



# Dusty Banjos serve up a midsummer's marvel

Three days of music, a splash of sunshine over Cleggan Bay and cracking sessions melding with the dawn chorus...

**M**usicians and singers from all over Galway gathered in Cleggan at the end of June for a rousing weekend of traditional music, song and dance.

Although the festival was open to all, most were from the large group of traditional musicians that forms the well-known Dusty Banjos – a community-based group which encourages adults to return to traditional music, and in particular to hone their skills by playing together in informal group sessions.

Some 60 musicians and singers – joined by sean nós dancers – came to town for the sessions, which took place over the weekend of June 22-24, in Newman's and Oliver's bars.

Some 25 musicians and singers performed in Newman's on the Friday, joined by Richie Newman, himself an accomplished musician and singer, as well as by other musicians from the area and a scattering of musicians holidaying in Clifden at the time.

On the Saturday night, 40-plus musicians gathered in Oliver's Bar,



and a 'wind-down' session on the Sunday afternoon took place in glorious Connemara sunshine, on Oliver's deck, overlooking Cleggan harbour.

Being the weekend immediately following midsummer, the music continued informally in locations in the village until daylight had well-and-truly -broken, and the musicians were joined by the dawn chorus!

Dusty Banjos celebrate their tenth birthday this year. They have played extensively in Galway and around Ireland, as well as in Hamburg, Kiel, Lübeck,

Berlin, Prague and more. Their classes and learners sessions are going from strength to strength, and their first CD, *Live At The Crane* has been very well received in Ireland and abroad.

This was Dusty Banjos fourth annual midsummer music weekend in Cleggan, and as usual it attracted a grand audience – of local people, of friends and family of the musicians, and of visitors and holiday-makers.

● Dusty Banjos classes and learners sessions are currently on their summer break, but

they'll be back in business from mid-September in Galway's Western Hotel. You can learn more about Dusty Banjos and its activities by visiting [www.dustybanjos.com](http://www.dustybanjos.com).

● Mary and Heather, who jointly run Dusty Banjos, are playing early sessions in Oliver's Bar, each Wednesday evening from 7.30pm over the summer, joined by guitarist/singer Tony, plus friends. As with the midsummer weekend, other musicians, singers and dancers are welcome to come along and join in. For more, see [www.AughrusPeninsula.com](http://www.AughrusPeninsula.com).