



Which Kit?

EXPOSED!

Statement in Open Court

In the February 2001 issue of Which Kit? magazine Peter Filby published an article entitled "Tale of a Pilgrim" in which he made a number of defamatory statements about Den Tanner and Pilgrim Cars.

Some of these statements were repeated in subsequent editions of Which Kit? In particular, it was alleged that:

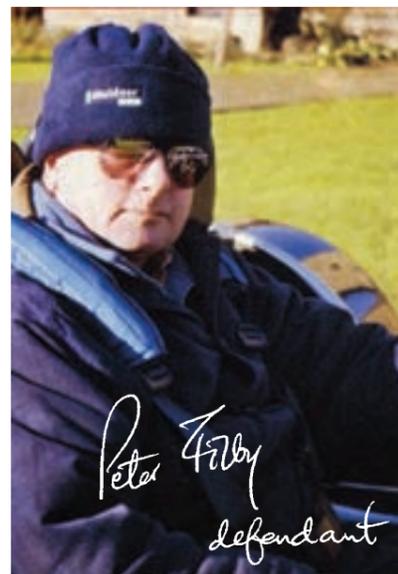
1. Mr Tanner was responsible for the fact that a Pilgrim Sumo purchased from him by Alan Howell had dangerously collapsed on the road while being driven.
2. The service provided by Mr Tanner and his company was shockingly bad.
3. These issues had been determined in Mr Howell's favour in a County Court judgement.

Mr Filby now accepts that the County Court did not find these allegations to be true. He apologises to Mr Tanner for publishing the statements.

Mr Filby now recognises that the true position is that, although the car did collapse, the County Court never found this to have been the responsibility of Mr Tanner, nor did it find that he or his company provided shockingly bad service.

It is hoped that Mr Tanner's reputation will be fully recovered by this retraction and apology.
Peter Filby.

Mr Tanner adds only that Mr Filby attended the said County Court hearing and hence knew the true position from the start.



Here's a signed photograph of Peter Filby in what looks like his apology outfit. Was that apology genuine or was it made out of legal expediency? In the same way that one swallow doesn't make a Summer. One retraction and apology doesn't make an honest man.

I won my claim against Mr Filby in the High Court and got something more valuable than money. This apology and retraction was read to his Honour Mr Justice Gray on 7th April 2003. Will Which Kit?'s readers ever get to read it, or is Mr Filby banking on his readers not finding out that he published pork pies?

"Oh what a tangled web we weave - when we endeavour to deceive!"

Last month I suggested that if Which Kit? wanted to "get more belief" it might try telling the truth. Which Kit? claims to be "biggest selling", "best" and "No.1" when it isn't. It implies that it has 50,000 readers when it doesn't. It claimed it shall be "racing ahead in 2003" when it won't be.

I was a victim of a long campaign of equally outrageous lies. But, in my case they were hurtful, personally focused, vindictive and vicious. As a result, I've been in and out of the High Court for the last four years. Having won the last action, and having got the above apology, I'm not going to lay down whilst Which Kit? takes more pop-shots, this time at Kit Car. It's certainly not Kit Car that has "dubious standards" nor was it "tarnishing" Which Kit?'s reputation, as it recently claimed. As I shall demonstrate,

Which Kit?'s own "dubious standards" are doing a perfectly good job at "tarnishing" its own reputation - without any help from Kit Car.

Last month I laid out the evidence that proved Which Kit? was lying in respect to not filling its pages with "wads of waffle or ads repeated". The above apology is an admission that it had lied on other occasions too. The lies about it "racing ahead" and the like continue. I therefore hope that it won't be necessary for me to prove that point again. As wheels are round, as oranges are orange, it is now an irrefutable fact that Which Kit? publishes lies.

The editor's lying about his competitor and his magazine's market position and content are quite one thing. But like Pinocchio's nose, the problem is growing. There are

presently far more ominous lies emerging from under the Which Kit? banner. In a curious reversal of roles, Mr Filby finds himself at the head of no less than three kit car manufacturing "firms". The resultant conflict of interests, combined with a lack of integrity is damaging to everybody with an interest in kit cars.

Suppose your daily newspaper contained a report that you absolutely knew was untruthful. Would you trust that newspaper in respect to reports that you had no direct knowledge of? Would you continue buying that paper? Of course not! Which Kit?, in my opinion, has similarly lost faith. It would account for why it has been losing readers and why it's now appealing "to get more belief". Readers lost to the industry in this way is hurtful for everybody...

Misleading claims like these pervade the inside of the magazine too! There are four implicit claims. All are hollow, some are bent.

Astonishingly, this picture first appeared in an article accusing Kit Car of having "dubious standards" which were "tarnishing" Which Kit?'s reputation. The article pleaded that Which Kit? wanted "to get more belief". Beggars belief - doesn't it?



Comprehensive Cobra guide

The guide did not include the Pilgrim Sumo. Accredited by Which Kit? as one of "10 kits that changed the history of kit cars" before bitterness created bias.

In place of Pilgrim's Sumo was the Python which was recommended to those with around £10,000 (the Sumo's price bracket). What it forgot to tell was that the Python is being sold by Which Kit? Also that the vehicle is but a pipe dream - none have been made since the 1980's. The intention was to resurrect it. However plans haven't come to fruition. It simply doesn't exist and probably won't. How objective and "comprehensive" a Cobra guide is that?

Building a future for British kit cars

The bias against the Sumo towards the magazine's own product isn't the only problem. The AF Sports, another Which Kit? product, has had a feature every month for a year. Advertising of other of

Which Kit?'s products is relentless. The March issue contained 34 ads for itself, its services and products. The advertising claims are outrageously optimistic too.

So exactly who is Which Kit? "Building a future for"....?

Racing ahead.

Which Kit? is lagging far behind Kit Car. They are selling only 7000ish copies a month. Proof of low sales is in that they recently changed from a regular to a "specialist" distributor.

Which Kit?

Customer's would naturally assume that the "Which" gave the magazine some form of "consumers association" accreditation. Whether or not that is so, consumers would expect honesty, objectivity and balance in the content. They're not getting it - are they? Which Kit?'s own products are forced in their face and legitimate worthy products left out. I think it a shame that Which Kit?'s reader's can't see this.

Betrayal of Trust.

I accept that it's not a particularly important issue for readers when a magazine overstates its sales position. But it should be, because if the magazine's dishonest in little matters then it's probably dishonest in bigger ones too. I have published an apology from Mr Filby admitting that a series of articles in Which Kit? contained dishonest slurs about me. I can see why they might be dismissed as a squabble - a trivial matter. However, I would point out that everybody has been affected. Arguments concerning what magazine was in front, caused bitterness that enticed Which Kit? to publish an attack, which caused the litigation. Years and tears and £100,000 (of Mr Filby's money) later, the lie still continues to rankle.

The distortion of the so called "comprehensive Cobra guide" and of the upcoming Cobra book is another lie (albeit by omission). It is born out of Mr Filby's ongoing malice toward my ex-product. The resulting loss of integrity has put Which Kit? on a slippery slope. Which Kit? contains wonderful photography, is beautifully presented, lyrically written and is now correctly priced. So why have its sales been falling? I believe it's because readers can see its loss of integrity. It can't recover it easily because things have gone too far....

Desperate Times. The rise of Kit Car knocked a hole in Which Kit?'s income a few years back. Come early 2001 the position was such that Mr Stent, its editor, went. As did the magazine's "wide" format, perfect binding and varnished cover. To top this, its price went up to £3.50 (excessive at the time). All economic measures - pointing to financial problems.

Come 2002, Which Kit? made various announcements to the effect that certain models of kit car from the 1980's were coming back. This is how they went about it...

Python. Which kit? announced that the Python is back and that RV Dynamics was responsible. Advertisements for RV Dynamics appeared that said definitively that the Python was "Back with Bite". Not coming soon or being developed. That was well over a year ago, but to this day no such car exists.

AF Sports. Which Kit? proclaimed that the AF Sports was being remade with Sierra running gear by Unique Autocraft. Advertisements duly appeared with no

suggestion that the car hadn't yet been designed. The impression given was that the Triumph based original in the picture was the Sierra version on offer. Customers were told that it was "The most beautiful roadster ever..." and that it was "Impressively engineered too..." The Sierra based prototype, according to designer Dave Pepper, is far from ready for sale in that it suffers serious problems like severe scuttle shake which are being "hushed up". We'll bring more on this when we have the full facts.

Razer. Which Kit? announced that a failed Lotus Seven inspired kit, the Eldon, was "under new ownership" and was being re-launched and renamed Razer by Razer Sportscars. The clear impression was that it existed in "Sierra donor" form, with "Supreme road manners" and "meticulous quality". There was no hint of a suggestion in the ads that it hadn't yet been designed and that the photograph was of an old Eldon made with Cortina/Escort parts. Again the announcements and advertisements proved hollow in that there is still no genuine Razer.

Which Kit?'s Interest. All three companies, purveying these three products, hail from the Which Kit? address. For the past year or more, coverage has been extensive and includes a dozen build reports and test features, not to mention their relentless "plugging" within show reports and in the news columns. Even the advertisements of third parties get graced with pictures of these kits.

For Mr Filby to recover his integrity, he has to extricate himself from all the lies surrounding these products and then convince his readers that he can be trusted in the future. He could conceivably do the former, but I can't see how he can do the later. When integrity and balance is sold for profit, the objectivity and hence viability of the publication disappears.

It is my opinion that Which Kit? has done the kit car industry more harm than good of late. The coverage on the AF Sports, in particular, has made this industry look like a bunch of cowboys. That on the Python and Razer makes us look like con-men.

It all started with an argument as to who was lying about which magazine is "best". Where does it end?

Den Tanner – Publisher.

Python Back With Real Bite!

18 examples of this beautiful classic sports car were made during the early 1960s. Now it's back in production. The Python once again offers freedom, speed and fun.

The construction & fitment technology has been applied to construction of the body and chassis. Built with the lightest and strongest materials. A higher, handling a better assembly is built. This is a classic that's ahead with the times.

- Superb tubular chassis with fully triangulated backbone.
- Craftman-made GRP bodywork using polyurethane foam sandwich techniques to increase strength and rigidity whilst reducing weight.
- Uses BMW 5-series donor parts throughout.
- BMW engine options range from 1.8-litre and 2-litre 4-cylinders to 2.8-litre and 3.5-litre straight sixes. The BMW V8 fits perfectly too.
- Also available with Jaguar suspension and Rover V8 or Chevy/Ford small-block V6 power.
- Full chassis £1495 inc.
- Complete body £1000 inc.

RV DYNAMICS, 56 Feering Hill, Feering, Colchester, Essex CO5 9SL
Tel: (mobile) 07802 813649 or (eves) 01376 570812

So you've taken a shine to the Python (advert above). Particularly to its unique 21st century specification. The kit is specified like that of a GD. It has the appearance of a DAX. The prices compare with the Sumo. What's more, according to the ad, it's overcome the two problems that afflict all other Cobras. It's got a longer, more comfortable cockpit and BMW 5-series mechanics which nobody else has managed to utilise. It sounds too good to be true! You excitedly phone the advertiser for a brochure.

You find there's no literature – not even a price list. They can't answer your questions regarding precisely which model of "BMW V8 fits perfectly too," nor how the McPhearson struts have been fitted. It's never been done, but you're not told that. So you suggest that

you could answer your own questions by taking a look. What are you told? Factory visits are by appointment only, and by the way, the factory's in Sri Lanka! In fact there's probably no car in Sri Lanka either.

By now you've worked out why it sounds too good to be true. Tell me what you do next? Do you phone GD, DAX or Pilgrim? Or has your faith been undermined?

It doesn't finish there either. Which Kit? are in the process of publishing a book. The advert (below) appeared on page 34 and again on page 128 of Which (we don't repeat ads) Kit?'s May issue. The "comprehensive" Cobra guide fiasco is repeated. Down with Pilgrim – We love Python all over again. Is this really helping Which Kit? to "Build a future for British kit cars"?

AK • Crendon • Classic Replicas • Dax • Fiero • GO • Hawk • Kirkham • Magnum • Madgwick • Python

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plus
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- Full colour throughout

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"Oh what a tangled web we weave – when we endeavour to deceive!"

Something of a looker...

AF SPORTS

"The most beautiful roadster ever offered in component form"

More than 1000 built

Impressively engineered too...

- Strong tubular steel chassis
- All-independent, purpose designed suspension
- Based on Ford Sierra running gear, can also accept V8 power
- Optional BMW 5-series based version available early 2003
- GRP central body tub for easy assembly

The further details contact:
UNIQUE AUTOCRAFT, 1 Howard Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 7JE
Tel: 01737 225888 or Mobile: 07974 712298 (after 5pm please)

You've bought a copy of Which Kit? and read the above advert. You note the car's odd looking, lacking finish and sports the most unbecoming wheels you've ever seen. You read the claim "The most beautiful roadster ever offered in component form". You notice that the aero screens don't line up with each other and see bits of painted exhaust shouting at you from under the car. "Impressively engineered too..." it says. You note that the words are the endorsement of the magazine. You flick through it and see photographs of the car everywhere, indicating that the endorsement's heartfelt. What conclusion do you come to?

Assuming you weren't put off altogether. How would you read all the other adverts? With great scepticism, I wager. The point is that such lies undermine customer confidence in us all. They tarnish everybody and make it hard for anybody "to get more belief".

RAZER Where meticulous quality and rare exclusivity count

"Supreme road manners"

See Steve Wright RZR

- Plenty of cockpit space
- Exceptional levels of handling, roadholding and ride comfort
- Superbly engineered and extremely strong 1" square tube spaceframe chassis
- Ford Sierra donor car
- All-independent suspension
- GRP and aluminium bodywork
- Engine options: Ford Pinto, Zetec, Crossflow or Toyota twin-cam

The further details contact: **HAZER SPORTSCARS**
1 Howard Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 7JE
01737 225888

Self Praise is....Advertising!

There's a saying that half your advertising budget is wasted. Wholesalers run a kind of "top of the pops" that can help advertisers identify which half. Kit Car is placed 486th with an estimated sale of 13,725 copies per month. Which Kit? is placed 721st with a sale of 7,143 copies. That means Kit Car has a massive 66% of the market. But it's even better than that when "dual readers" are considered. These are people who take both magazines. If we assume there are 5000, that would mean that the total of 20,868 magazines were being sold to 15,868 readers. Kit Car's 13,725 readers would account for a staggering 86% of the total.

Even allowing for us being optimistic concerning the number of "dual readers", advertising executives (or private car sellers for that matter) don't need to be too clever in respect to knowing where to place their ads.

The question arises as to whether or not we shall continue to increase our market share. We can't honestly see our traditional competitor taking our sales away. So short of a new kit car magazine being launched, we are supremely confident that our market share shall indeed continue to grow.

If you're a manufacturer, and you're looking to advertise, then Tom will help you.

Remember.

We don't sell Cobras. We don't sell Sevens. We don't sell Traditional Roadsters. In fact we have no vested interests other than in the selling of magazines. Means we can concentrate on being "best" rather than "biased". Refreshing isn't it!

OTHERS PRETEND BUT WE REALLY ARE
To advertise contact Tom
01273 497060
No1

This car doesn't have "plenty of cockpit space". Ian Stent of Which Kit? in the January issue, said "My knees were too close to the steering wheel and I found myself looking through the very top of the screen". Neither does it use a "Ford Sierra donor car". Mr Stent said "it's Sierra based in name only". Its parts actually come from an old Cortina and even older RWD Escort.

The photo's of a late 1980's Eldon roadster. The Razer doesn't yet exist!

As with the Python and AF Sports. The policy to sell first and hope the promises can be honoured later. The plan was doomed, as the claims are of perfection. Let me put them in a line. The Razer is a small car using "Sierra donor" with "plenty of cockpit space" that is "superbly engineered and extremely strong" that has both "exceptional levels of handling" and, at the same time (what us engineers thought impossible) "exceptional ride comfort" and it's of "meticulous quality". Want one? Sorry, their "rare exclusivity" prevents it.