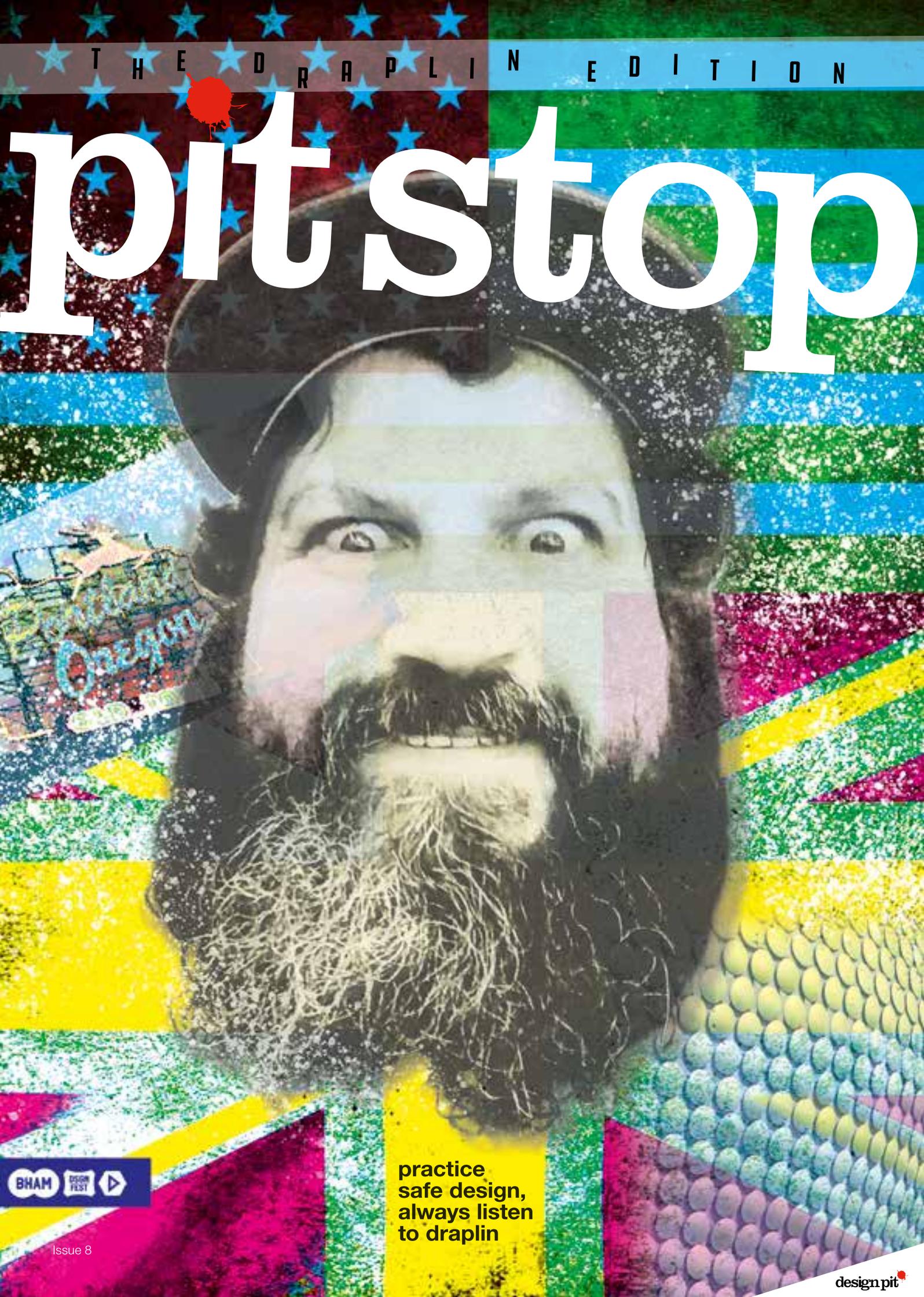


T H E D R A P L I N E E D I T I O N

# pitstop



practice  
safe design,  
always listen  
to draplin

Issue 8

design.pit

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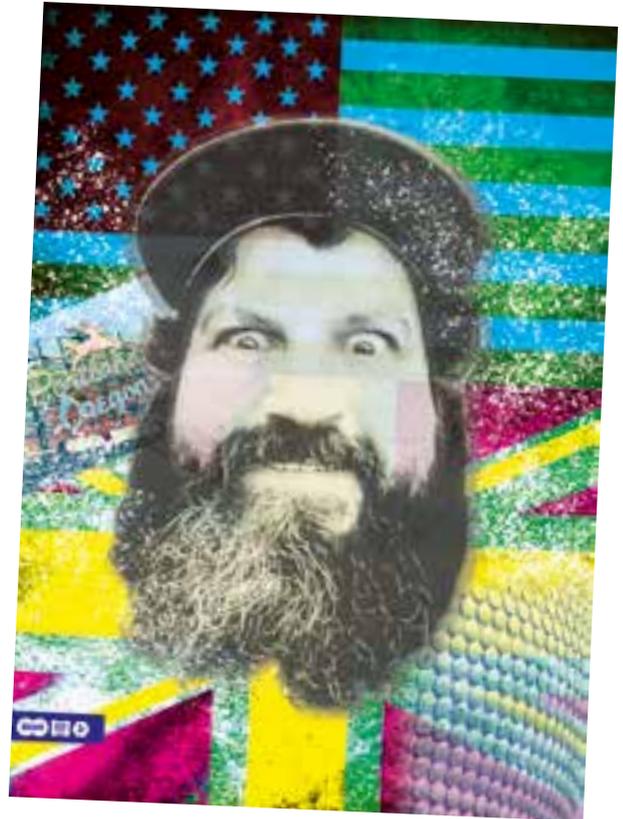
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# WELCOME TO PIT STOP 8

**INTRO BY:** Gareth Robertson  
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# The Draplin Edition



This issue contains a variety of articles and is sure to provide an interesting read! In June, we attended the first ever Birmingham Design Festival and were lucky enough to see the world famous American designer Aaron James Draplin deliver a talk on his career, life and the industry that we exist within. It was a rollercoaster ride and later on, you will read more about the man himself and our experiences at the festival.

In other news, we have had some incredible results back for our designer Dan Hollyoake, who passed his degree with a high first honours. Dan has now moved into full time employment with us. He is riding the crest of a big wave and we are all thrilled to see him do so well. As well as Dan's fantastic news, we also have a new designer starting with us in September. Eve Cooper will be joining us fresh from her illustration degree as a Junior Designer and Content Producer - welcome Eve, we're thrilled to have you on board! We have the usual portfolio articles and the return of the now world famous spot the difference competition! So settle in, relax and unwind into the latest edition of Pit Stop...



## Welcome to the Team... Eve Cooper, Designer

**September sees us greet our newest studio team member Eve Cooper into the company. She has joined us and will be working closely with Dan in the studio on creative briefs and design projects.**

Eve comes to us with a degree in Illustration from Gloucestershire University and she will be officially graduating in November. Her illustrative skills will complement our design style, particularly with our packaging and animation work.

Look out for her projects featuring in the next edition of Pit Stop, including Pirate packaging, Cluedo graphics and gastro pub social graphics!

## OPEN DOOR @ DESIGN PIT HQ

We like to talk. We like to listen. We like to learn. We like understanding things. That is why we have an open door policy here at HQ for any clients (new or old), to pop in for a coffee to discuss their next creative brief. What is your next creative challenge? Get in touch, let's see what we can do!



**BNI Elite meets weekly at Moor Hall Hotel in Sutton Coldfield. Elite is one of the top performing BNI Chapters in the Birmingham & Coventry region, turning over in excess of £1 million in the past 12 months. Design Pit is proud to have been a member here for the last 3 years.**

Please email [gareth@designpit.co.uk](mailto:gareth@designpit.co.uk) to check the seat availability, suitability of your business and request a visit at one of the region's best value BNI Chapters.



## TALK About Mental Health

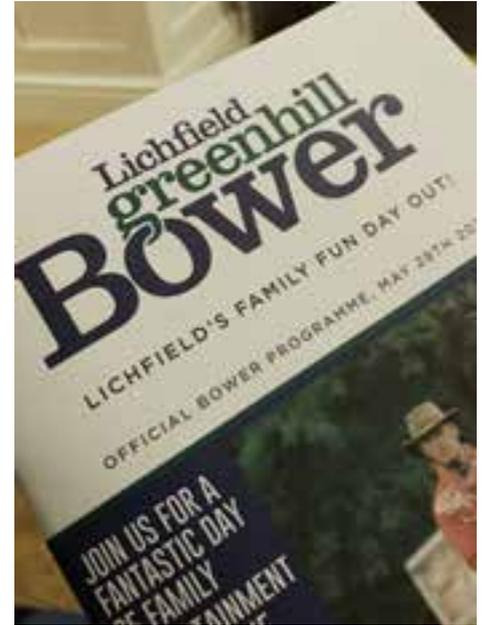
We recently donated a pull up banner to Lewis Dewsnap, the founder of TALK About Mental Health. TALK is a Facebook campaign that is working to encourage people to talk about mental health without fear of being judged or labelled. Lewis posts videos to share his own experiences in a brave effort to support others who may be suffering with similar issues to those he has faced over the years. The page is growing and we decided to help Lewis to freshen up his videos with a branded background. The banner can now be seen in all of his videos. Check out the page at [www.facebook.com/talkaboutyourmentalhealth](http://www.facebook.com/talkaboutyourmentalhealth)

# OUR WORLD FAMOUS SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Spot the 8 differences in the two images below. The image at the bottom has been edited. Can you find all eight?! Take a photo if you find all of the differences and send it to us on Twitter or Facebook for a chance to win some super cool odd socks! @design\_pit or fb.com/thedesignpit



## Our Lichfield Bower Brand still Going Strong...



Back in 2013, we rebranded Lichfield Greenhill Bower. We created a new identity, logo and programme layout, as well as this we sold advertising space, designed some of the adverts and wrote the articles inside the booklet.

Our working relationship with the Bower ended after the first year but they still use our carefully crafted branding elements today. And it is safe to say that it looks as good today as it did back in 2013, transitioning from print to large format to web seamlessly with strong traditional typography with a contemporary twist that links the letterforms together to form a neatly stacked logo.

If you visited the Bower this year, you will have been treated to some beautiful weather as well as a great day out!



**A new way to network...**



# WHEN UR SNEAKING A PIC OF **DRAPLIN** HE CATCHES U IN THE ACT, STEALS UR PHONE AND GOES **#SELFIE CRAZY...**



Aaron Draplin is a graphic designer, author and founder of Draplin Design Co. Draplin was born in Detroit, Michigan, on October 15, 1973. He is now based in Portland, Oregon and his clients include Nike, Burton Snowboards, Esquire, Red Wing, Field Notes, Ford Motor Company and the Obama Administration. His book, "Pretty Much Everything", is a mid-career survey of his work including case studies and advice which was released in May 2016.

Draplin is known in the design world as a real firebrand, truth-teller, a man of the people and vector-terrorizer! He is the Field-notes founder, motivational speaker and radical designer, Draplin is as sought after for his words of wisdom as he is for his design skills and, on Saturday 9th June we went to see him talk at the inaugural Birmingham Design Festival...

"We sat the second row back from the stage and who comes and sits three seats away from us? None other than Draplin himself! I thought that this would be a great photo for Instagram, I'll do a selfie and get him in the background. So, I line it all up and just as I click shoot he turns around, looks right into the camera as I take the shot! He laughs and shouts..."

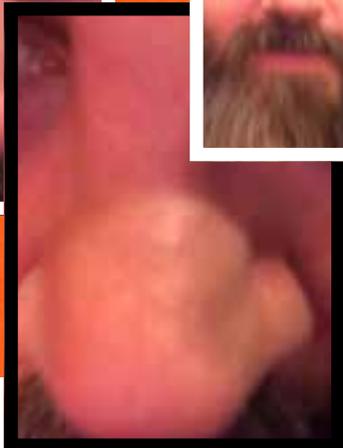
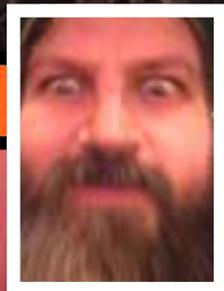
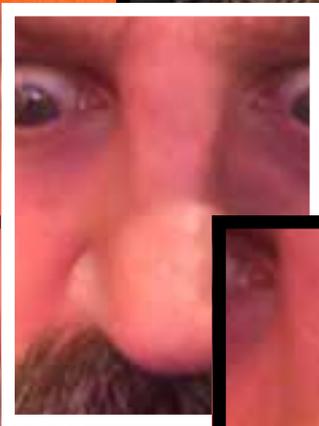
## "GIVE ME THAT PHONE MAN!"

So I pass it over and he goes selfie crazy before passing it back over with seven pictures in the library!"

PHOTOS BY:  
Aaron J. Draplin

# DILLIN

ARTICLE BY:  
Gareth Robertson



# DRAPLIN SPEAKS



**The Summer of 2018 saw the launch of the Birmingham Design Festival – an ambitious celebration of the dynamic design industry, held over four packed days in June.**

Whether you're a seasoned professional, design student or someone who just enjoys a casual critique of the modern world, the festival offered the opportunity to engage with a broad range of disciplines and top practitioners from the UK and beyond – not to mention exciting local talent.

Through a carefully-curated programme based around an annual theme, organisers encouraged further conversation, interaction and inspiration. Visitors heard from individuals and studios who are helping champion the local scene, combined with iconic designers who've made waves around the world.

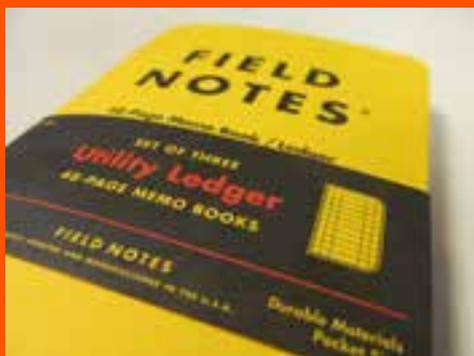
Birmingham Design Festival consisted of workshops, talks, exhibitions, demonstrations and screenings loosely gathered into three Design Districts (Graphic, Digital & Product) and was held in both modern and historic venues across Birmingham, showcasing the innovative institutions and rich heritage the second city offers.

**The Design Pit team ventured into Birmingham for the first ever Design Festival in the city armed with tickets for the headline event, Aaron Draplin.**

Listening to Draplin was inspiration and reassuring in equal measure. The guy has been there, seen it, done it, designed a tshirt and sold the tshirt to thousands upon thousands of people all over the world. Some of his stories and anecdotes resonated with all of us on one level or another and we left the talk, having taken several pearls of wisdom away with us.

Draplin has been a favourite of ours for a number of years and having listened to him talk, it is clear to see why we are drawn to his style of work, ethos and self made brand. For Draplin, as it is with us, every project matters. It is all about doing the very best job we can do with every brief we're given. The feeling you get when you see some of your work on the shelf in the supermarket or on a 40 foot wagon on the motorway, is amazing... To be able to say, "I did that" is a wonderful feeling.

Draplin is an inspirational designer that has left his mark on us and we can't wait for the next time we get to see him talk!



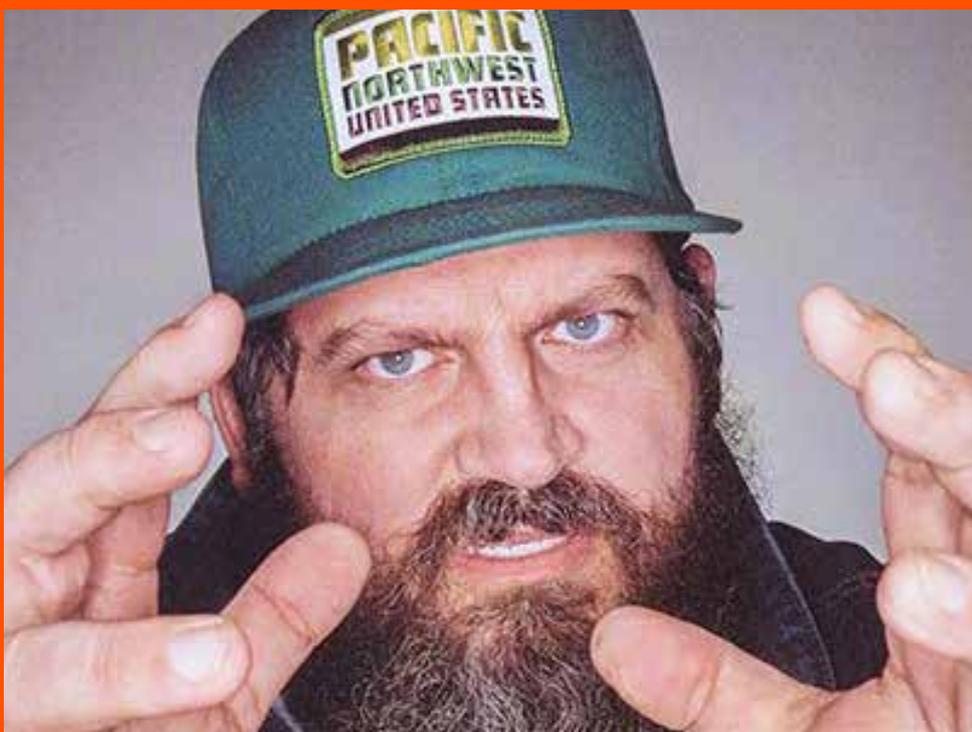
# MERCH MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND...

Draplin is one of my favourite designers. His work is great but his attitude to our industry is what I like most about him. There is no messing about, no flowery rubbish just a genuine desire to do a great job on every project.

He's created a brand for himself by simply doing what he loves most and his range of "merch" is massive; and highly desirable for any designer who follows him! When we went to see him talk at the Design Festival, he brought loads over to sell and I couldn't resist! We have his book at the studio so I indulged some magnets, posters, Field Notes booklets and a famous Draplin Trucker cap!

The Design Festival was great and to top it all off, Draplin sat right in front of us at the final show before he went on stage. He was making notes throughout the first two speaker's talks and it just proves that he doesn't stop working! He's always looking for inspiration, always on the hunt for the next theme, style or message to build into a project and then his talk was very inspirational.

It was a real treat to listen to him talk and I feel very lucky to have seen him working up close before he went on stage. If any designer or interested person gets the opportunity to see him talk, I'd recommend you book a ticket now; Draplin is a force of nature and his merch is seriously cool!



PHOTOS AND ARTICLE BY: Dan Hollyoake



# My Design Journey... The Long Way Around

Before 2012, I had an epiphany, “wouldn’t it be great to finish my formal education in an arts related degree?” I pondered this for a while, as it was at this point in my life I was working for a photography studio retouching photographs all day. I felt satisfied that I was earning money but very dissatisfied with my career, which was going nowhere fast. I was torn between the certainty of employment and the uncertainty of diving into higher education; and having to quit my current job if I did. Thankfully I discovered the option to start a degree course part-time. This was perfect as it would enable me to work while I learn; the downside was that it would take six years to complete. I decided to take the plunge and secured an interview at Derby University and got an unconditional offer for my chosen course in B.A (Hons) in Graphic Design.

So my 6 year journey began, I promised myself I’d put all my effort into my work at university and to utilise my experience in photo editing to my advantage. I soon got into the swing of things at university and started to stack up the grades. For my first grades I was achieving 85%, I was surprised and even more determined to reach for the skies so I tried harder and achieved 90% for the next part of the course again.



## Prize Winner

I entered an award for my project on unique packaging and point of sale design for Morrisons Energy Saving Bulbs. The Point of Sale piece is a triangular modular design that interlocks to increase capacity dependent on the space available in the supermarket. The packaging for the bulbs were designed in a triangular form where the corners pop and lock into place to secure the bulbs. I won Silver overall.

## Redundancy

Then, disaster struck. The news that I was to be made redundant as the entire photo studio I worked at for the last 7 years was about to close due. This put me in a very difficult position, as I had to earn to pay my bills and fund the remaining three years of my degree. Luckily the university has a careers centre and I managed to get a couple of jobs internally as a student ambassador, working with the marketing team as their designer and a internship at a new local start-up brewery in Derby. Shortly after this, I started following a design company on Facebook called Design Pit. I liked their work and the activity on Facebook so I started to interact with them more. I even asked if I could interview them for a university project and they said yes!

## Settling Down

I continued my studies, but yet further challenges awaited. Wedding planning and a house move made concentrating on my studies incredibly difficult, but I knew I had to knuckle down and focus as I’d come so far and my grades were really high. Just to add to my already heavy workload, I entered the 2016 YCN Award for a packaging design project I made for Fedrigoni Paper. It all happened so quickly, but I won the YCN student award.

## Hat Trick

I had a surprise letter from the Dean of my University, it contained an award I wasn’t aware of called, ‘The Ede and Ravenscroft Prize’ which is a cash prize of £700 awarded to one student per faculty for gaining the highest grade within that faculty for first and second year modules. This gave me a much-needed boost to continue to work hard and focus on my studies as much as possible!

## Journey's End!

Recently completed my final major degree project called, ‘DiverseMinds’ which is an informative pack for a campaign to help employers understand Autism more in the working environment.

Inspiration was taken from the personal perspectives of autistic people. The design is eye-catching, informative and visually engaging as well as having useful information on autistic people at work and the positives.

The pack consists of a booklet guide, compact foldable poster and postcards. I achieved 90% in my grades for this project and taking into account the other grades over the six years of study, I will achieve a first class honours in graphic design, which has made all of the hard work, 100% worth it!



I went to meet Design Pit at their offices in Lichfield to meet the Creative Director Gareth Robertson. It was a surprise to discover that Design Pit was in fact, just Gareth! The website painted a much different picture, it looked so much bigger than a one man band and I really liked the way Gareth intended to grow it as a business. I kept in touch with Gareth and not long after this, he approached me with a small project that he needed some help with. And within a couple of weeks, I managed to bag a part-time graphic design job at Design Pit; and the rest they say, is history.



**“I kept in touch with Gareth and within a couple of weeks, I bagged a part-time job at Design Pit; and the rest they say, is history...”**

# Portfolio Focus: Kalkaire

## Launching a New Coconut Flavoured Charcoal Toothpaste



**Back in early 2017, we were approached by a new client to help with the design of a new packaging set for a toothpaste product they were developing and planning to launch in the UK on Amazon. It was an unusual and interesting brief so it immediately spiked our interest!** The product was remarkably unique, a black charcoal based toothpaste with coconut flavouring. Totally different to anything that we'd encountered before but our clients assured us that this type of product was on an upward curve in terms of popularity and that their product could really take off quickly after launch. We set about designing several elements including a new identity for the holding company, called Antilla Health. This was a very deliberately chosen name which allowed them to move into other similar areas of health product rather than pigeon-holing themselves as an exclusive toothpaste supplier. After the company identity was established, we moved onto the really exciting bit... The box and tube designs. They wanted a really clean and fresh style with striking typography and high production values in the resulting production of the box and tube. We arrived at sign off with a fresh, clean and airy design for the box which followed through onto the tube. We assisted with guiding the Chinese production team to place some SpotUV varnish on the box along with some green hot foiling for the Antilla logo. It all looks great and positions Kalkaire as a high end toothpaste at a very affordable price. We look forward to working with Antilla Health in the future as they look to move into new product areas which includes mouthwashes, toothbrushes and CBD oils.



**DESIGNS BY:** Dan Hollyoake

**ARTICLE BY:** Gareth Robertson



# 5 Self Sabotaging Brand Mistakes that EVERYONE Makes...



## 1) Believing you don't have a brand; or don't need one

A lot of SMEs just don't understand branding, and therefore dismiss it as a concept completely. The truth is that every company no matter how big or small, has a brand whether they realise it or not, or accept it or not!

### Simply replace the word "brand" with "reputation".

Everyone wants to cultivate a great reputation, and if you have a reputation that people trust, then they presto – you have a great brand. If you have a reputation that people don't relate to or distrust, then you have problems.

And therefore, you need to look at turning it around. As designers, we can help with this.

## 2) Believing that designers are expensive and unnecessary cost

If you are struggling with your brand and reputation as demonstrated in point 1 above, then a designer is actually a sound investment; not a cost.

Having a professional designer work on your identity to cultivate a new look that paints your company in a professional, credible light will bring fresh air of legitimacy in the eyes of clients, customers and prospects.

**An investment in your brand is an investment in the future of your business** to arm yourself with new tools to take yourself to market with a renewed sense of vision and purpose.

## 3) Your company name is doing you no favours

Your company name should be short, snappy, easy to spell and should above all describe what you do. In the digital age in which we now exist, the shorter the name the better. Short names are easy to type into web browsers and they take up less characters on Twitter!

Having a name like **Willshaw and Woodhouse Creative Consultants** will do you no favours when people fail to land on your website because they've spelt your domain name wrong. Also, who the hell has heard of "Creative Consultants" before? Why not just say "Designers"? Don't try to be too clever with your name, although Nike, Audi or Adidas have names that say nothing about what they do, they also have millions of pounds in their marketing budgets – and you (probably) don't. So don't make your prospects work too hard to understand what you do or offer.

## 4) You're being inconsistent

Something we preach as our mantra... **consistency, consistency, consistency.** If you are being inconsistent then you are being ineffective with your branding and marketing. Clear, precise and coherent messages that are consistently executed across all of your marketing channels and platforms will always, always, always work better. Nowadays, we have so many platforms on which we can get our brand out there. But it is essential that your message carries through consistently on every level. For example, if you use Twitter for business make sure that your handle represents your business name rather than your own name; see how a short company name helps here as well now?

## 5) You don't have an end goal

The clients that we do most work with and achieve more success than others, are extremely consistent but they also have a very clear vision in four key areas:

- **Who they are**
- **What they do**
- **Why they do it**
- **Where their customers are**

Knowing this information allows you to keep a tight grip on your identity, control quality of your work, keep focused on what you're trying to achieve and how to locate and sell to the right type of customer.

Once they've got all of this mapped out, they stick to it and refuse to deviate. This sort of focus breeds efficiency, processes and ultimately delivers success faster. This approach also develops a solid foundation for a brand that is grounded on efficiency, service and delivery; three things that customers will love.

If you can arm yourself with this information, you will take hold of your brand and enhance your reputation as you become more and more successful in your own work.



# Client Focus: The Plough



**We recently started working with The Plough at Shenstone on their digital design requirements including website and social media platforms.**

We have taken over their accounts on Facebook and Instagram and we are also designing a new website for them which will be going live in September. The digital presence of the popular gastro pub in the heart of the Midlands was lacking and in need of updating, we've been brought on board to deliver regular updates across social channels and a responsive website that paints a clearer picture about everything The Plough does.

August was a month of planning, strategising and preparing content to launch fully during September. We have a complete 5 month plan mapped out and we'll be executing the various campaigns systematically across Facebook and Instagram in the run up to a variety of events that we've helped map out, these include a Beer Festival, a Food Festival and a Gin/Cocktail Festival.

We'll be bringing regular updates on our work and partnership with The Plough via Pit Stop and on our company blog which can be found at [www.designpit.co.uk/blog](http://www.designpit.co.uk/blog). Keep checking The Plough's FB and IG pages as well as our own social channels as we will be sharing The Plough's content regularly.

Is your digital presence and content in need of a revamp? Why not get in touch and see how our considered approach to blended, cohesive and creative content can impact your identity, brand and reach online. Drop us a line on 01543 241 251 or email [sarah@designpit.co.uk](mailto:sarah@designpit.co.uk)



## Farewell Sarah...

**October will see our Studio Manager Sarah Richards leave us. After just under two years with us here at Design Pit HQ, Sarah has decided to take some time out and be with her children as they go into school.**

We'll be very sad to see Sarah leave us after the positive mark that she's made on our company. We all wish her the very best going forward and hope to see her back at Design Pit HQ for a visit soon!



## Gareth's First Interview in over 15 years...



**Gareth recently had his first interview in over 15 years. He was interviewing to secure a place at the Aston Business School Programme for Small Business Growth. After a Dragons Den style grilling, he was delighted to see that he'd been successful.**

Aston Centre for Growth offers leading growth programmes and other opportunities for SME owners looking to grow their business. Aston University has held the Small Business Charter since 2014, reflecting its expertise in SME engagement. They have experience of working with hundreds of SMEs to support their business growth, with investment ready pitching competitions, through student focused start-up support and incubation centre and on high profile programmes such as Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses.

Gareth said, "I wasn't nervous for the interview but it was a change to my usual working day! I am a designer first and foremost so learning about business, leadership and the more professional side of things is critical career development for someone like me. I see this opportunity as a launch pad to take Design Pit on to bigger and better things. My cohort starts in October and I'm excited to get started."

  
Aston Business School  
Birmingham



# 5 Top Tips for Perfect Packaging Design



Packaging sells. It is a fact. We all buy with our eyes and packaging plays a major part in our buying decisions and habits. In recent studies by BusinessInsider.com, BrandPackaging.com and The PaperWorker.com, it was found that 70% of purchase decisions are made in store; so shelf presence is key. Over a third of purchases are based on packaging; think about how you choose your bottle of wine in Tesco or Asda? And 66% of consumers have tried a new product based on the packaging.

Based on these three stats, it is clear to see that designing product packaging is a crucial factor in getting noticed, being remembered and demanding purchase. Here are our Top Five Tips for Perfect Packaging Design...

## 1) Positioning of your Product

Where is your product positioned in terms of brand and place within the market? Is your product a premium product or a lower end product? Knowing and understanding this will help form the brief for your packaging, a more high end product will command more input to layout, balance, shape, form, functionality and production values of the pack. A premium product should be reflected in high quality packaging, just think about Apple's packaging for example. Lower end products don't necessarily require as much input as higher end alternatives but that doesn't mean care and consideration should not be taken when designing the packaging.

## 2) Inclusion of Mandatory Items

A lot of products out there will have elements that must be included and displayed clearly on the packaging that delivers them to market. Think about alcohol products, they must include alcohol by volume measures and volume within bottle. All food products are required to display whether nuts are present within the ingredients. What fundamental, mandatory information must be included on your packaging and how will that affect layout and design?



## 3) Be Bold and Make an Impression

Design your packaging to reflect the environment where it will be sold most – in a shop or online. Look to design something that will stand out on a shelf or screen, think about what appeals to your target demographic and how your packaging will arrest their attention? Being bold and getting creative with wording, messages, colour, layout and typography will set your product apart from the chasing pack; but ensure you've done your research and know what competitors are doing so you can improve on what is already out there.

## 4) Understand Production Techniques and Capabilities

How and what your packaging is made with or from, the shape and form of it and how the production process starts, runs and ends is incredibly important. How many colours of ink can you use? What materials will work best to protect the contents? Will any inks affect the contents? How big or small is the packaging? How does the product sit within the packaging and how is the fulfilment carried out? There are so many factors to fully understand how a package is formed and produced, and these elements are a big part of the design equation.

## 5) Impact on our Environment

With the move against use of plastic in general day to day life gathering pace in recent times, having eco-friendly packaging is a very good way of spinning some positive PR when launching or relaunching a product. Think about environmental impact in terms of carbon footprint as well, how are component parts or materials shipped from source to production, this is an area where companies have come unstuck when making claims of eco-friendly packaged goods. Having eco-friendly packaging can impact on how a design is executed and can be made into a prominent feature on pack; this feature will also enhance the company brand in the eyes of consumers.

**Client Events: 1st - 31st October, Autumn Food Festival and 19th - 23rd November Autumn Ale Festival at The Plough at Shenstone. Book a table on 01543 481 800**

