



RMD  
KWIKFORM

# 10 YEARS OF GROUND SHORING:

IAN FRYER



Ian Fryer, Global Product Innovation Director, shares his ground shoring journey over the last decade.

## Ian's journey

I have been designing temporary works schemes for 35 years. My first involvement with system support for ground shoring was in 1993, where I designed a scheme to support a live railway line on a Kier Construction site, and another supporting a sheeted excavation in a saturated slurry lagoon above running sand, both using trusty RMD Superslim Soldiers.

Much later, I was UK Engineering Director at RMD Kwikform. It was the vision of the MD at that time, Mike Follet, to enter the ground shoring market, and I initially went with Mike to visit a competitor's yard, as there was the potential to buy that business at the time. Seeing their kit was interesting.

Soon afterwards, we also visited a large and deep excavation on an Interserve site which was being supported by another competitor using their heavy-duty Ground Shoring equipment. I recall finding the 12-metre-deep support scheme pretty awesome, and I later learned that the scheme had been designed by Simon Wilkinson, who was with our competitor at the time.

Mike then practically dragged me to a Ground Engineering Conference in London where I clearly remember listening to an interesting presentation by a third competitor about load monitoring of excavation shores in London.

## Ground shoring development

After this, RMD Kwikform recruited our then Commercial Director, and he was instrumental in helping to assemble the rest of the team from across the industry. Suddenly I found myself tasked with developing a full range of ground shoring equipment that would outperform the leading competitors currently in the market, which was a pretty daunting task.

Choosing an overseas manufacturing location was a key decision. This choice allowed us to achieve highly economical cost prices,

while also gaining access to a wider range of high-grade steels and heavy steel casting and machining outfits, the likes of which are no longer so readily available in the UK.

This, together with our determination to set the highest standards of design and manufacturing compliance, set us off in the right direction. Along the way we have found ourselves questioning the status quo in the industry and inventing multiple new and improved components and details, all designed to ensure that ground shoring systems can be deployed quickly and safely whilst minimising monetary and environmental cost.

Buoyed by increasing confidence as our offering was so well received by the market, our ambitions grew, and with them load capacities. The heaviest duty props we envisaged at the outset would safely carry 250 tonnes. The latest Tubeshor 1370 system is configured to carry over 1000 tonnes.

My story would not be complete without paying tribute to the incredible engineers that I have been fortunate to work with during the 10-year development period, their performance has been exemplary and working through and with them, the last 10 years have unquestionably been the icing on the cake of a long career. There have been many stand-out moments when sometimes wacky ideas and back-to-basics engineering have come together to yield a component, detail or connection that pushes our products ahead of others available on the market.

Becoming preferred ground shoring supplier on HS2 and having the chance to visit some of the most spectacular sites in the country to see our handiwork in action and hearing such positive feedback from customers has been fantastic.

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