

## **History of the Roaches Traffic Management Scheme**

The pressures of visitors, and in particular car-borne visitors to the Roaches area were identified within the Peak District National Park – National Park Plan (March 1978), which stated that “*the Roaches area is heavily used both for informal and active recreation, e.g. walking and climbing. As a result there is considerable verge and footpath erosion, traffic congestion and visual intrusion of parked cars*”<sup>1</sup>. The Plan then went on to propose that “*the problems related to the recreational use of the Roaches area should be examined*”.

The Peak Park Joint Planning Board acquired the 395 ha Roaches Estate in 1980, and adopted a Management Plan in 1981 to provide for the future development of the estate. This Plan imposed controls aimed at resolving the “*apparent conflict between conservation and recreation, particularly climbing and hang-gliding*”.

A review of the Roaches Management Plan took place in 1990, during the same year a report was taken to Park Management Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1990. This report identified a number of problems related to car parking: -

- The capacity of the narrow approach roads is exceeded at peak times resulting in traffic congestion.
- Congestion is made worse by the amount of roadside parking which occurs when areas provided for parking are full up.
- Congestion and indiscriminate parking causes inconvenience and delays to local residents, obstruction of farm and field entrances and could prevent service vehicles gaining access in an emergency.
- Roadside parking results in erosion of grass verges and damage to walls, is a hazard to walkers and can be visually intrusive.

The report identified four outcomes that were necessary to remove these problems: -

- Restrict roadside parking.
- Provide more off-road car parking spaces.
- Separate walkers and vehicles where possible.
- Recognise that at the Roaches, the amount of parking space which can be reasonably provided, whilst remaining consistent with the Board’s policies for managing the Estate, will not at peak periods wholly satisfy demand, and at these times, some visitors are likely to seek alternative destinations.

A number of proposals were put forward to achieve these outcomes including a car park and picnic area below Hen Cloud, creation of a turning area to the North of Roaches Gate, and to put in place waiting restrictions to prevent roadside parking. However all of these proposals were subject to a review of the Estate Management Plan being undertaken at the time. Following on from the review, some concerns were expressed about the impact of the car park and picnic area upon wildlife in the vicinity of Hen Cloud; this coupled with a lack of funding, meant that this measure was not progressed, but a turning area was put in place.

Following on from this a report was taken to Park Management Committee in September 1992, to inform them of progress. Because the implementation of parking restrictions had been based upon the installation of a car park, this had not yet progressed, but due to pressure on the Highway Authority, a way was being sought to progress this. It was proposed that in order to mitigate the loss of parking caused by any such restriction that an experimental Park and Ride scheme be put in place. This service

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<sup>1</sup> Peak District National Park - National Park Plan (March 1978), Peak Park Joint Planning Board.

would operate between Tittesworth reservoir and the Roaches Turning area. This service was to run for two 6-monthly summer periods from Easter 2003 onwards on weekends and bank holidays between 10:00 and 18:00.

The service came into operation during 1993, but following a decision by Severn Trent Water to charge for all car parking at Tittesworth, it was necessary, to then get approval from Park Management Committee to make only a nominal charge for use of the bus service<sup>2</sup>.

The Park & Ride service<sup>3</sup> has continued to operate since 1993 to present, with linkages to Leek also included. However significant cuts to the Transport Team's budget have seen successive reductions in the level of service over recent years, with a reduced season length and a Sunday and Bank Holiday only operation. Recent surveys have indicated a disappointing level of use of the service.

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<sup>2</sup> Park Management Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps it is more accurate to describe the service as a Shuttle Bus.