

The European Blue Banana

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Thursday, 03 March 2011 12:51 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 March 2011 13:04

(Article first published Feb 2011 by <http://www.theedgewirral.co.uk/content/>)

From the Super Lamb Banana to the Wealthy Blue Banana

You may be familiar with Liverpool's iconic Super Lamb Banana, but how many know about the European Blue Banana? Well, you should, because it may change the way you view our place in the world up here in the North West of the UK. The story begins a long time ago in a land far away – well, actually France in 1989, where geographer Roger Brunet was trying to make sense of the growing European economy. When he took a close look at where the wealth of Europe is actually created he found an almost continuous urbanized region of 110 million people stretching from Milan in Northern Italy, through Germany and the Low Countries, crossing over the North Sea into the Midlands and the North of England and ending in – *Liverpool!*

The shape of this super-wealthy region was roughly banana shaped, somebody coloured it blue from the EU flag and, hey presto, you have the famous Blue Banana. Brunet's message to the French Government was simple – stop focusing on Paris as the centre of the world, you're not even on the economic map! Well, something similar tends to happen to us "provincials" in the North West, always assuming we have to play second fiddle to the might South East on the other side of the so called North-South divide. Instead we should be taking advantage of the Blue Banana super-region of which we are an integral part. After all, our mixed economy in the North West is much closer to this European backbone than it is to the financial services focus of London. So if you want to grow your business into new territories, think of going East on easyJet from John Lennon Airport, and not South on Virgin Trains from Lime Street!

Bon Voyage

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