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Working Together to Keep 'Road Steam' Alive

Questions & Answers

How long will real coal be available?

Global reserves of coal are run into billions of tonnes. However, if we focus on the UK the question is will sized coal be available for the Heritage Sector in the future?

In short yes, but the ban on the sale of coal into domestic properties and the phasing out of coal in the power stations will mean less coal coming into the UK and lower volumes of larger coal as importers will focus on coal fines and singles (too small for most NTET members) to satisfy the demand from industrial users (steel, cement, brick manufacturers – CPL requires c.100ktpa for our own manufacturing)

However, sized coal will be required for domestic properties in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for as long as there is demand (and no ban). If it is cost effective to do so, CPL (and others) will bring in sized coal that will be sold into these domestic markets and the heritage sector. However, prices are likely to be higher than they have been historically and we shouldn't ignore the fact that public opinion is to move away from fossil fuels to cleaner burning fuels.

Where is the coal from?

Main suitable sources are South America, Russia and Eastern Europe. China, Australia, India and North America also have coal reserves, but price, logistics, quality and local demand generally make sourcing coal from these regions unviable.

How is it supplied to the end user?

Coal can be supplied into the Heritage sector in either large, loose volumes, generally 20t or 29t loads from our facility at Immingham (Humberside). Alternatively, CPL has a network of over 28 depots across the UK that supply coal, smokeless ovoids, wood, charcoal and anthracite in much smaller pre-packed quantities – as low as 1 no. 25kg bag (subject to a minimum order value of £50)

What happens after May 2023

The SALE of coal into domestic properties in ENGLAND will be banned.

Coal can still be sold (and burned) in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

If properties have coal in their bunkers beyond May 2023 they can still burn it, they just can't buy it anymore.

The Heritage sector is exempt from this ban

Coal will still be imported into the UK (including England) to meet demand of industrial users and domestic users not in England

What future alternatives to real coals will be available?

Manufactured ovoids will be / are the most widely available and suitable alternatives. They are available now. CPL produce a wide range of manufactured ovoids. These are smokeless (emit 80% less smoke than coal) and can be blended with a wide variety of raw materials (coal, anthracite, petcoke, biomass, molasses) to create fuels with different burning characteristics for different appliances. Ovoids can be manufactured in different shapes and sizes (limits apply) to suit almost all boiler types.

Other fuels such as wood or heatlogs (briquetted wood) are also available, but may not be suitable for all appliances due to lower bulk density, lower CV's and the volume required on the firebed – never-the-less CPL can supply product for trial.

Will these alternatives be tailored to the different demands of road steam?

(Need to cover these broad phases of use) Lighting up - no forced draught, 'Boiling the pot' – very low draught, Working hard – high draught.

This is a new area of fuel development for CPL, but we are already running successful trials with the HRA and we can work with the NTET to adjust blends to suit requirements. We appreciate the needs of the NTET members will differ from HRA members.

Fuels can be developed quite quickly and we already have fuels available for you to trial – just tell us where they need to go.

Any new fuel will NOT perform the same as your existing fuels. A new fuel will inevitably perform differently and require managing differently by the operator – just like you did when Ffos-y-fran was first introduced. But, manufactured

ovoids provide a long term, sustainable, smokeless and environmentally better alternative to what you currently have.

Are there manufactured fuels available today for road steam use?

Yes we have a range available which will suit

Anticipated costs?

Depends on product, quantity (loose v pre-packed) and transport, but we currently have a smokeless ovoid with 5% biomass available at £255/t FIV Immingham (loose, transport to be added) and our Ecoal 50 (50% biomass) available loose at £394/t FIV Immingham or prepacked at c.£540/t delivered.

Are manufactured fuels be available in small sizes for miniature engines?

We are able to produce a range of ovoids in different sizes. Our smallest is a 23g briquette. Further trials would be required and the volumes need to be commercially viable, but yes, in principle, this is possible.

What progress is being made towards 'Green' coal?

Timescales?

Anticipated costs?

CPL are the first and only fuel manufacturer to have developed a mineral & biomass fuel. We already have an established fuel on the domestic market (Ecoal50 – 50% biomass) which has been successfully trialled by a number of narrow gauge railways. We are currently working with the HRA and other steam users to develop a suitable fuel with a biomass content, we hope the NTET will also choose to work with us to help find a biomass, smokeless ovoid suitable for them.

Ultimately our goal is to get to 100% biomass, smokeless ovoid, but this is probably a few years away, however, we expect to make incremental gains over the next 2 – 3 years as we move from 50% to 100%.

Costs are uncertain at the moment, but Ecoal 50 is available at £394/t loose FIV Immingham. Prepacked Ecoal is also available in 10kg, 20kg and 25kg bags from all of our depots.

Are CPL able to work with the NTET to help design acceptable environmental solutions for heritage road steam?

Yes, we welcome this. This is a major area of focus for our R&D team across a number of customer channels – Domestic, Heritage and Industrial.