

THE THINGS

Hereabouts in this magazine is an article about a recent trip to the Ernest Giles Range. On that trip we discovered a novel way to replace a chewed out shockie rubber. The Ed. was so taken with this bush fix, he rang me. Being aware of my nickname Truthful Phil, he wanted to make sure I wasn't misleading the readers (read pulling his leg). Now would I do such a thing?

Enter The Dragon

We had been doing some rough track and cross country driving during a two week remote desert trip over Easter 2012 and had just set up camp when a mate announced he was trying to find a loud clanging noise coming from under the bonnet. Further investigation revealed that the top rubber on a front shockie had either disintegrated or been devoured by a very hungry rodent.

Assisted by a 'cup of tea' to lubricate the thought processes and rather than remove the shockie altogether and bounce his way home, we got some nylon rope, fixed one end in place of the rubber and wound it tightly round and round until we filled the space. Then using The Dragon we melted the end of the rope so it fused with the ropes beneath. This temporary bush fix didn't fall apart and all metallic noises ceased; it held until he got back



to Perth.

Over the years we've found numerous other uses for The Dragon; fusing heat shrink, bush soldering, fusing rope ends to stop fraying, loosening tight bolts and lighting camp fires when wood is damp.

On one desert trip our convoy of two vehicles out west of Rudall River got caught in a torrential downpour. Sunny blue skies one minute and can't see out of the windscreen the next. Within 30 mins the hard and easily negotiated



track turned to custard and we were bogged to the chassis for three days. Having a lot of time on our hands and wanting a fire despite it still raining, we built a mound of mud and put wet firewood on top. Sheltering under an umbrella and using The Dragon we heated the wood, eventually dried it out and after using almost a canister of gas we started a fire which we then kept going. There's something about a fire

YOU SEE with Truthful Phil

that revives one's spirits. One gas canister I've got has a label affixed saying Nissan Rescue Aid,



not exactly sure what that's about, presumably it's to clean up the bush of broken down Nissans!

Tiny, a chef mate of mine uses The Dragon to caramelize the sugar on Crème Brûlés. I kid you not, and they're delicious.

Another use I've been told about but haven't tried is to use it as a hairdryer, I suspect you'd have to use a low heat setting otherwise you wouldn't need a hair cut for a while.

Where do you get them? Using Google and if you use the more dignified name Gas Torch Butane Burner you'll come up with a number of types and brands. I got mine in a camping shop, but it took some tracking down. Mates have since bought theirs on eBay.

The Groover

Ever had that sense of urgency in the morning and after racing off and finding a suitable bush, you drive your shovel down to find it bounces

back and you've done enough dental damage to pay a significant part of your dentist's new BMW?

This device which masquerades in prospecting supply stores as a prospecting pick is your saviour. It's small, easy to store in your vehicle and it can shift more dirt than Bugs Bunny escaping a dingo. We've also used it many times to dig a fire pit,



when the dirt's been so hard the dentist gets to make his final payment. It's also great at removing those stubborn tent pegs that won't budge and if you're a 'metal detectorista' and enjoy dragging the chain it will get you to the source of the beep in double quick time. Mates scoffed and dumped on us when we first started using our Groover, now nearly all of them have got one! Made from a cut up plough disc, this little beauty is so tough you'll never wear it out. Why the name The Groover? Well it seemed appropriate given its main use first thing in the morning!