Family's delight as Network Rail restores historic railway sign in York

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Teams from Network Rail have painstakingly restored an iconic railway sign just north of York station following a request from the daughter of the man who made it almost 90 years ago.

Pauline Kerr contacted Network Rail earlier this year to request that the sign, which marks the half-way point between Edinburgh and London, be cleaned and restored.

The sign was made and installed in 1938 by Pauline's Dad, Ken Bainbridge, from Newton-on-Ouse. Ken made the sign when he worked as an engineer's apprentice aged just 17. Building the sign took Ken two weeks and saw him craft the 50-foot sign by hand, using a chisel, saw and drill.

The sign, which has been next to the East Coast main line for 86 years, was looking a little weathered, which is why Pauline reached out to Network Rail to request it be shown a bit of attention.

Network Rail teams have now carried out work to refresh, repaint and restore the sign to its former glory once more.

A new maintenance regime has also been put in place to make sure that the sign remains in good condition and can be enjoyed by rail passengers for future generations.

Jason Hamilton, Network Rail east coast route programme director, said: "This sign is iconic and loved by many passengers who travel up and down the East Coast Main Line, so we're really pleased that we've been able to get it looking as good as new.

"York has a rich railway history and it's fascinating to learn more about how Ken made the sign when he was just a teenager. We're really happy to have been able to complete this work, as we know what a difference it will make for Pauline and her family.

"The new maintenance routine will make sure it continues to welcome passengers to York for years to come."

When he retired in 1984, Ken Bainbridge told Railnews, "All I had to do the job with were chisels, a hacksaw and a file – there were no machines then. When I look at those signs north of York I feel they are mine."