

News story: Forest Gin branches out into new spirits and overseas markets

Husband and wife team Karl and Lindsay Bond have big plans for their new whisky brand – Forest Whisky – to help secure the firm's future through exporting. They plan to increase their exports to constitute 90% of their total revenue in 5 years' time.

Currently, the family-run distillery's exports make up 17% of its sales, with its gin sold in 10 countries, including Japan, China, Australia and the US. UK stockists include Harvey Nichols and their gin is available by the glass in the Virgin Trains First Class lounge in London.

Interest in the new whisky brand follows repeat orders from distributors in Japan for the firm's earl grey infused gin over the last year.

Forest Gin is the only gin to have ever been awarded 2 separate Double-Gold Medals at the San Francisco World Spirit Awards in 2016, a competition that assesses hundreds of spirits from all over the world.

Since starting operations 3 years ago, the business has leveraged worldwide demand for premium products with a clear British heritage to fuel its impressive growth. The team joined trade missions to China, Japan and the US, organised as part of the Food is GREAT campaign, a joint initiative by the [Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (Defra) and the Department for International Trade (DIT) to help British food and drink businesses sell their goods and services overseas.



Founders Karl and Lindsay Bond with their daughter. (c) Forest Gin

Karl Bond, co-founder of the Forest Distillery said:

We've been amazed at the reception to our gin from overseas buyers. We're expecting our exports to grow substantially over the next few years, especially as we continue to find trusted contacts in new markets, with support from DIT.

We're very excited about the launch of Forest Whisky. We're only the 15th distiller in England to be granted a licence to mature whisky, and to receive pre-orders at this early stage shows how highly regarded British distillers are internationally.

We expect to face a few challenges as we grow our exports. The logistics of transporting our porcelain bottles is an obvious one. But support is on hand from DIT to help us connect with distribution partners that we can trust to take maximum care of our products. With the support that's available, there's nothing stopping others like us in the drinks business to find a footing in new markets.

Paul Stowers, Head of North West region at DIT, said:

While it's the Scottish that are typically best known for their whisky exports, ambitious drinks businesses like the Forest

Distillery are beginning to fly the flag for English whisky overseas.

We're also currently seeing a surge in demand for British gin from abroad, as part of a so-called 'ginaissance', which is the result of excellent products like Forest Gin.

UK exports of gin have risen by 19% in the first half of 2018 and are predicted to reach £600 million by the end of the year. This is more than double the value exported in 2008. The US and Australia in particular are hot markets for British gin, and we'd urge any distiller to get in touch with one of our local [international trade advisers](#) to find out how they can begin or grow their trade overseas.



Forest Gin Distillery (c) Forest Gin

Online support, find a buyer, and export readiness tools are available at [great.gov.uk](#), where thousands of live export opportunities are also promoted.

Press release: Innovative technique to install two bridges in one weekend on A14 upgrade

How do you build two 1,000 tonne bridges over a very busy road while (nearly) keeping the road open throughout? You build them at the side of the road and wheel them into place at the end!

This is exactly what the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon upgrade team has been doing over the past few months. They have built four abutments to support the new bridges as well as two bridge decks at the side of the live carriageway, and are now ready to wheel the bridges decks, each measuring 44 metres, into place on top of the abutments.

Now the team has released an engineering video to show exactly how they plan to tackle the challenge – and it involves a very big, remote controlled platform on wheels.

[Animation – Bar Hill junction bridge replacement September 2018](#)

The new bridges, which are being built as part of the £1.5 billion major improvement scheme and will be located at Bar Hill, will be installed during the weekend of 14 September. They will form a new, improved Bar Hill junction which will connect the A14 to the future local access road between Cambridge and Huntingdon, as well as to the existing local road between Bar Hill and Longstanton (B1050).

David Bray, project director for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon upgrade at Highways England, said:

Redesigning and building the Bar Hill junction was identified from the start of the project as one of the main challenges we would have to tackle. I am delighted that we've found a way to build the two bridges while keeping the A14 open as much as possible and disruption for people locally and road users to a minimum. And I am also excited that we're using such an innovative solution to our challenge – that's what makes my job so interesting.



The abutments for the two new bridges can be seen just south of the existing bridge and further down on the right of the road, the bridge decks are under construction

To carry out the bridge deck installation work safely, the A14 will need to be closed between Friday 14 September, 9pm, and Monday 17 September, 6am.

During the closure, clearly signed diversions will be in place as traffic not needing to enter or exit the A14 at Bar Hill will not be able to travel through the junction along the A14 in either direction.

Through traffic travelling eastbound toward Cambridge will be diverted to leave the A14 at Godmanchester (junction 24), follow the diversion via the A1198, and A428. Through traffic travelling westbound toward Huntingdon will follow the same diversion in reverse.

The team will also need to make some temporary changes to the slip road during the closure.

Traffic wishing to travel westbound from Bar Hill will be able to access the A14 towards Huntingdon but it won't be possible to travel eastbound on the A14 from Bar Hill. Traffic wishing to travel eastbound will be diverted via the westbound A14 to Godmanchester and join the through traffic diversion towards Cambridge.

The new bridges will ultimately replace the old bridge which will be demolished in 2019.

To help people find out more about this work and the closures, the A14

upgrade team will be available with their Mobile Visitor Centre at Tesco Bar Hill on Monday 3 September, 4pm to 8pm and Thursday 6 September, 4pm to 8pm.

There is no space to safely watch the work taking place, during the weekend but people can find out more about the work and closure details, and watch the work via a live stream online by visiting the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon social media channels and website.

Highways England is upgrading a 21-mile stretch of the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon to three lanes in each direction including a brand new 17-mile bypass south of Huntingdon, with four lanes in each direction between Bar Hill and Girton. The project, which includes 34 bridges and main structures, will add additional capacity, boost the local and national economy and cut up to 20 minutes off journeys.

To check the latest traffic information for the A14 and other roads, listen to traffic bulletins on local and national radio stations, visit <http://www.trafficengland.com/> and follow Highways England on Twitter via @HighwaysEAST.

For the latest information about the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme, visit <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/A14C2H> follow @A14C2H on Twitter and like the scheme Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/A14C2H/>.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: New UK support to boost long-term stability in Somalia

Updated: Added image for context.

The international community must do more to help the African Union lead the fight against al-Shabaab as Somalia takes on greater responsibility for its own security, Theresa May will say today.

The UK has a strong track record both in supporting the African Union and helping Somalia rebuild its police and military forces after decades of

insecurity.

On a visit to a UK-backed Counter-IED training centre in Nairobi the Prime Minister will see British troops helping prepare soldiers from Kenya and the region to deploy as part of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

British instructors and their Kenyan counterparts are training troops in the tactics and techniques needed to identify and destroy the home-made bombs which are increasingly the weapon of choice for terrorists in the region.

Announcing over £7 million of new UK funding to support the AU's peacekeeping mission in Somalia, she will call on international donors to contribute more, setting out that an unstable Somalia has a knock-on effect on stability across the region and further afield.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Somalia is at a critical juncture and sustainable, predictable funding and support for the troops who are building stability in the region is vital to support a transition to Somali-led security, when the conditions for a handover are right.

Last year the UK contributed £385 million towards international efforts to help the Somali people build an increasingly secure, stable and prosperous country.

The Prime Minister hosted the London Somalia Conference in 2017 which agreed the international community's new partnership with the Federal Government of Somalia.

While in Kenya, she will announce further funding to support Somalia in a range of areas, including:

- more than £60 million to help over a million people cope with and recover from the impact of conflict and drought. Lifesaving food, clean water and medicine, along with support to find stable jobs, will help Somalis to look after themselves and their families in the long-term, reducing their dependence on humanitarian aid
- more than £25 million to support Somalia as it works to establish a stable and democratic political system. This will include advice to help develop rules on resource and power-sharing, and to prepare for landmark elections, including through support for voter and political party registration

Press release: Prompt action prevents A14 bridge closure

A lorry which struck the underside of a low bridge could have caused chaos on the A14, were it not for the swift recovery work of Highways England traffic officers and their partners.

The vehicle hit the underside of the Huntingdon Railway Viaduct, which carries the A14 over the rail line and through the town, at 1.15am last Wednesday (22 August). The bridge has a 4.4 metre (14ft 6in) height restriction in place on it, with the HGV too big to pass beneath.

A lane was closed on Brampton Road following the crash, which could have seen the bridge beams damaged and made the viaduct unable to support its weight, let alone the 77,000 drivers who cross it daily on the A14, closing both the road and railway beneath it too. Such damage would have seen the bridge need assessments which could take six months, with the repair and inspection work likely costing around £2 million.

Fortunately the damage was only superficial, and Highways England traffic officers, along with contractors Kier, Cambridgeshire Police and Cambridgeshire County Council, were quick to act at the scene, minimising disruption before the morning rush hour hit prevent the town centre road being closed fully. With the lorry trapped beneath the steel beams of the bridge, they released air from the tyres to move it back.

Highways England service manager Austin Adkins said:

Hopefully this will serve as a reminder to drivers of tall vehicles that they need to take extra care on their journeys, particularly with low bridges, as hitting them can easily be avoided yet have a far reaching impact. I want to thank our operatives and partners who worked together to swiftly resolve what could have been a hugely disruptive incident, even with the damage being minimal.

The Huntingdon Railway Viaduct will be demolished after the new £1.5 billion A14 link between Cambridge and Huntingdon opens in December 2021, with new link roads making it easier to travel to, from and around the town.

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Press release: UK expands counter-IED support in Africa

With the help of the British Army who are working closely with their Kenyan partners to combat terrorism and save lives in East Africa, the facility is expanding into a regional centre of excellence.

Training will be offered to Kenyan security forces and other African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop-contributing nations in the region. Continued UK support will also include £2.3 million a year from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and mentoring from the British Army.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

“From supporting counter-terrorist operations in Mali to improvised explosive device disposal training in Kenya, our Armed Forces are helping to build a more secure Africa. By tackling the terrorist threat abroad we are helping to keep our streets safe at home.”

Since 2015, 1,000 military and police personnel from East Africa have been trained by the British Army in identifying and destroying IEDs. Yet, in the same period the use of IEDs has increased by around 300 per cent in Somalia, where casualties are often civilians.

By November 2020, the wing is expected to have developed into a fully-functioning, independent centre of excellence where East African instructors will provide specialised IED disposal training.

The expansion forms part of a new UK-Kenya security agreement which is allowing both countries to keep pace with the changing nature of threats and to renew our cooperation on counter-terrorism, child protection, and regional security. The Prime Minister also announced over £7 million of new UK funding to support AMISOM, as she called on international donors to contribute more to the peacekeeping mission.

Her visit reaffirms that the UK will support the project until it operates independently as a regional and continental centre of excellence.