

Enabling clean water for 25 years

Water-well drilling equipment company Boode has been active in groundwater abstraction since 1897, later focusing on supplying PVC well casings and screen systems. Its UK concern, established by Stan and Scott Dronsfield, celebrates 25 years in business this year

Stan Dronsfield still remembers the early days back in 1989 when they operated from a wooden shed in their garden, with a 20ft container of stock stored at a yard near Nottingham.

"Over the last 25 years, we've witnessed huge changes, not just in our own operations but also in the land-drilling industry, changes that have encompassed improvements in technology, advancement in techniques and greater adherence to compliance.

"We've worked on some exciting and fascinating contracts in that time, but there is no doubt that the most memorable projects have been those involving our support of humanitarian efforts: during famines, wars, earthquakes or as part of a local improvement programme," he says.

Boode UK has supported humanitarian relief work in most of sub-Saharan Africa over the last 25 years, and both Stan and Scott have worked alongside Oxfam, World Vision, Concern, the World Bank, the British Army and a range of international consortiums and NGOs to help ensure the supply of clean water.

IN SENEGAL

One of Boode UK's earliest contracts was with World Vision in Senegal. Between 1989 and 2000 they supplied the charity with equipment, including casings and screens, drill-rig packages, pumps, tractors and compressors. Over those 11 years Boode supported initiatives that saw more than 600 wells drilled, to an average depth of 90m, supplying clean, safe water to rural communities.

Stan made two visits to Senegal in the early days to liaise with and advise the drilling team on the



Scott and Stan Dronsfield in their garden office in 1989 when Boode UK was first established

ground. "It was important that we got the materials and quantities right so that there was minimal delay in getting a project off the ground, and it helped to understand exactly what conditions we were supplying for," he says.

Between 1993 and 1995, Boode UK also supplied PVC casings and screens to Oxfam in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Rwanda



and Angola, and a World Bank-funded project in Papua New Guinea.

"We generally got involved post-disaster or post-civil war, when refugee camps were being set up and clean water was needed. We also supplied equipment in war situations, for example to Oxfam in Angola and South Sudan in 1993. In Angola the first delivery was part of an intervention airlift to besieged towns during the civil war to allow the supply of water. We continued to supply equipment during the fragile peace period between 1994 and 1998."

BRITISH ARMY

Boode has worked closely with the British Army on projects other than humanitarian ones. During the Kosovo War, between 1998 and 1999, the company was asked to supply the well casings and screens for the supply of water to 6,000 men in tented temporary accommodation zones, set up in winter. ►

"Over the last 25 years, we've witnessed huge changes, not just in our own operations but also in the land-drilling industry"

Preparing to drill and install Boode screen and casing in Senegal in the mid-1990s

A Fairwater pump providing clean, safe water for remote communities

The difficult drilling and operating conditions meant keeping the supply and drilling process as simple and efficient as possible, so gravel-coated screens were used. The installation was successful and on January 18, 2000, Brigadier Roycroft, chief executive of the Defence Logistics Organisation, wrote to Stan Dronsfield to thank him for Boode's efforts.

“According to WHO figures, 47% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa rely on unsafe or surface water supplies”

Between 2003 and 2005 Boode worked with the army's Specialist Team Royal Engineers in Iraq, supplying PVC casings and screens for similar tented accommodations.

BLUEWATER PUMP

Boode's most recent affiliation has been with the Fairwater Foundation as distributors and advisors for the BlueWater pump, a simple, durable and versatile handpump available for community water supply for all depths.

Since 2006, Boode has been



supplying pumps, rising mains, well screens and casings and technical advice to engineers working in remote communities in Angola, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Central African Republic, Niger, Gambia, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Over 500 Blue pumps are now providing a safe water supply to more than 150,000 people across Africa.

The latest World Health Organisation figures indicate the importance of these kinds of initiative. According to its 2013 report, there were 768 million people in the world in 2011 that did not have access to safe water,

approximately one in 10 of the world's population. 3.4 million people die from a water-related disease every year, 185 million rely on surface water to meet their daily drinking-water needs and 47% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa rely on unsafe or surface water supplies.

Between 50% and 80% of donated handpumps across Africa are not functional because of the expense of repairing them when they break down. The Blue pumps cost only £3 (US\$4.96) per family a year to maintain and can pump from depths up to 100m.

Boode's most recent Fairwater project in Africa was early last year, supporting the British Army's Royal Engineers in Sierra Leone, supplying casings, screens and Fairwater Blue handpumps, along with associated technical advice for 19 specialist military water experts who flew out to drill nine new and refurbish two existing boreholes. ♥

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