

# SLCO lands 'The Honeybourne Hoover' and 'Ore No More' as its first charter

April 26, 2022



*Birmingham based train operator takes the helm for the Hanson & Hall / Branch Line Society's 400 mile plus Class 50 adventure...*

It was a milestone moment for Birmingham based train operator **SLC Operations** at the weekend, when for its first passenger charter it was chosen to helm the Hanson & Hall / Branch Line Society's (BLS) venture along the Hampshire and Sussex Coast.

Using classic English Electric Class 50 haulage (Hanson & Hall's 50008 'Thunderer' and Class 50 Alliance's 50007 'Hercules,' the special charters included the 'Honeybourne Hoover,' running on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, and 'Ore No More,' which took place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, with both charters exploring branches normally dominated by multiple units.



*Image courtesy of Sam Dixon and provided by SLC*

A UK-based voluntary association for railway enthusiasts, the BLS runs a dedicated programme of rail tours, with the 'Honeybourne Hoover' seeing passengers travelling in Mark 1 coaching stock pulled by 50007 from Burton-on-Trent to Eastleigh via Pershore and Honeybourne, with a number of sought after loops for added interest. The running order was as follows:

- Burton-on-Trent - Elford - Tamworth High Level - Kingsbury Jn - Water Orton - St Andrews Jn - Bordesley Jn - Lifford East Jn - Kings Norton - Longbridge Dn Gloucester Goods - Cofton Jn - Bromsgrove - Stoke Works Jn - Worcester Shrub Hill - Norton Jn - Pershore - Honeybourne - Wolvercote Jn - Oxford - Radley - Didcot Parkway - Tilehurst - Reading West Curve - Oxford Road Jn - Southcote Jn - Basingstoke - Worting Jn - Wallers Ash - Shawford - Eastleigh.

Again using the Mark 1 stock, but this time hauled by 50008, Saturday's 'Ore No More' was a marathon 400 mile round trip starting and finishing at Eastleigh, via Reading, Portsmouth, Bognor, Brighton, Eastbourne, East Croydon and London Cannon Street, with the opportunity taken to include the Cliftonville Spur near Brighton and Newhaven Marine Sidings. The full timetable was as follows:



- Eastleigh – Waller’s Ash – Basingstoke – Reading – Basingstoke – Waller’s Ash – Eastleigh – Botley – Fareham – Portsmouth & Southsea – Fratton – Havant – Barnham – Bognor Regis – Barnham – Littlehampton – Arundel Jn – Worthing – Hove – Brighton – Hove – Cliftonville Spur – Preston Park – Brighton – Lewes – Newhaven Marine Sidings – Lewes – Haywards Heath – Lewes – Eastbourne – Haywards Heath – Gatwick Airport – Quarry Line – East Croydon – New Cross Gate – London Bridge – London Cannon Street – London Bridge – New Cross Gate – East Croydon – Gatwick Airport – Three Bridges – Horsham – Arundel Jn – Ford – Havant – Cosham – Southampton Central – Eastleigh.



*Image courtesy of Sam Dixon and provided by SLC*

The train was stabled overnight at Arriva Traincare, Eastleigh.

During the weekend, organisers BLS held a special raffle, which when combined with the proceeds from the charter and on-board buffet, raised over £3,000 for the Trussell Trust, which supports a nationwide network of food banks and emergency support for people locked in poverty.

For **SLC Operations**, the trips represented a major landmark as the business’s first passenger charter in its two-year history, with the company providing the operation and train crew for the weekend, with assistance from **DB Cargo**, **GBRf** and **Balfour Beatty**.

Commented SLCO’s Managing Director Cath Bellamy: “We’re delighted to have had the opportunity to use

our passenger operating licence to support BLS and its benefiting charity in running such an unusual and exciting charter.”

Added SLCO’s Commercial and Charter Manager Ben Mason: “It was truly a team effort and is heartening to have successfully operated a very complicated rail tour over extremely busy parts of the UK rail network, with no impact on other services.”

Now SLCO is preparing itself for a busy summer, with a further four charters scheduled from now through to September.