

Rail anniversary is a family affair

THE grand-daughter of Great Malvern's stationmaster in Victorian times will be coming to the town next weekend to the celebration of the railway's 150th anniversary.

Nancy Andrews will be travelling from Solihull to Malvern on Sunday, May 23, for a gala day at the station to mark the railway coming to the town. Her grandfather, T R Franklin, was the stationmaster for 38 years, from 1871.

"The Duke and Duchess of Teck presented him with a diamond tie pin for his long service," she said.

"Princess Mary, who later became Queen Mary, fetched him to the Foley Arms, where they made the presentation."

Mr Franklin was a loyal employee of the Great Western Railway, but that did not stop him turning down what was one of the top jobs in the company.

"He loved Malvern so much that he turned down a chance to become the stationmaster of Paddington," she said.

Mr Franklin died in 1920 and was buried in his hometown of Shipton-under-Wychwood.

Memorabilia from his life will be on show at the station as part of the celebrations on the day, which have been arranged by the town and district councils and the Cotswold Line Promotion Group.

A special train carrying rail enthusiasts and VIPs will leave Worcester Foregate

Street station at about 9.30am for Malvern, where it will be met by town council chairman Paul Tuthill.

There will be displays of rail history at the station, where rooms that are normally closed to the public will be opened up.

Bands will be playing all day and there will be a fun-fair for children, vintage cars, food and drink and other attractions.

Coun Tuthill said: "It's a day to celebrate what the railway means for Malvern.

"The same day marks the first of our Bands In The Park concerts, and I hope that people will come and see the popular Band of the Lancashire Fusiliers, which starts playing at 4.30pm."