

UNITED FRIENDS

a folk and country dance album by ...

The Amazing Catsfield Steamers

This album is a celebration by the ACS of traditional country dance music and song. The band have been together for many years (including family generations) and at full strength, their sixteen piece line-up must have made them perhaps the largest folk dance band in the British Isles. The size of the group, who are still an institution in Southern England, also made for a great variety of programming and they have played at ceilidhs, barn dances, concerts and festivals, from the Covent Garden Piazza and the Capital Radio Festival in London - to pub 'tune ups' in their native Sussex.

The album UNITED FRIENDS is inspired by the pub of that name in Ninfield village, where the band were based in their early years and where many legendary Sunday evenings have been spent in a celebration of music and song, in the best folk tradition of pleasure and companionship. This album, first released in 1983, attracted wonderful reviews, gained a great deal of airplay on mainstream media and reached No.3 in the folk charts. It has now been updated and re-mastered, so that we can once again enjoy one of those typical Sunday night programmes, as given by this most versatile and evergreen band.



ar ACADEMY
RECORDINGS

ORIGINAL ALBUM REVIEWS

SOUTHERN RAG:- '*United Friends* is the name of the pub where The Amazing Catsfield Steamers play on Sunday nights – their home patch. It must be a big place as the band alone has 16 members. The music selected for the record comes from all over the British Isles plus two tunes from America. The band's excellent trombone player, Richard Hill, also makes a fine job of producing the record and copes magnificently with the terrible task of mixing 16 musicians, recorded in three different locations, only one of which is a studio. The sound is even, clear and well defined throughout. Full marks!

Surprisingly, the ensemble work is by far the best – for a band sporting five melodeons, a concertina and a piano accordion! Thank God they don't seem to all play at once! But the music you hear after the mixing is tight, snappy and exciting. This is undoubtedly due not only to the producer, but to some fine electric bass playing by George Copeland, who can really make 'em go. At last, it seems folk bands are beginning to borrow something worthwhile from Rock. The *Fiery Clockface* set, *Woodcutters' Jig* set and part of the *Schottisches* set are excellent.'

MUSIC WORLD:- 'Richard Hill produced and played trombone on this album. Trombone on a folk album? How about several melodeons, concertina, piano accordion, 3 banjos, guitars, electric bass, fiddle, assorted percussion, male and female and group vocals and even a synthesizer!! Well, you can hear them all on this album. Capital Radio like it enough to play it outside the confines of their folk programmes as do Radios 1 and 2. Not only them, for indeed I like it too. This record works incredibly well. Already appearing in our folk charts, this could be the one from a small label that breaks out into the big league.'

FOLK INTERNATIONAL:- 'The idea of a folk band with 16 members seems a little daunting. But, a band from down in Sussex have both recorded and apparently gigged with that army of people. They are called *The Amazing Catsfield Steamers*, and amazing they are too. Their album is named after the pub in Ninfield in Sussex where they all spend their Sunday evenings playing the music they love – a combination of English dance tunes and songs. The album sets out to be a typical Sunday night programme and they certainly have managed to get an excellent selection of their repertoire together here, including a stirring version of the perennial *Hopping Down in Kent*, and a beautiful bit of melodeon playing on *Woodcutters' Jig/Ned Kelley's/Haste to the Wedding*. It is their approach that sets them apart from other bunches of musicians. Either way, they are definitely worth listening to, and if you have enough mike stands to go round, they would probably be an excellent bet for any festival, since they can supply both excellent dance music, plus listenable and entertaining songs.'

TRACK TITLES

- 1 Fiery Clockface/The Perfect Cure
- 2 79th Highlanders' Farewell to Gibraltar
- 3 Hopping Down in Kent
- 4 Woodcutters' Jig/Ned Kelly's/Haste to the Wedding
- 5 Sally in the Kitchen
- 6 The Tempest
- 7 Bodmin Riding
- 8 The Mizzard/Swaggering Boney
- 9 Church Street/St.Mary's/Girl with a Blue Dress
- 10 Spanish Ladies
- 11 Rogue's March/Captain Lemo's Fast March
- 12 Drink the Winter Away/When Spring Comes In
- 13 New Schottisches
- 14 Come Me Lads

All tracks arranged by Hill/Steamers

Published by Bucks Music Ltd except **6** (Noon Music) and **12** (Folktracks/Coppersongs)

The Amazing Catsfield Steamers – Personnel

Melodeons: Eric Downes, Andy Dennis, Mick ('Goose')

Gander, Cliff Mason, Nigel Taylor

Concertina: Bryan Hawes

Piano Accordion: Bob Bournier

Banjos: Paul Roberts, Cliff Mason, Roger Vance

Guitars: Nigel Taylor, Paul Dengate

Bass Guitar: George Copeland

Drums: Brian ('Brain') Chainey

Percussion: Rosheen Eldrige (Tambourine)

Paddy Hanlon (Spoons)

Fiddle/Viola: Steve Cooke

Trombone: Richard Hill

Occasional synthesizer: Mick ('Goose') Gander

Vocalist/Caller: Jane Downes

Vocals on 'Drink the Winter Away': Bryan Hawes

Lead Vocals on 'Come Me Lads': George Copeland, Mick ('Goose') Gander

Album recorded at: Essex Studios, London, Catsfield Village Hall, Pestalozzi International Children's Village

Mobile Units: PRT Mobile, JT Mobile

Re-mix: Essex Studios, London

Engineers: John Burns, John Timperley

Re-mastering: Paul Dengate

Thanks to Annie, Alan, Alf and Martha at the United Friends

PRODUCED BY RICHARD HILL

Booklet design by Paul Hill 2010