



# Service Point

**99**  
**AUTUMN**  
**2007**



The Journal of the Branch and Mobile Libraries Group of CILIP:  
the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

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- iPod

**Front cover:** Bradford's Award Winning Mobile





## Joes Garage



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Close up of Bradford's award winning mobile.



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# Service Point

Edited by IAN STRINGER

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## • Editorial •

Another slightly late issue is because I have been working abroad at the Australian mobile muster and at the IFLA conference in Durban. This is what you get when editor of Service Point. Despite this promise of such rewards, no-one has come forward to take over the mantle. However, fellow committee member Viv Warren has agreed to help with the paper work (invoices etc) and also to help with the content.

I have been very successful over the years in getting mobile library items for the journal but not so successful at getting branch library news. Viv is going to concentrate on this. So lets have lots of articles on both aspects.

We need to have a good quantity for the next issue which is number 100. I will be revisiting some of the items from the previous 50 issues.

We have now got definite confirmation of the site for next years mobilemeet and its at Aintree home of the Grand National see page 11 for details.

*Ian Stringer, Editor*

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**Front cover:** Bradford's award winning mobile

**Back cover:** Yarra Plenty mobile

**Pictures are by** © Ian Stringer, Gerard Cairns, Nick Coe and Brian Giles

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Free to members of the Branch and Mobile Libraries Group of CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. Details of subscriptions to non-members available on request.

## How Green in the Valley

Margam Country Park, Neath Port Talbot,  
Saturday 12th May 2007

When asked by CILIP President Ian Snowley what we were looking for as judges at the *mobilemeet*, I replied 'a very good vehicle but with some sort of additionality to take first prize'. 'Such as what?' he queried. I did not know but suggested that the van in the middle of the long line of pristine vehicles, being attended by an RAC van did not seem to be a likely winner.

Well I was right and wrong. The vehicle with RAC attendance turned out to have a cracked windscreen and was from Bradford and it did have additionality. It had solar panels, which were proving there worth in sunny Bradford.

### The venue

An outstanding vehicle was just one of the outstanding features in an outstanding day. Back in Wales after a long absence, we were royally treated by the local team at Neath Port Talbot.

We had had the usual misgivings, would anyone travel to the heart of South Wales? What would a venue be like in Port Talbot, famous for its steelworks? Would it pour down with rain.

We needn't have worried Margam Country Park was an excellent venues, one of the most beautiful sites we have been to. The facilities were excellent and lots of delegates and vehicles turned up in bright sunshine.

### Judging

We also had the new CILIP President, Ian Snowley who proved enthusiastic and we had a great time choosing the winners along with local librarian Lloyd Ellis. This was a difficult task as there were 39 vehicles in attendance. Our State of the Art choice rested between three vans but Bradford's solar panels just gave them the edge. We felt that our choice was endorsed when it was revealed that the Delegates Choice was also for Bradford.

The livery award took some deciding but we eventually chose a very attractive scheme from Stafford. The Concours yet again wended its way to Birmingham for Paul Phillips still beautifully kept children's van.

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that it can be made even better in future. It's vital that blind and partially sighted readers – and librarians who support them – can find out about accessible books easily and in one place. We look forward to working with MLA and The Combined Regions to act on the recommendations of this study."

A shocking 96 percent of books published in the UK never make it into formats that people with sight problems can read, such as large print, audio or braille. The few titles that are available are produced by a mixture of charities, specialist producers as well as mainstream publishers. Historically, it has been difficult to identify which books are available in accessible formats and where they can be found. Revealweb was set up as a web based catalogue, bringing together information about available titles produced in accessible formats from a wide range of organisations, in response to that need.

Rob Froud, Chair of the Combined Regions, said: "I am delighted that Revealweb is assured a sustainable future by combining with UnityUK. The Combined Regions has always recognised the need for people to be able to discover, locate and borrow materials in accessible formats. Integration with UnityUK presents a fantastic development opportunity to consolidate resource discovery and interlending for everyone, whatever their requirements. It's a huge step forward."

Tony Durcan, incoming President of the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), said: "SCL warmly and enthusiastically welcomes this development. Any initiative that makes accessible materials more readily available for people who need them is to be celebrated. We will give the RNIB National Library Service, The Combined Regions and the MLA any help we can in helping them to carry forward this terrific initiative."

To access Revealweb, go to [www.revealweb.org.uk](http://www.revealweb.org.uk)

### Notes to Editors

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council works with the nine regional agencies in the MLA Partnership to improve people's lives by building knowledge, supporting learning, inspiring creativity and celebrating identity. The Partnership acts collectively for the benefit of the sector and the public, leading the transformation of museums, libraries and archives for the future. Visit: [www.mla.gov.uk](http://www.mla.gov.uk). Media Enquiries: Anne Marie Todaro, Media Relations Manager, MLA tel: 020 7273 1472. Urgent news media enquiries until 7pm: 07747 564 209.

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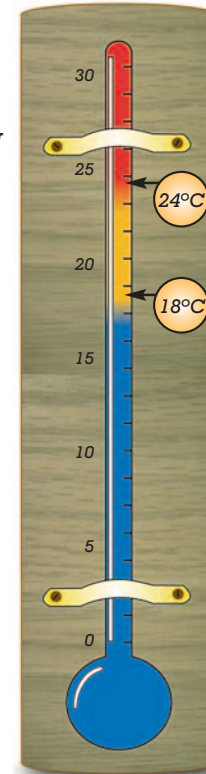
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Please contact me for more details:

Kester Clarke, ALA.

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## **An improved way for blind and partially sighted people to search for accessible books is revealed**

A study published today will clear the path for improvements to Revealweb, the database of accessible reading material for blind and partially sighted people. The Revealweb II Study, commissioned by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and the National Library for the Blind (NLB), found that the current method for sourcing accessible reading materials could be improved and made recommendations for how this can be achieved.

Revealweb is an online catalogue that provides blind and partially sighted people and librarians in the UK with the ability to search for books in accessible formats, such as large print, audio or braille. The study was commissioned to find out how Revealweb, which was launched in 2003, could be made sustainable in the long-term, easier to use and how it might also be used by a wider audience. An interim report to the Steering Group, in August 2006, established that a new, sustainable model was required so that the database could remain a long-term tool for blind and partially sighted people. It suggested that the database could be extended to include public library and commercial services.

The second report, Revealweb II Study, confirms that Revealweb should be combined with UnityUK, a national public libraries' resource sharing service, to provide a more comprehensive service to users, and outlines how this process would unfold. The MLA, RNIB and The Combined Regions have agreed to fund the transition.

Sarah Wilkie, Programme Manager, Framework for the Future at MLA, said: "Revealweb needs to evolve into a more comprehensive service that will dramatically widen access to the wide range of accessible public library stock for visually impaired users. The MLA is committed to ensuring a sustainable future for this important resource."

Helen Brazier, head of the newly formed RNIB National Library Service which combines NLB's and RNIB's libraries of braille, large print and talking books, commented: "We're very proud of the part we played in setting up Revealweb and pleased that the study has identified ways

*Continued on page 29*

### **A New Award**

One problem we had was judging a good small van against a good big one. It proved so difficult to make an allowance for the smaller vehicle that Ian decided to award a new trophy next year. Called the President's Cup it will be awarded to the best 'Small' vehicle. By small we mean non-LGV i.e. under 7.5 tonnes.

### **The Vehicles**

One of the reasons we hold an annual *mobilemeet* is so that delegates can see best practice in action and ask the staff about how well some features work. This was very apparent this meeting with lots of vehicles copying the East Riding counter system. Its obviously proving good practice to have staff in with the public and not isolated behind a counter.

Another feature picked up from previous *mobilemeets* is the obvious improvement in livery schemes. This years judging was far from easy as there were so many good schemes and Staffordshire's winning scheme was not just how good the scheme was but how good it portrayed the message to the public.

### **The Sessions**

The morning session were interesting discussions on Health and Safety succinctly explained by Andy Langford and colleagues at Neath Port Talbot. It was good to hear Health and Safety from a users point of view rather than the often 'jobsworth' view that you must do it or else.

### **Thanks**

Many thanks to Mary Morris for the original idea and to the staff at Neath Port Talbot for such a fine *mobilemeet*.

### **Follow Up**

It is good to report that for the first time the winners of the Delegates Choice were re-presented with their award at the Umbrella conference awards dinner. So Ian Watson of Chief Librarian of Bradford duly accepted the trophy on behalf of his authority.

*Editor*

## Branch and Mobile Libraries Group PUBLICATIONS

### NEW!

**STRINGER, Ian**

**Nostalgia Road Number 8: Britain's mobile libraries. Trans-Pennine Publishing Ltd.  
– ISBN 1 903016 15 0**

### MOBILE LIBRARIES

ORTON, G. I. J.

An illustrated history of mobile library services in the U.K. £1.00  
(plus postage). – 0 85365 640 1

CAMPBELL, C.

Mobile library route planning £3.00 (£2.00). Basic Guide 5 – 0 853 659 15x  
PYBUS, R. L.

Mobile libraries in England and Wales: a guide to their construction and use.  
2nd edition. £4.50 (£3.00). Basic Guide 6 – 0 946 461 031

PYBUS, R. L.

The design and construction of mobile libraries. 2nd edition. £5.00 (£4.00).  
– 0 946 461 090

PATEMAN, John and McMURRAY, Nigel

Mobile library staffing. £3.00 (£2.50). – 0 946 461 112

McMURRAY, N.

Publicising and promoting a mobile library service. £4.50 (£3.00). – 0 946 461 074

### GENERAL

JORDAN, P.

Managing a public library team. £1.95 (£1.50). Basic Guide 1. (A guide to the operation  
of team librarianship). – 0 853 656 029

BUNCH, A. Switched on. £3.00 (£2.00) – 0946 461 139

BUNCH, A. More than just books: community information in libraries. £3.00 (£2.00).  
Basic Guide 2 – 0 853 655 928

BUNCH, A. Sources of community information £3.75 (£2.50). Basic Guide 8. – 0 946  
461 066

MILTON, I. S.

Changing faces (A practical guide to reader interest categorisation and library facelifts).  
£3.75 (£2.50). Basic Guide 11 – 0 946 461 04x

MEADOWS, Jack

Performance assessment in public libraries. £1.50 (£1.00). – 0 946 461 104

BETTS, D. A. Borrowing and the fiction reader. £3.00 (£2.00). – 0 946 461 082

WALLACE, V. Who manages the Library – The role of the paraprofessional. £2.50 (£2.00).  
– 0946461 120

Prices in brackets are those for individual members. All overseas orders are plus post and  
package.

**Available from:** Jim Fergusson, Hon. Publications Officer, William  
Patrick Library, 2 West High Street, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow.  
Tel. 0141 776 5666

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- [www.prestongrange.org](http://www.prestongrange.org)
- Preston Grange is a Museum in Scotland, mentioned here not because they offer talking books, but as an example of how digital media can be put to good use for improving public services. The Museum has an Audio Tour, for which they provide MP3 players to visitors when they arrive. They also offer downloads of the tour, so that visitors can put the tour on their own MP3 player prior to arriving at the museum (The site will also soon be hosting a German version of the tour, read by your humble narrator) This idea could also be used for providing tours of libraries for VIPs (and indeed other users) and for providing other information about libraries and public services.

There are quite a number of websites now, which offer downloadable audiobooks, some of which are free for libraries. The sites listed here are a very small selection. Searching in google for “audiobooks” will give you a wealth of sites to consider for the provision of material.

### What are our options?

- 1 Library downloads from supplier's site onto device and posts or delivers to customer.
- 2 Library downloads from publisher's site onto device and posts or delivers to customer.
- 3 Customer downloads from
  - Library site.
  - Supplier site.
  - Publisher site.
- 4 Supplier downloads and posts to customer.

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## **Mobilemuster Bermagui**

**Saturday 21st July 2007**

I was invited to speak at the Australian Mobilemuster in July and so found myself flying from Sydney in a small propeller plane and dropping into a field at Merimbula which turned out to be the airport. There was a wooden hut, a garden and a car park and not a security guy in sight.

I met up with Cathie Richards from New Zealand and we travelled together the 200 km to Bermagui up the coast in a rental car.

The muster was at an excellent location, but because of the great distances, only 5 mobiles were on show. However, these were well worth looking at and had features not found on your average UK mobile.

Expanding pods were shown and operated by my host Margaret Ross. She is the mobile driver from Upper Murray Regional Library Service. This enables a sideways counter as the staff area is within the pod. Roo bars were also displayed and the librarian from Dubbo told me unfortunately they were very necessary in the parts of the outback travelled by his van. He also told me that his vehicle travelled 420kms from base, (that's about London to Liverpool, to go home at night!)

The social evening was enlivened by the awards ceremonies. Unlike the UK where we give awards to vehicles, the Aussies give awards to people. It is good to see a mobile librarian of the year award and special awards by coachbuilders. Margaret won one of these.

See [www.mobilelibraries.com.au/Conf2007.htm](http://www.mobilelibraries.com.au/Conf2007.htm) for full details of conference papers.

After the muster was over, I travelled back with the Upper Murray Regional Library Service mobile to their base at Wodonga a mere 500km away. This was a fantastic journey over the Australian Alps in the depth of winter which meant we travelled through snow at the top of the pass.

I then had two days out on the Upper Murray mobile which included a stay in the Laurel Hotel, in Mitta Mitta. Rather like something from a Crocodile Dundee film, I was entertained by barman Troy and his mother in Aussie style and offered the house speciality Digger Pie. This was excellent.

Another halt was at Mel Gibson's home village of Tangambalanga, where all the locals had their own Mel Gibson story. I met lots of émigré Brits on the route and 'Old Harry' from Spennymoor was overjoyed at hearing a northern English accent again and kept asking me to say more just to hear the accent again. It was very comforting to find out that people

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- *How do I know which one is best for us?*
- As with most electronic devices, there is no hard and fast rule. The player you choose is dependent on your target audience, your budget and so on. Searching for MP3 players on kelkoo ([www.kelkoo.com](http://www.kelkoo.com)) or google should give you an idea of prices for individual players. It is also worth speaking to your existing talking book suppliers, to see if they favour any particular make. It is definitely a good idea to have a fairly clear idea of your requirements \*before\*, shopping around, so you can compare the features of each player against your own objectives.
- *Can I fit a whole book on one?*
- Yes – plenty of MP3 players now have upwards of one Gigabyte of memory, which will comfortably fit about 20 hours of audio – enough even for Order of the Phoenix.
- *Where do I get them?*
- iTunes is the Apple programme which is needed to put audio files onto an iPod, but it also has an online store with a large selection of audiobooks. iTunes is free software, and can be used as a media player without having an iPod, but most of the MP3 files available have encoded security which allows them to be played only in iTunes, or on an iPod, so cannot be transferred to other brands' MP3 players. Aside from these restrictions, if used with an iPod, the iTunes store is a very straightforward and secure way to acquire talking books
- [www.daisy.org](http://www.daisy.org)
- The Daisy Consortium offers a number of solutions, including the daisy player. Have a look at the website for full details.
- [www.audiobooks.org](http://www.audiobooks.org)
- [www.audible.co.uk](http://www.audible.co.uk)
- Another couple of websites with a large collection of audiobooks available for download.

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10,000 miles away speak the same language, drive on the correct side of the road and read just the same books.

Whilst I was there the new Harry Potter was released at I thought I might steal a march on my sons by reading it first, but the Aussie launch was not till 9am (i.e. midnight back in the UK). Even so, by mid afternoon kids were coming in the van, and telling us the ending!

My presence in Wodonga was recorded by the local press who were surprised that someone had come right round the world to see their mobile libraries. But, all publicity is good publicity.

Finally I ended my Aussie trip with a journey down to Melbourne to stay with another librarian from the New Zealand conference and look at the city.

*Editor*

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## Mobilemeet 2008

Plans are already in place for the next *mobilemeet*.

The venue is Aintree racecourse in Liverpool home of the world famous Grand National race. Mobile libraries will be parked by the main racecourse and the winners will be awarded their trophies in the much televised winners enclosure.

All facilities look to be first class and the location is easy to find and of course, it is very well signposted.

The cost is to be £50 + VAT. This includes lunch, for security reasons all delegates to be issued with lunch vouchers and checks to be made on the day.

Overnight accommodation is available very near the racecourse. We are organising places for overnight parking.

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*Editor*

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### What is an MP3 Player?

- *Is an iPod the same as an MP3 player?*
- In many respects “iPod” is to “MP3 Player” what “Ford” is to “car”. It’s a brand name for the Apple MP3 player - all iPods are MP3 players, but not all MP3 players are iPods. Also, as with Ford, the iPod holds a large market share, but is far from being the only option. It is currently unique in the Market however in that it is the only product to have a dedicated, cross-platform software system.
- *Is it easy to use?*
- “Does my bum look big in this?” There’s no right answer to this question. Some players are very complicated with numerous peripheral functions and small, sensitive controls which would be difficult for inexperienced users to fathom – particularly VIPs. Conversely, many players are very straightforward, with just the basic Play/Pause/Stop/Back/forward controls used on CD and cassette players.
- *What else is available?*
- As MP3 and digital audio grows in popularity, new products are appearing all the time, so there is a wide choice available, in addition to alternative formats such as the Daisy Audio player, which uses a variation of the MP3 technology and is specifically designed for VIPs. Big names such as Microsoft and Sony have products on the market, though as with the iPod, these are not designed for or targeted at VIPs and are often complex and expensive. There are also much cheaper and more straightforward options available – many supermarkets now stock smaller MP3 players in their electronics section – some for less than £20 – though the size of storage is usually less than on the more expensive models.

- *How easy is it to use?*
- Downloading MP3 files and moving them to an MP3 playing device is very straightforward for anyone with a basic grasp of modern computer use (use of internet, office software etc). Once the file is on the portable device, the ease of use is down to the player itself. Some players have small controls and many options, which restrict their market to the proficient user. However, many models are clear, tactile and uncomplicated and could be used by VIPs – especially as the basic commands (play/pause/stop) have the same format as a cassette or CD player.

### MP3 vs. CD

- *What does an MP3 look like?*
- Unlike a CD, an MP3 is not a tangible object so doesn't really look like anything. It is essentially just data, made up of computer code. The MP3 player itself is the tangible part of the equation, and is a small hand-held device about the size of a mobile phone.
- *What can MP3 give us that CD can't?*
- Because MP3 is just data, it is much easier to store than CDs, requiring only computer storage, rather than actual shelf space. Because it can be downloaded it means that an audiobook could be received the day it is ordered, rather than waiting for postal delivery. It is also fairly futureproof, as it can be converted to other formats with ease and can be used again and again, without any deterioration. The easy transferability also means that different branch libraries could share the same central resource and all have access to the same audio books.

### Price comparison

Once you have made the initial outlay on the equipment, the MP3 data is much cheaper than CD as is it not a tangible resource, so does not need to be manufactured, just reproduced. The publishers would make less revenue from the digital format, but admin and production costs would be low enough to ensure a comparable profit margin, particularly as once they have the data stored online, they do not need to manually issue it, the library would collect it themselves, cutting down on labour costs.

## Solar Panels - or How To Build a Mobile Library That stands out in a Crowd!

What could we possibly put on a Mobile Library that would make it different from any other Mobile Library?

East Riding have been the forerunner in this field, counters designed to break down barriers between staff and customers, lots of windows to let in the light, toilets, microwaves, cool boxes fitted for staff comfort, public PCs taking the internet and taster sessions out to the customer, all these had been tried and tested.

Why not go down the "green" road?

PCs need electricity, Mobile Libraries need a "plug in" point at their base to charge the Auxiliary batteries up every night, we all know what happens when a vehicles batteries go flat, the lights dim and eventually go out, we limp home and "plug in" hoping the batteries will be fully recharged by the morning.

How about solar panels? Would they be effective, if so how effective? Looking into this further, we decided that the space on the roof would not be used for a satellite dish and therefore the space between the roof lights would accommodate between 6 to 8 solar panels.

On a sunny day 4 x 125 watt photo-voltaic cells would provide 25% of power used to operate the auxiliary equipment. 8 x 125 watt photo-voltaic cells would provide 50% of power used to operate auxiliary equipment.

We opted for the maximum 8 at a cost of £6,000.

The panels fit snugly on the roof and cannot be seen from the road, it is easy to forget that they are there, a meter, fitted in the cupboard reminds us that they are working and the charge input is nearly always 100%.

The panels trickle feed the batteries through an accumulator throughout daylight. A bright sunny day gives you maximum input, power still trickles in slowly on a cloudy day, the only weather condition found to hamper the process is fog.

The auxiliary battery capacity has not been reduced by the inclusion of the solar panels we are just making use of the free "green" energy

supply available in varying quantities on a day to day basis.

We garage our vehicles outside and have been told that the solar panels could pick up off the street lighting, certainly when the vehicle was being built we were told that the covers were left on the panels because they were picking up power from the fluorescent lights.

The travelling library has only been operational since March 07 so it is too early to say how much power we will save, the auxiliary equipment is used all day and the battery power needle hardly moves.

We still "plug in back at base to ensure the batteries are topped up to the maximum (it might be foggy tomorrow!).

Overall we are extremely happy with our Solar Panels and our next vehicle will definitely be solar powered.

At the 2007 *Mobilemeet* at Port Talbot we won the State of the Art Award (thanks to our solar panels) and the delegates choice award, a big thank you to everyone who voted for us.

*Julie Dyer*  
*Manager Mobile Library services*  
*Bradford MDC.*

## Design and production for web, print and other media

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## I-pod he-pods they-pod , but do you-pod

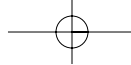
By Paul Stringer

As promised at UmbrellA conference I am setting out Paul's notes from his presentation use.

### Introduction to digital audio

#### *Introduction to the digital concept*

- *What is an MP3?*
- An MP3 is a digital audio computer file, compressed to take up much less disk space than an ordinary CD audio track, allowing easy transfer between formats. It is recognised by all modern computer operating systems (Windows, Apple Mac, Linux). Although the filesize can vary between different levels of compression, a reasonable benchmark is that 1 minute of audio is around 1 Megabyte.
- *What is an MP3 Player?*
- An MP3 player is a portable device, usually around the same size as a mobile phone or smaller. It allows many MP3 files to be stored and played. Most new mobile phones and DVD players also now include MP3 players as part of their standard operating software
- *How do you download a book?*
- A digital audio book is almost always in MP3 format, so can be stored online by suppliers, to be downloaded on-demand by consumers. The file is saved to the user's computer hard drive, where it can be listened to directly, or moved to a portable device such as an MP3 player. Once a download has started, it may take some time to download, depending on the size of the file, but can be left unmonitored until it is complete.




# SatPoint

SATELLITE CONNECTIVITY FOR MOBILE LIBRARIES



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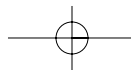
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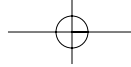
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▲ Stirling's new vehicle exterior.

▼ Stirling's new vehicle interior.





- ▲ Macho mobile from Dubbo Australia complete with roo bars and canopy.
- ▼ Mel Gibson's local halt at Tangambalanga.

- ▲ Upper Murray Regional Library Service with sun canopy and expanded pod.
- ▼ Inside showing the pod.

