

# soundscape™ UPDATE

SUMMER/AUTUMN 2005

## Turning Points Ltd

Turning Points has developed an award-winning technology to create and deliver GPS-triggered audio commentaries.

Under its Soundscape brand the company offers a complete audio commentary package for operators, which includes:

- GPS-driven audio commentary delivery units for single and multi-language applications;
- an easy-to-use PC-based authoring system enabling licensed customers to create and manage their own audio commentaries quickly and to the highest standards;
- an ever-expanding library of high quality recorded audio commentaries covering continental European road routes.

**Soundscape clients include operators of coaching holidays, city sightseeing tours and waterway tours.**

## Paaske Bus launches Soundscape in the city centre sightseeing bus sector



**Paaske Bus** is Denmark's largest privately-owned coach company and a part of Københavns Rundfart A/S which also includes Vikingbus, Nettobus, Open Top Bus and Copenhagen City Sightseeing. It has a fleet of 20+ buses and 45 coaches.

Paaske Bus has installed six multi-language Soundscape systems over the course of the summer and has also taken out a license on the PC based Soundscape authoring system in order to create and manage its own commentaries and tours.



Soundscape Authoring

The automatic Soundscape system offers many operational, security and safety advantages over Paaske's earlier driver-activated Compact Disk hardware.

Paaske Bus scoured the European market for a system that would provide robust construction, reliability and flexibility to create and modify commentaries and their

locations. An additional requirement was a facility for the driver to override the system manually at a moment's notice.



Multi-language unit with optional touch screen monitor

**Turning Points' Soundscape system was chosen because of:**

- the design and construction of the commentary hardware (combination of an 8-language channel commentary delivery unit and touch screen monitor);
- the easy-to-use Soundscape authoring system by which operators can create and programme new tours and commentaries quickly and cost-effectively;
- the facility for a manual override function.

## Yorkshire Waterways Museum

In 2004, the Yorkshire Waterways Museum, Goole, looked to the sky for inspiration in consolidating its position as one of the county's most enterprising visitor attractions. It appointed Turning Points Ltd to produce and install its Soundscape audio commentary system.

Since the tour's maiden run in May 2004, hundreds of visitors have enjoyed the insights that the commentary gives into the origins of the town, the men and women who built and worked on the waterway and the ongoing importance to the town of river and rail cargo handling.

The commentary features interviews with many local people who have witnessed at first hand life on the port and canals. Museum Manager Claire Hunt says:

*"We're so fortunate here in being able to combine the attractions of a waterways museum within its own, living and breathing waterway; right here on the quayside.*

*And the fact that so many local people have connections with the port's activity both now and in the past means that we and they have tremendous stories to tell.*

*The commentary and GPS system have brought a new dimension to visitors' experience, both children and adults alike, and always prompts questions, memories and stories of their own."*





# Case Study

## WA Shearings

2005 saw the merger of two of the UK's favourite coach holiday operators - Shearings and Coach Holiday Group (CHG) - into the newly created WA Shearings.

WA Shearings is one of Europe's largest coach holiday companies and carries almost a million passengers each year with a combined fleet of over 400 coaches.

### The challenge for Turning Points

Continental coach holiday itineraries often involve long stretches of road between the various stopping and hotel points.

Recent EU regulations governing a driver's use of the microphone during travel means that new ways of providing entertaining and relevant information en-route are being sought by operators, particularly for longer stretches between stopping points.

Turning Points' task was to provide commentaries which could consistently appeal to a wide variety of passenger tastes and interests and which, using a highly accurate GPS-based delivery system, would direct the passenger's attention to specific points of interest along the route.

Soundscape commentaries cover a broad range of topics including local history and geography, myths and legends, culture and customs, flora and fauna.

The commentaries are typically between one and two minutes in length and feature multiple voices, music and sound effects.

### Soundscape commentaries in Action

Shearings trialed the Soundscape commentaries and GPS-driven delivery system in 2003 on its Paris, Giverny and Fontainebleau holiday itinerary.

Research conducted by Shearings throughout the 2003 season showed that the commentaries were being well received by passengers and drivers alike.

Shearings has since extended its use of the Soundscape system and commentaries to include Scandinavian, Eastern European, Italian and Spanish routings.



The Soundscape delivery system adopted by WA Shearings comprises a car radio-sized unit which is installed in an overhead or other compartment in the same way as a video or DVD player.

The Soundscape unit does not need to be accessed or operated by the driver at any time during the season and connects directly into the coach's existing audio system. The unit takes its GPS data from a small receiver located either on or just under the vehicle's roof.

On selection of the appropriate channel on the coach's audio system, the commentaries are heard when the points of interest are passed.

Once heard, a commentary does not repeat during that same trip and the system resets itself at predetermined locations so that, next time out, the commentaries play as intended all over again.

The commentaries are stored either on the unit's hard disk or on a removable data key depending upon both memory capacity and security issues. Modified and new commentaries can be loaded onto the unit within seconds.

### What the Customers say

#### John Slatcher, WA Shearings' CEO

"Soundscape is currently running on nine of our European holiday itineraries. Our customers have told us that they have enjoyed the lively and informative commentary. Our drivers, far from feeling pushed out, have found that, where safety allows, they can add their own observations and anecdotes to the commentary. The result is an enhanced holiday experience for our customers."

## Executive Profile



**Hilary Field**

Soundscape Executive Producer

Hilary joined the BBC in 1986 and worked in television for four years before finding her true home as a researcher for Radios 2, 3 and 4 and producing her own programmes for Radio 4. During this time Hilary travelled extensively including France, Iceland, the USA and Vietnam, researching, recording and producing a variety of programmes.

Hilary's output covers a great variety of subjects from poetry and literature, to history and drama, from social issues to cultural history.

Credits include: Dear Diary, With Great Pleasure, Afternoon Short Stories, Stanza, Inventors Imperfect, The Little House on the Prairie (Woman's Hour Serial), The Unknown Coleridge.

Hilary joined Turning Points in 2004 as series producer with overall responsibility for Soundscape audio commentaries.

"As executive producer for Soundscape commentaries, I can happily combine all the strands of my work - making great sound pictures and adding an extra dimension to a holiday!

Painstakingly researched, recorded and produced, the words, sounds and music in our Soundscape commentaries reveal vivid - and often unexpected - stories of the places you pass on your journey, to give you that extra special holiday experience you won't forget!"

