

An Aussie Tradition

In a recent newsletter the Rector of our son's school, after his visit to the Dowerin Machinery Field Day, queried why men found it necessary to kick the tyres of all the machinery they looked at? Being Irish (and he thinks we have some strange habits!) he wouldn't understand that it is an Australian tradition and there doesn't need to be a reason for it. It's just one of those things you do. I actually think it is possibly a male initiation type of act.

'Now look here son, before you can be called a real man, you've got to learn to kick tyres. You do it this way and always with your boots on. It isn't cool to kick a tyre then hop around holding onto your foot.'

It's a man's way of letting everyone know that whilst this machinery may look large they are still the boss.

I'm not a male but I do kick tyres. Why? For two reasons, one because it makes me look like I know what I'm doing, that I'm a true Aussie, a real bush woman, and secondly it might just give me a clue as to whether the tyre I'm kicking is about to go flat and if it is then I can try to make sure there is a male handy to change it for me. (I got left out in the cold when women's lib came in).

Those in the know (namely my husband and sons) tell me you can always tell when a tyre is starting to go flat. Well of course you can because it makes that horrible clunk, clunk sound and suddenly the car doesn't want to go anywhere you want it to go.

However I am told that I 'should' be able to tell a tyre is going flat long before this and not wait until it gets to the stage where the rim is digging holes in the road and I've left a trail of rubber for the past 3 kilometres.

I don't know why manufacturers can't put a warning signal in the car for flat tyres like they do everything else. I get beeped at if I leave the lights on, flashed at if I don't wear

a seat belt and see flashing lights and hear sirens if I speed, although I'm not sure this is part of the car set up!

Surely it can't be that difficult to put some little gadget in each tyre which is connected to the car. Maybe it could be voice activated. 'Excuse me but your left hand front tyre is going to go flat in five minutes. Slow down now and pull over and change the tyre.' If I find out anyone has released such a thing on the market be warned I'll be in line looking for my share of the royalties for copyright of such a brilliant idea.

Meanwhile I'll go on kicking tyres just to prove what a true blue Aussie I am.