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### **Golden History for London Midland**

London Midland's golden history is to be preserved by the National Railway Museum.

In 2016, London Midland turned its station signs gold to mark the success of local heroes such as Megan Giglia and Jon-Allan Butterworth at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Ten London Midland stations had their signs, or running-in-boards, changed to celebrate gold medals won by local athletes at the games.

Across the London Midland network, gold signs were installed at Kidderminster, Stratford-upon-Avon, Northampton, Bromsgrove, Sutton Coldfield, Leighton Buzzard, Bedworth, Bedford St Johns, Stone and Hemel Hempstead. Alongside the installation of the new boards, London Midland created a scheme called 'Your Sporting Chance', aimed at encouraging young people to embrace healthy lifestyles. The scheme now supports over 50 youth and junior sports teams and clubs across the network.

Now the sign at Kidderminster station, in honour of Team GB Paralympian swimmer Claire Cashmore, has been handed over to Science Museum Deputy Chairman, Lord Faulkner of Worcester.

At the point of railway privatisation, it was decided that there was a need to continue protecting heritage objects and records, as they had been since the Transport Act of 1968. This led to the 1996 Act, which empowered the Railway Heritage Committee to designate objects with special heritage significance, ensuring that at the end of their working life they would be preserved by a suitable organisation. These powers passed to the Science Museum trustees in 2013, who are advised by the Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board (RHDAB).

London Midland's gold station signs have now been identified as an official part of railway history. The sign at Kidderminster will be displayed at the National Railway Museum in York for future generations of visitors to enjoy.

Brenda Lawrence, head of Snow Hill services at London Midland, said: "Communities are at the heart of everything we do and to have our gold board at Kidderminster destined for the National Railway Museum is a real honour. We wanted to recognise the excellent achievement of sportsmen and women across our network and installing gold boards seemed like a very fitting way to celebrate their success."

Steve Helfet, who came up with the idea of the gold station signs at London Midland, added "For any train operating company, having an object designated and installed in the National Railway Museum is very exciting and we are extremely proud to leave a small and important London Midland legacy behind for generations to come."

Science Museum Deputy Chairman and RHDAB chair Lord Faulkner of Worcester, said: "We are delighted that London Midland shares our enthusiasm for the preservation of a gold station sign from Kidderminster. It is a perfect example of a modern railway artefact which will continue to tell the story to future generations of visitors to the National Railway Museum of how a train operating company went the extra mile in linking together a railway station, a local community and a brilliant athlete."

The gold Kidderminster board will be moved to its new home at the museum in York later this year.