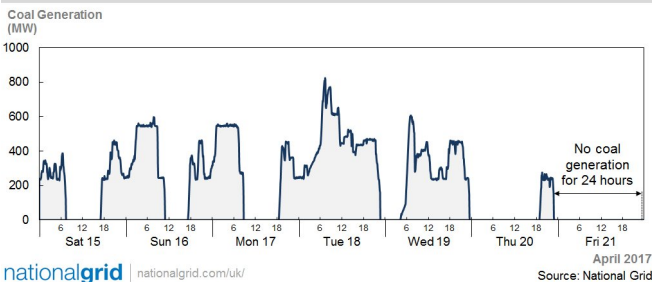


Who needs coal? Britain did nicely without coal for 24 hours

25 April 2017, by Nancy Owano

Great Britain goes without Coal Generation for 24 hours

Friday 21st April 2017 was the first 24-hour period since the 1880s where Great Britain went without coal-fired power stations.



[nationalgrid](http://nationalgrid.com/uk/) | nationalgrid.com/uk/

April 2017
Source: National Grid

Credit: National Grid

(Tech Xplore)—The energy provider, National Grid, on Twitter [confirmed](#) that, on April 21st, Britain went without coal-generated power for its first full day.

Environment watchers can mark off Friday, April 21. In a 24 hour period, confirmed National Grid, electricity demand in Great Britain was supplied without the need for [coal](#) generation—that is, without coal fired [power stations](#).

Climate Action, which works in partnership with the United Nations Environment Program, said that, specifically, by 10.50 pm on Friday the UK had not required electricity sourced from coal.

Coal accounted for just 9% of electricity generation in 2016 - down from 23% the [year](#) before.

Coal-fired [power](#) plants emit almost double the amount of CO₂ (a heat trapping gas blamed for global [warming](#)) as gas-fired power plants, said Reuters.

So, April 21 is a day to remember as no coal was used to generate electricity. Sources that kept the lights on included [natural gas](#), nuclear, wind, biomass, and imported energy.

The average generation mix was [gas](#) (50.3%), nuclear (21.2%), wind (12.2%), imports (8.3%), biomass (6.7%) and solar (3.6%), based on the Twitter feed from the National Grid Control Room.

Of the imports, 59.7% were from France, 36.8% were from the Netherlands, and 3.5% were from the Rep of [Ireland](#).

National Grid is highlighting the coal-free period as a watershed moment, considering the government's resolve to cut carbon [emissions](#) and phase out Britain's last plants by 2025. That is when Britain's last coal power station will be shutting down.

The significance is in the length of the coal-free period. Britain's longest continuous period until now had been 19 hours.

Sebastian Anthony, editor of *Ars Technica* UK, has been looking at the fate of coal over the years: "Coal has been on a steady decline in the UK since the 1970s, when natural gas from the North Sea started to replace coal as the fossil fuel of choice for heating homes. A bunch of nuclear power stations came online in the 1980s further reducing our need for coal, and then in the 1990s natural gas [power](#) generation surged from about 5 percent of the National Grid's energy mix to 28 percent."

Falling power [prices](#) and a tax on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, said Reuters, have made it more uneconomic to run [coal plants](#).

Even in the bigger picture of all of Europe, data indicates coal is in decline. Europe continues making massive investments in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, said *Inhabitat*. "Last year, [European](#) coal emissions fell by an impressive 11 percent, according to an analysis published by the European Commission."

Interestingly, China and India have been taking steps away from the use of coal for power. On

Monday, *Insurance Journal* referred to an Allianz Climate & Energy Monitor Deep Dive report: China is canceling plans to build [fossil](#)-based power plants and is decommissioning existing coal power plants, and India is considering plans to stop building new coal power [plants](#) after 2022.

More information: twitter.com/NGControlRoom/status/855544665172529156

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