

GREAT BRITISH RAILWAYS



DONCASTER HEADQUARTERS?

“The competition will recognise towns and cities with a rich railway history that are strongly linked to the network ensuring the first headquarters will take pride of place at the heart of a new era for Britain’s railways.”

Nick Fletcher MP for Don Valley

WHY DONCASTER SHOULD BE HOME TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF GREAT BRITISH RAIL

This country needs Great British Railways and that new organisation needs its headquarters to be where the heart of railway country is. Of course I'm talking about Doncaster.

Great British Railways. It sounds wonderful doesn't it. I have said it before but there is nothing I am more proud of than being a citizen of Great Britain.

God, Queen and Country. That's the order and that in my eyes is the way it should stay. After God, Queen and Country it surely has to be your home town and mine is Doncaster. What a great town it is. A northern town, a red wall town, a mining town but to me and my family and to the UK it will always be a railway town.

My dad loves telling stories of his time firing the steam engines in the 50's and 60's. The day he stood on the footplate of the Mallard for a local journalist. Jumping off the engine



at Marshgate when he'd finished his shift. Not sure the Health and Safety Executive would have approved! He would quite fondly tell me which were the good engines; the Green Arrow in Doncaster's new Museum and Library is a 'good engine' he says. All the big engines were built here in Doncaster. They breathed these engines. They were almost living things, he says. Songs were written about

them. Princess of the night. 90 tonnes of thunder speeding down the track, iron striking metal, the sound of racing steel. It truly brings the railway alive doesn't it? Gets the pulse racing.

For me, my apprenticeship was at Doncaster Plant Works, not quite as exciting as firing a steam train but so many happy days spent there. I cannot begin to tell you the joy of working with a group of great guys on a great railway project. I often say if I'd have never been made redundant, I would have never left. My final shifts at Doncaster Plant were spent rewiring the London Underground trains that were the first to be refurbished after the Kings Cross disaster. So the railway is not just important to our town of Doncaster and its folk, it is personally important to me.

The mines have gone never to re-open, much of that industry where many working class families earned a living have gone. But Doncaster Plant Works remains, still there doing what it has done for the railways for years and years, keeping our trains on the track and refurbishing rolling stock. It is no accident that the new National Railway College is now in Doncaster.

The talk of levelling up has been as much about infrastructure as anything else. Getting people from A to B as quickly and as cleanly as possible. There's talk of opening old lines and stations. Creating new lines and buying new trains.

The railway is definitely as much of our future as it has been our past. 1 freight train is the equivalent of 500 lorries on our

motorways. It's green and it's part of our DNA. Today Doncaster boasts 50 railway companies that call Doncaster home with paid employments across the region in excess of 8000 if we include all the supply chains.

Now, following the pandemic, the new framework for our railways: Great British Rail. As I said at the beginning, where better to put the headquarters than the greatest railway town in the UK, Doncaster. The infrastructure is in place. The companies and skills are here. The training college is here.

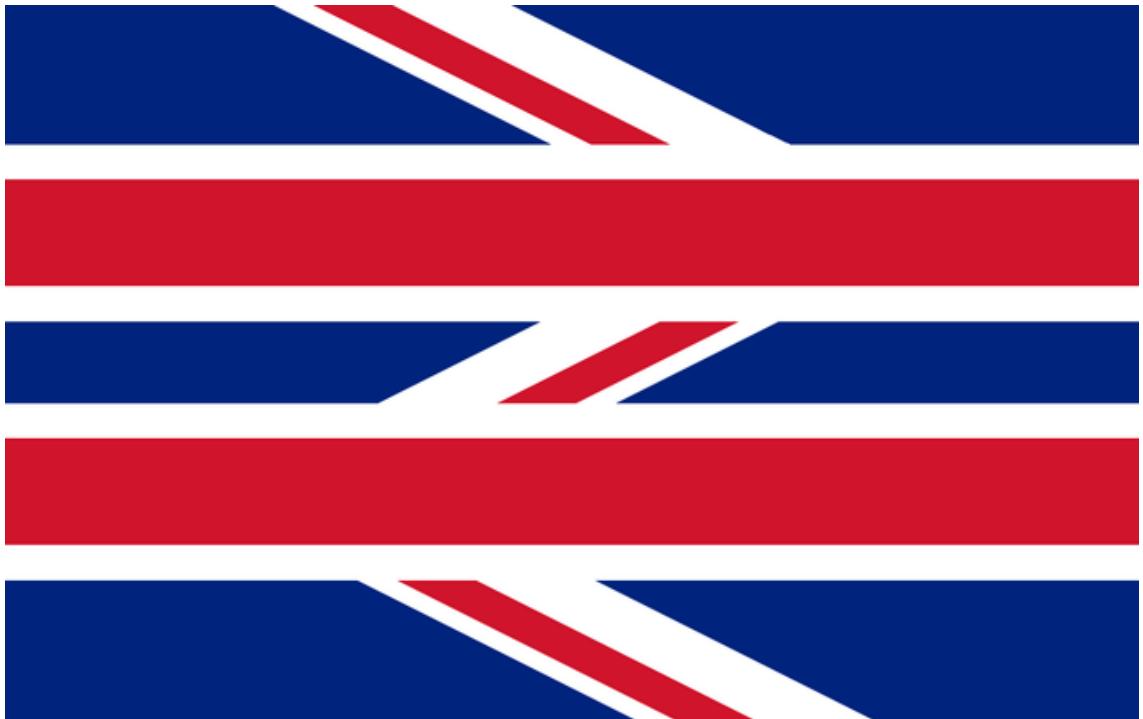
Success is never a given and I don't believe in sure things but I do believe in all the right ingredients and I do believe in Doncaster. 'Great British Rail headquarters will be in Doncaster'. I can hear the cheers now!

A new headquarters within the industrial North, an emblem of a great industrial past with a wonderful green future. Now that's levelling up.

Let the bidding begin. Let's get all our pulses racing again.

Let's bring this railway town of Doncaster really alive once again. Bring it on!





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