

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

A Man & His Tools

I nearly bought a chainsaw the other day. Just a little one. I mean, I don't actually *need* a chainsaw. Not right now. But a man never knows when he could use a tool like that. It's bound to come in handy, sooner or later – eh? That's why I bought the skillsaw that's on the floor in my office. And the jigsaw that's in the laundry by the washing machine. And the cordless drill that's still in its box on my bookshelf.

My wife doesn't understand this. She fails to appreciate the point of my tool collection. I tell her, "*Just wait ... you'll see!*" But she tells me she's tired of waiting-and-seeing. She'd rather have a spa pool. Which is why I didn't buy a chainsaw the other day. Instead, we went and ordered a flat white. Which, I'm the first to admit, was nice.

(But a lot of help a flat white will be when a tree falls on our roof – right? Not that I said that to her, of course ...)

Modern women have yet to realise that there's something sacred about a man and his tools. We males are in D.I.Y. heaven when we're sawing timber, banging nails, screwing things, gluing things, fixing leaks or taking apart major appliances. Cool tools make our hearts beat faster. They remind us why we're here. And there's nothing quite like the rush a bloke gets when his power-drill/saw/sander/grinder/post-hole-borer/concrete mixer/jackhammer leaps noisily into life.

I recently spent the happiest Saturday in



years shifting moss off my driveway with a water-blaster. Why, I even get a kick out of using my staple-gun! And one of my proudest moments ever was just before Christmas, when I finally found a use for my multi-purpose, chrome-plated, hardened-steel socket set.

IT'S ALWAYS DARKEST JUST BEFORE IT GOES PITCH BLACK.

I've had it since 1989, under the bed in our spare room, along with all my other tools. And I always knew it would come in handy. With 100 different sockets and spanners and ratchets and pliers and magnetic bits and bobs, all tucked away in a sturdy little blue case, it was a handyman's bargain 18 years ago – and it still is today!

We'd invested in this big flash barbecue, you see. We'd brought it home in a huge cardboard box that weighed more than my car. And it didn't look so flash when it was spread out all over our lounge in a million separate bits.

"How on earth will you assemble THAT?" my wife enquired.

"Just wait ... you'll see!" I replied. And I went and found my socket set.

It took me the entire weekend, but I did it! Oh, I ended up with some leftover bits – a long rod-thingy and this motor-con- traction for a rotisserie which I didn't even know we'd bought. I'll work out where they go as soon as I remember where I left

the instructions. But you should've heard the applause on Christmas Day when I successfully burnt all manner of meat for all manner of visitors!

You can imagine my disappointment, just a week later, when my wife took it upon herself to move my tools. She'd had enough, she said, of seeing my overflowing collection staring at her from under the bed. This room's for our grandchildren, she said – not for saws and drills and hammers and bolts and dangerous leftovers from long-forgotten projects.

But I don't know what her problem is, do you? *Most* men keep their tools under a bed where they're nice and handy – just in case. I mean, you never know when you're going to need something, eh?

Shame, really. Now I've got nowhere to put my new chainsaw ...

JOHN, GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER & EDITOR, CAN BE FOUND MOST WEEKENDS DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR HOLES TO MAKE WITH HIS STILL-UNOPENED FOUR-YEAR-OLD DRILL.

THORT



To me, it's a good idea to always carry something, like a chair, when you walk around. That way, if anybody says, "Hey, can you give me a hand?" You can say, "No, sorry, I've got this chair."