

# Picture perfect

There's more to a football club than 90 minutes of action. Mike Ward unearths the individuals who have one thing in common... a love of the Albion



**If a picture paints a thousand words – and I don't see why not – then 2,000 pictures ought to paint, what, a couple of million? Something like that.**

So imagine the stories the Albion mosaic is going to tell.

This project, the brainchild of Albion fanatics Warren Dudley and Tim Herbert, is collecting photographs from Seagulls supporters the world over, with the aim of turning them into one enormous iconic image, to be mounted on the wall of the North Stand Supporters' Bar at the Amex Stadium.

Ingenious, huh?

"Warren made a flag for the 2006 World Cup in Germany," Tim explains, "featuring a mosaic of fans from clubs all over the country. He turned it into the famous picture of Bobby Moore being held aloft at Wembley with the old trophy. It was really successful.

"So we got talking after that tournament and came up with the idea of doing something along those lines for the new Amex Stadium. It's been in the pipeline for quite a while now, so it's really exciting to see it finally coming together."

Warren and Tim thought long and hard about which image they wanted to create, ultimately settling on a picture of Peter Ward in his heyday, gazing at the new stadium in the distance.

"We wanted to blend the old and the new," says Tim, "and as Peter Ward is Brighton's most famous, best loved



player, this seemed ideal. We think it's a nice image. All the people we've shown it to have been really, really supportive, which is great.

"I must admit we were a little bit worried when we stuck it on North Stand Chat, thinking people might go, 'That's rubbish, they're having a laugh.'

"There's always that fear, isn't there? That little bit of insecurity that it won't go down very well. But the response has been, I'd say, 99.9 per cent positive."

Ward himself has submitted

pictures, as have other Albion legends including Bobby Zamora. Gus and the current squad will be on there too.

Depending on how many images are ultimately submitted before the May cut-off point, the final piece could stretch as wide as four metres.

"That would be fantastic," says Tim. "You'll stand back and see this amazing image – and then as you get closer you'll see each of the individual photos."

It is, of course, ultimately all about those pictures and the fans they feature.

"In many cases it's an opportunity for people to honour the loved ones who've not made it this far," says Tim. "It's been so long since we were playing at the Goldstone that many supporters are sadly no longer with us."

One of those absent supporters, of course, is Robert Eaton, who lost his life in the Twin Towers attack on New York in September 2001. Ten percent of the money raised by the mosaic

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project, for which submissions cost £9.99, will be donated to the award-winning memorial fund set up in Robert's memory, helping fund football for underprivileged youngsters both in England and overseas.

"A lot of it is about remembering those who won't be there," says Tim. "People on North Stand Chat, for example, have been collecting money in memory of Evan Warren, who used to post as Defrocked Priest and who died suddenly just a few weeks ago. They want to get him a Heritage Stone at the new ground and put a picture of him on the mosaic as well.

"It's that sort of feeling, really – paying tribute to all the fans who fought so hard to make Falmer a reality. Because obviously it's been a bit of a slog, hasn't it?"

It's also, of course, about passing on the legacy. Hence others who'll feature on the mosaic will include Tim's three-year-old son Jamie, pictured in an Albion shirt when he was only a few weeks old. It's clear that Tim – a Liverpool fan as a kid, but miraculously converted to the Albion during the 3-3 draw at the

Goldstone in 1981 – is doing a fine job of raising his lad the right way.

"He's got his shirts and he sings the songs: 'Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, jingle all the way, oh what fun it is to see Brighton win away,'

"And he's always walking around the house singing, 'I love Albion.' It's great!"

With pictures submitted so far including pets, babies, family photos and supporters' tattoos ("It doesn't matter what the image is, as long as it's not offensive – or Palace..."), the final work promises to be fascinating.

"Just e-mail us the picture you want to include – the address is on our website – and we'll ping you back with payment details. It's really simple. And everyone who submits a picture will get an A1 print of the finished mosaic."

Come the day that mosaic is ready, Tim says he and Warren would love an official red-curtain unveiling. "Obviously we'll have to wait and see," he says Tim, "but wouldn't that be brilliant?"

• For more details, go to [www.albionfanmosaic.co.uk](http://www.albionfanmosaic.co.uk)



**Above:** Warren Dudley; Tim Herbert showing son Jamie the right path as a baby, and Jamie continuing his education!