

## Steam Railways Will Run out of UK Coal, industry warns

The Heritage Railway Association (HRA) has issued a stark warning after planning permission was refused for a new coal mine near Newcastle. The HRA says English coal supplies will run out in early 2021, with Welsh supplies lasting until 2022. Chairman of the West Somerset Railway Jonathan Jones-Pratt said: "The whole industry is in jeopardy over this. We've got so much coal here, but the problem is that we can't extract it. Steam locomotives rely on bituminous lump coal to burn, which is relatively smokeless and comparatively clean. The opencast mine at Dewley Hill, near Newcastle, would have produced this coal but it was rejected for environmental reasons. The HRA said the decision "dashed the hopes of Britain's heritage railways, who need affordable coal to continue operating. The only remaining mine producing lump coal in the UK is Ffos-Y-Fran near Merthyr Tydfil, which is due to close in 2022.

It is estimated the heritage railway industry used 26,000 tonnes of coal per year pre-Covid, accounting for 0.02% of the UK's carbon emissions. Once stocks run out the industry will be reliant on foreign imports as demand from the steam industry would not be enough to sustain a domestic coal mine, according to the HRA.