



# Gil Merrick

*Keith Dixon*

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Birmingham City Football Club has been acknowledged over the years as 'a sleeping giant. Unfortunately for its fans, the giant has not awoken since the club's formation in 1875. Over 130 years of professional football in the heart of industrial Midlands has produced only one major trophy - The League Cup in 1963 - alongside a million heartaches and disappointments for its fans. Faced with an underachieving football club, Blues fans have had to look to their heroes to justify their blind faith and continued enthusiasm - and to many Gil Merrick is the greatest hero of all! Gil is held in high esteem because he loved the club as much as the supporters, even though his father was a Villa fan. He gave his life and soul to Birmingham City, serving it as player and manager before the club broke his heart with the manner of his dismissal. Loyalty could have been Gil's middle name. Known as 'Mr. Birmingham City' his time at the club coincided with many of the best days (and nights) in its history; Promotions, F.A. Cup Final appearances, European success, domestic success, the introduction of European coaching methods and giving debuts to many great young players. Who knows how Gil would have fared in today's game where money rules and international players become celebrities. There is little doubt that he would have remained level-headed and taken the trappings of success in his stride, but would he have remained with one club for 25 years? Whatever happens in the future to 'The Blues', whether they ultimately re-gain Premier League status and conquer Europe there will never be another club servant to match Birmingham City legend - Gil Merrick. This is a fascinating biography of Birmingham City hero, Gil Merrick. Based on hours of in-depth interviews with Gil, this title tells the goalkeeper's story.

KEITH DIXON was raised within site of St. Andrew's in Holmwood Road, Small Heath and has been a Blues fanatic since 1954. He founded the BLUENOSE CLUB in 2004 and has organised a number of themed charity nights featuring ex-Blues players to raise money for Promise Dreams and MacMillan. In 2006 he self-published THE BLUES - Great Games - Great Teams - Great Players in celebration of the Centenary of the Opening of St. Andrew's. Until recently he was a guest writer for THE BLUES MAGAZINE providing a monthly article entitled "My Time at The Blues" whereby he tracked down ex-Blues players to talk about their careers at St. Andrew's.

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