

# ladders in focus

Ladders are the world's most widely used pieces of access equipment. Love them or hate them there is no arguing that they are cost effective, handy and environmentally friendly. However they are also wide open to abuse, from selecting the wrong ladder for the job to using them on applications for which they are not suited, to outright dangerous and improper use.

They are also widely taken for granted, everyone thinks they know how to use a ladder. Mention ladder training and the reaction is likely to range from sniggers to guffaws of laughter in many quarters. And yet, ladders are for many jobs still the access method of choice and given some good basic training the vast majority of accidents would be eliminated. Cranes&Access has teamed up with the Ladder Association, which has arisen from the old BLMA, to bring you a quarterly Ladder Association page with news, tips and information on the correct use and selection of ladders.



## National training scheme gains momentum

As a natural and logical extension of its activities, and as a practical expression of its commitment to encouraging best practice, the Ladder Association operates a national training scheme for users, supervisors and managers wanting to equip themselves with the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to use ladders safely and legally. It aims to provide delegates with the information to:

- 1 Select appropriate work at height equipment for a task
- 2 Assess and determine when it is appropriate to use ladders and stepladders
- 3 Correctly locate and safely use ladders and stepladders
- 4 Inspect ladders and stepladders for damage

Details of all the association's approved training centres can be found at [www.ladderassociation.org.uk](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk)

## Name change heralds new era for ladder industry

It's all change at the British Ladder Manufacturers' Association (BLMA). Celebrating its diamond jubilee this year, it not only has a new name - the Ladder Association - but a revised constitution, a fresh agenda and a new look. It also has a new chairman, Don Aers, technical manager at the Youngman Group.

Committed to 'progressing safety and best practice step by step', the association is no longer the exclusive domain of manufacturers, but a progressive, broad-based organisation determined to promote and champion an invaluable piece of workplace equipment.

With some two million ladders and stepladders in daily use throughout the UK, the ubiquitous ladder is set to get some serious support.

"Working in close co-operation with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) the association will be delivering the clear and unequivocal message that ladders are not banned in the workplace, so if it's right to use a ladder, use the right ladder and use it safely," says Don Aers.

Ian Greenwood, head of the Falls

from Height team at the HSE, endorses this message. "The Work at Height Regulations make it clear that with sensible risk assessment, proper planning and training, ladders can continue to be used for short duration, light work," says Greenwood. "We look forward to collaborating with the association to encourage good practice across industry where ladders are used."

For its part, the Ladder Association is adapting to the challenges facing the industry by positioning itself as the clear and acknowledged focus in the marketplace. Rapidly gaining momentum is its national training

scheme designed to ensure that users are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to use ladders safely and productively. Upon successful completion of the training course, every delegate receives a certificate and Ladder Association photo card as proof of competence. Increasing numbers of delegates are expected to pass through its various training centres in 2007.

The association will be a major contributor to Access Live, the Access Industry Village and the Access Industry Forum's 2007 Conference at the NEC, 22 - 24 May.



Ian Greenwood, head of the Falls from Height Team at the HSE (second from L) with members of the Ladder Association during a recent meeting at ladder manufacturer, Abru.



The Ladder Association card

## New website makes essential viewing

A definitive reference source for leaning ladders and stepladders, the Ladder Association's new website includes an interview with Geoffrey Podger, the HSE's chief executive, in which Podger talks about his organisation's views on ladders. He says: "Ladders are not banned in the workplace, so if it's right to use a ladder, use the right ladder and use it safely." The complete interview can be read at [www.ladderassociation.org.uk](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk)

### The Ladder Association

PO Box 183 Leeds LS11 1AG

Tel: 0845 260 1048

Fax: 0845 260 1049

Email:

[info@ladderassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@ladderassociation.org.uk)

Website:

[www.ladderassociation.org.uk](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk)

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**Web: [www.heightmaster.uk.com](http://www.heightmaster.uk.com)**