

pan podium feature
center
stage
with

By Jon McHugh

Milnthorpe Steel Band



Milnthorpe Steel Band has been in existence since the latter months of 1998, following the purchase of steel pan instruments for 'half' a steel band by Milnthorpe Primary School from a school band visiting from Manchester. **The school band was introduced as a way of enhancing musical opportunities within the school and increasing the public profile in the wider community. They are based in the South Lakes, Kendal in Cumbria, England.**

As the band became more experienced they were successful in playing at local events such as the Mary Wakefield Festival in Kendal and nationally in the festival of Music For Youth in London. The Community Steel Band was formed at the same time as a way for interested individuals outside the school to take advantage of a previously unheard opportunity of participating in a unique and exciting music making experience, playing and performing in a full steel band. These members were parents of current and ex-pupils of the school, as well as people who had no ties whatsoever with it. It gained the affectionate name of 'Din on a Bin'. **In September 2005, the bands amalgamated. Most of their members have little or no musical experience when they join and in recruiting for the band they always emphasise that experience is not essential but a sense of humour is!**

The band practices every Tuesday night in the Creative Confectionery Company Warehouse on Mainline Industrial Estate, Milnthorpe from 5.30 to 7.00pm (term time only). The session is open to everyone from the age of 8 years. There is no upper age limit. Anyone is welcome to come and 'have a go'. They gig to raise funds towards purchasing new equipment and instruments, enabling more people to play. The band always has a very full and varied annual performance programme, with weddings, carnivals and agricultural shows among their bookings. They also perform at The Lakeland Rose Show, Kendal Torchlight Procession, various Carnivals and Levens Hall Chilli Fest which are their regular repeat bookings.



None of this would have been possible without the enthusiasm and skill of their **musical director, Andy Whitfield, aka 'Harry'**, a former teacher at Milnthorpe Primary School and their band Leader. In 2008, they recorded a CD which has proved very popular and includes many of their favourite tunes. This is usually available at all their performances.

If you require any further information please take the time to visit their website www.milnthorpesteelband.co.uk where you can find loads of background information, hear a selection of their music, as well as view some of their photographs and a current booking list. The band can be contacted via their website or their booking manager **Andy Pinder - Tel: 01524 734770 • Email: info@milnthorpesteelband.co.uk**

