

THAT'S GAS

Is that a gas leak you smell?

Well, don't be getting into a big botheration, vexation and ado, and don't be troubling them gas repairers either; they've more important things to be doing than to be fixing leaks particularly during the Jump and Flat seasons.

And, anyway, you don't know who they are or if they know their arse from an elbow joint and you'll only get the blame from the other half, as other halves are wont to do, for whatever mess they're bound to make.

And, anyway again, using a telephone is dangerous as the microwave emanations from mobiles and the listening devises that the government don't want you to know about can ignite the gas.

So here, as public service from the goodness of my heart, are some DIY instructions.

And 'tis better to do by yourself; you don't want the trouble and strife or Doubting Thomas's whinging at you; some people get into a fuss over the smallest things.

The first thing you need to do is to close all the windows and doors as you can't be letting the gas escape. That's a big no-no as it will set off the next Ice Age.

But the question is: do you lock yourself in or out?

You could lock yourself out but that's no long term solution. The leak is probably in the kitchen with the fridge that has a six-pack ready for that all important match on the telly, which you wouldn't enjoy anyway with the kids throwing tantrums because they can't have ice cream and the ball and chain in a snooty snit because that's her HQ.

Plus, you need her to make your breakfast in the morning before she goes to work so you can properly enjoy a soothing rest before the kids get back from school.

So, lock yourself in, sit down, relax and have a fag; there's nothing more relaxing than having a fag, especially with a mug of strong proper tea – and, sure, don't you deserve it.

Now, some will tell you should turn off the gas supply at the mains, but this is silly advice. How are you supposed to find the leak if the gas is off?

Though, I suppose, you may as well turn it off temporarily while flustering around organising yourself; no point in wasting money either.

Others will tell you that by locking yourself in you may suffocate – this is an old wives' tale, but don't take too long either because of the collywobbles, speaking of which:

You can't be fixing things on an empty stomach, that's not healthy. So make yourself a proper meal. I recommend searing a juicy steak; the flaming drops of super heated oil add a certain taste.

That done, I suppose you better get around to fixing the leak, but first you have to find it. It's probably in the back of a cupboard or hidden somewhere daft.

A candle is handy for those dark areas; you always know you've found a leak when it blows the candle out. And don't mind the explosion myth, that was invented by unscrupulous gas repairmen for nefarious motives; hint, hint, say no more, a nod is as good as a wink to a blind donkey.

Now what to do? A good short term solution is a chewed bubblegum patch but avoid the chilli flavour as that can ignite the gas.

But as you don't want bubbles of sticky gum floating around the kitchen you need a permanent solution, which is when a soldering iron comes in handy, or, failing that, an acetylene blow torch is the man for the job – be sure to adjust the heat settings a touch if the pipe or fittings are plastic, PVC or aluminium.

Now's a good time to have an appreciative audience of kids; there's nothing they like better than hunching around after school and watching the blaze and sparks off a blow torch, better than homework any day.

There now, it's done, wasn't that a grand job, and you did all on your own, isn't that gas! Well done! Give yourself a pat on the back, go off to the pub and celebrate with an early pint.

Don't worry about any lingering smell, 'tis well known that gas is good for chesty complaints. Never let it be said you don't care about the health of the family.

Next week I'll tell you how to fix a gammy bit of wiring with a hammer, chisel and a few nails and explain why fuses are a total waste of time. Plus, plans for wiring the bath, there's nothing more annoying than the water going cold when you're having a good soak, in such a way that they act as a handy back scratcher.

Till then, Cheerio!