



## *Irish Tin & Low Whistles*

### **The Tin Whistle**

It is a diatonic instrument, most of the time tuned in the key of D.  
However, you can also find whistles in other keys.

It was made at first *not in Ireland* but in the village of Coney Weston, North-East London, in 1843.

*Robert Clarke*, a farm labourer, played a small wooden whistle. He heard that a new material called *tinplate* (mild steel covered with tin) had been invented.



So he tried to reproduce his whistle with the help from his friend, the village blacksmith.

As his new whistle sounded very well, he decided to make a few more copies...

... Then he heard that there were opportunities for manufacture in Lancashire : so he walked from Coney Weston to Manchester, pushing his tools and materials in a handbarrow.

He met *Irish navigators* on his way and sold them his tin whistles.

These Irishmen took them back to Ireland where the « English tin whistle » became *Ireland's favourite folk instrument*.

One can find it also called *Penny Whistle* because it costed one penny from the time.

*The first Tin Whistle*



[Clarke's website](#)

### **The Low Whistle**

It was created in the seventies by *Bernard Overton* to find a low, wide and warm sound.  
These whistles are longer than the tin whistles and play an octave below them.  
As for the tin whistle, you can find the low whistles in several keys.

The instrument is more difficult to play : the holes are bigger and therefore not easy to close properly at the beginning; the space between fingers is more important and will require a different grip of the instrument; the whistle needs more air to sound.

It was widely adopted in Irish traditional music and is now made in several metals or alloys (aluminium, copper, brass,...) and also in wood and plastic.



*Low & Tin Whistles*