

Finally in January 2008 Chiltern Railways, which formed part of the Laing Group, was sold by its parent company to Deutsches Bahn (DB), the German state railway system. Whether this will amount to nationalisation by the back door, and result in any improvement to Chiltern's already commendable performance remains to be seen. One wonders what Sir Edward Watkin would think of it all.

Numerous books have been written about the Great Central Railway and its London Extension of 1899 and the 1910 'new' line, from a three-volume detailed history by the late George Dow to mainly illustrated albums with usually informative captions, especially a series by Messrs. D. Edwards and R. Pigram, and another series by Mr John Healy, now out of print but frequently obtainable. Mr S.C. Jenkins' *Great Western and Great Central Joint Railway* (Oakwood Press) is an authoritative history of the 1910 line. The same author collaborated with Mrs Ruth Irons in producing *Woodford Halse – A Railway Community* (Oakwood Press, 1999) which is a fascinating read for those interested in social as much as industrial history, and a major contribution to the history of Banburyshire. The Great Central's chairman, the first Lord Faringdon, was a connoisseur of the arts as well as an astute businessman, and his taste (ranging from Rembrandt to Burne-Jones) may still be appreciated at Buscot Park in Oxfordshire, managed by his descendants on behalf of the National Trust. A visit is strongly recommended.

I am grateful to my siderodromophilic* friends Hugh Jones and Professor George Huxley for reading this short article through in draft, especially to the latter for his scholia, and to Anne Radford for typing it out. Any errors are of course my own work.

* Professor Huxley's neologism, from the Greek 'sidero' (iron) 'dromo' (way) and 'philiac' (lover).