

# Building the Arnold Laver dynasty

A SHEFFIELD-based company is going from strength to strength thanks to the achievements of three generations of the same family.

The Arnold Laver timber dynasty, with roots dating back two centuries in the city, has been built on more than 80 years of traditional company foundations and is now an essential element within the worldwide timber industry.

One of Sheffield's best-known businesses, the Arnold Laver Group was established in 1920 when Arnold Laver returned from the Great War in Germany and announced that, instead of joining the family business, he intended to use his savings to start up as a timber merchant.

The response from his family was: "Don't come crawling back here when it's gone." He never had to and the first Arnold Laver site was born in Heeley, Sheffield.

Arnold Laver's grandson and current managing director of the Arnold Laver Group, Andrew Laver, says: "When my grandfather first started out, customers paid cash in advance so he could buy the wood to fulfil their orders.

"All deliveries were made by hand cart and within the year he was doing well enough to buy machinery such as a saw bench and a planer.

"He also bought a horse, called Charlie, to help make deliveries."

Determination and sheer hard work by Arnold Laver and his staff helped the business to prosper and before long the Heeley site just wasn't big enough.

In 1925, Arnold Laver began negotiations to purchase a much larger location on Bramall Lane, Sheffield, and two years later the new Olympic Sawmills were up and running.

Arnold Laver passed away in 1971 but the Laver family have continued to develop, while preserving a comforting,



Left: Arnold Laver chairman David Laver (left) and managing director Andrew Laver. Right: the morning after the December 1940 blitz



old-fashioned commitment to customer service. Alan Laver took over the running of the business and now, the third generation of the family, David Laver and Andrew Laver are helping to expand the empire.

From these humble beginnings Arnold Laver has grown to the company that it is today. With 14 major sites across the UK, including branches in Leeds and Bradford, it is known and respected nationally as a company representing quality and choice, while also demonstrating an ability to move with the times in the timber market.

Andrew said: "Our exciting new North East acquisition, on the former Dent Steel site in South Tyneside, not only enhances our national supply chain but it also indicates a positive

commitment to our major investment programme.

"We supply timber and related materials to a whole host of industries, including a number of production companies such as the makers of Big Brother, The Games, The F Word and Top of the Pops."

Responsible management of the world's forests is now a major focus of the timber industry and Arnold Laver has successfully risen to this growing green challenge by stepping up its commitment to environmentally friendly sourcing of timber.

"All of our depots have been awarded accreditation from the Forest Stewardship Council and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification," says Andrew. "We have also signed up for the Timber Trade Federation's Responsible Purchasing Policy – the pioneering initia-

tive which provides our customers with a tool to assess and evaluate industry performance."

These moves make Arnold Laver one of only a few companies in the region – and indeed the UK – capable of providing timber products sourced from sustainable and well-managed forests.

"We recently supplied a significant amount of graded building timber for the UK's first ever eco-theme park and we have also supplied cedar cladding for one of the first schools in Yorkshire to be constructed predominately out of ecological materials, while our own site at Mosborough in Sheffield uses scrap timber to heat the premises and rainwater for the treatment of wood," he said.

Last year Arnold Laver vacated its Bramall Lane base for the first time since it

set up business there in 1927. The 36-strong headquarters team have moved to make way for a £25m commercial and residential development on the site adjacent to Sheffield United's Bramall Lane ground – but will be going back into prestigious new offices there when the work is finished at the end of this year.

Andrew added: "We are proud of our roots and believe that by maintaining many of our family values we remain respected as a timber firm representing quality and choice.

"This is combined with an enviable record of investment and development, not only in Sheffield but across the UK, has helped place Arnold Laver as an essential part of the timber industry and preserve our position as one of the UK's leading suppliers of timber and building materials."

## High demand for premiership class living at Sheffield's Anchor Point

FANCY being Neil Warnock's next-door neighbour? Sheffield's Anchor Point is becoming the must-have address for Blades fans.

The award-winning £30m Magellan Residential mixed-use development is next door to newly promoted Premiership side Sheffield United's Bramall Lane ground.

And that makes it a sure-fire winner for diehard supporters looking for a stylish new home almost overlooking the pitch.

Parking on match days isn't a problem and you can leave your home five minutes before kick-off and still be in time for the big game.

Sheffield United are reporting record season ticket sales and Anchor Point is surging up the property league. More than 130 of its 176 one, two and three bed apartments have been snapped up – with the final phase just about to be released. The scheme also includes 12 four bedroom townhouses.

Designed around a seven-storey tower, on the corner of Bramall Lane and Cherry Street, Anchor Point is an ultra-modern development reflecting the bold new face of Sheffield, with spectacular views from the top floors.



From left Andy Firth, Bob Taylor and Alan Parkin at Anchor Point

Anchor Point is a 3.25-acre mixed-use scheme. The commercial side of the project includes 2,863 sq ft of office space and a 2,617ft retail unit.

The development is also earmarked as the prestigious new headquarters for the

Arnold Laver Group and is being created on the site of the company's former Olympic sawmill.

Working at Anchor Point has proved to be a labour of love for many of the contractors, who are lifelong Sheffield United

supporters. Andy Firth, from design and build contractors North Midland Construction, Bob Taylor, from cost consultants Capita Symonds and Alan Parkin from surveyors BWS all think it is a dream come true to work on the doorstep of their beloved football ground.

Says Andy Firth: "Bramall Lane is a great address – just look at the neighbours you'll have at Anchor Point, Blades manager Neil Warnock and his team.

"It has been great working on the site and looking across to the ground. Anchor Point is Premiership class – just like Sheffield United."

Cheryl Bissett, associate director for sales at Shipley-based Magellan Residential, said: "Sheffield's renaissance is continuing at some pace and we are delighted to be involved in helping build its brighter future.

"Anchor Point is a quality development that will be a welcome addition to the up-and-coming Bramall Quarter. As award-winners ourselves, we are delighted that our neighbours at the football ground are doing so well and gearing up for the Premiership."

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