane began making ladders for local builders in his garden shed, sourcing the timber from the nearby Forest of Dean and in 1948 the company as we know it now, was established.

Over the next two decades demand grew substantially and in 1971, the company relocated to their current site on Horsefair Lane in Newent, Gloucestershire.

In the 1980's LFI went on the acquisition trail, firstly purchasing Gough Ladders and then Hyde & Clements, securing a dominant position manufacturing & supplying timber pole ladders. Further acquisitions followed in the 1990's with the purchase of Chapman Alloy

Products and following heavy investment in new buildings and machinery, LFI began its journey into the manufacturing and supply of aluminium ladders and steps.



In the 2000's LFI developed and launched one of their most successful products TuFF : Steel, a precision engineered steel ladder for heavy duty use within scaffolding. Along with the traditional timber pole ladder, these two ranges have become the preferred choice for the UK scaffolding industry.

Over the last decade they have continued to invest in new people, new buildings and new products, always searching to find and develop safe new ways to work at height in line with changing standards and in collaboration with the Ladder Association.



Today the company's huge range includes scaffolding ladders and accessories, single and extension ladders, roof ladders, multi-purpose & combination ladders, vehicle access, surveyor ladders and a range of steps & platforms. LFI are actually the only UK company who manufacture Aluminium, GRP, Steel and Timber access products in Britain

The successful business is now run by Managing Director Ben Walker, the third generation of the Walker family to be at the helm of the company.

Credentials in Construction

The company has a strong heritage in the UK construction sector, where quality of product, training and safety is critically important. The Work at Height regulations emphasise the importance of the correct selection and safe use of ladders, to minimise the risks associated with working at height. The HSE expects that anyone using ladders on site will be trained in the planning of the job, the selection of the correct equipment and its safe use and maintenance. LFI offer a range of training courses from their on-site training division OTJ Training, including 'Ladder User' and 'Ladder Inspection' courses that conform to the latest and best industry training practice, along with IPAF & PASMA courses. For more information click here – otjtraining.com

The UK Ladder Market

The UK Ladder & Step market is worth around £61m pa and according to AMA Research has been supported by a relatively buoyant construction market over the last two years. The Government measures to increase housing stock and encourage demand, coupled with the general improvements in the economy and consumer confidence have all helped the market. Non-residential construction output has also performed well over the same period, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure, offices, entertainment and leisure.

Current Team

LFI has around 40 employees, some of which have over 40 years loyal service to the business. With growing demand, and their ambitions to establish a stronger presence in the market, LFI continue to invest heavily in their people.

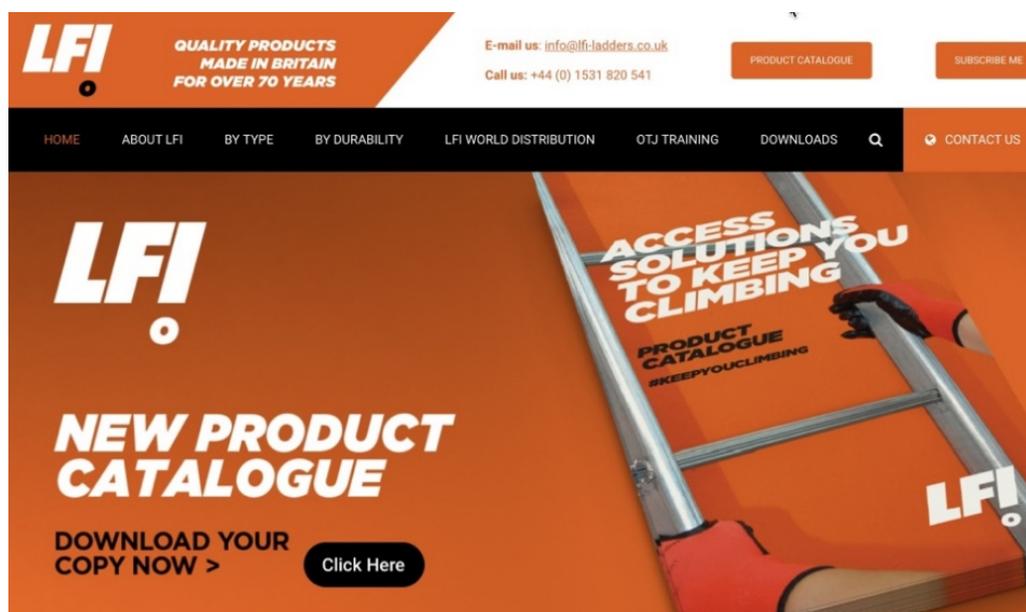


Customer Service

The company prides itself on a high level of customer service and with their fleet of 5 lorries, they can deliver a full load, nationwide from Truro to Aberdeen within 7 days. In fact, 96% of all their deliveries – from single items to hundreds – are delivered within 5 working days. They can also drop-ship anywhere in the country (with products less than 6m), with most small orders being dispatched the next day.

A Significant Year in their History

With a rich history of over 70 years, 2020 is a significant year for LFI, as they reveal new branding, a completely new website, new catalogue and a host of new and innovative products to #KeepYouClimbing

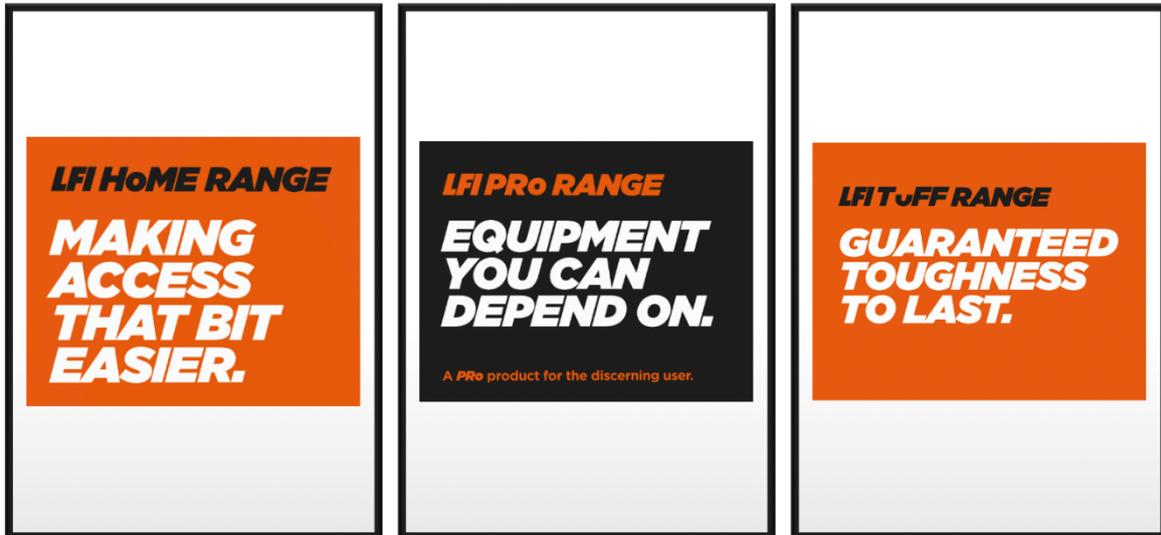


The bold orange branding delivers immediate cut-through and stand-out, whether that is on-shelf, online or even on the side of the lorries that they use to deliver nationwide.

You can access the new LFI website here – [BritishLadders](#).

You can download their full catalogue here – [Catalogue](#).

The updated branding and the move into new markets, presented a perfect opportunity for the company to review the customer purchase journey, leading to the introduction of a clear and simplified route to selecting the right product. The range is now clearly segmented by product type.



Suitable for frequent use in tough environments. *TuFF* products are made from larger profiles & stronger materials to provide more resistance to heavy use.



A *PRo* product for the discerning user. The best combination of lightweight design and durability for the professional who needs to depend on their equipment.



Super-lightweight solutions for the *HoME* or workplace.

Light-duty access products for occasional use that are easy to store.

As the changes to the standard that governs the design, strength and testing of ladders and steps in the UK and Europe (EN131) take hold, the need to offer clarity on durability and user expectations has enabled LFI to segment and simplify their range to do just that, a real first in the marketplace.

Ben Walker, MD says: “It’s exciting times for LFI who are well known as a long-standing premium supplier of strong, dependable products into the construction industry, our new branding is helping us to target some new markets as we enjoy a healthy start to the year so far.”

More Information

If you’d like to know more about the business and how they can help you, Andy Ferris is the Commercial Manager at LFI and you can contact him here - andy.ferris@lfi-ladders.co.uk

ISO Certificates, product specifications and data sheets, can all be downloaded here - <http://www.britishladders.co/downloads/>