



‘I doubt there will ever be another time like it.’

Bobby Platt, a building contractor from Portstewart, loved music. During the 1950s he spent his free time in cafes with friends listening to the latest bands on Radio Luxembourg, and dancing in local ballrooms. As a keen sportsman he was a member of Bann Rowing Club, volunteering his time booking bands for Saturday night dances in the Boathouse to fundraise. As the Boathouse Dance Club gained in popularity, in 1955 an extension to the dance hall was built to accommodate up to 800 dancers.

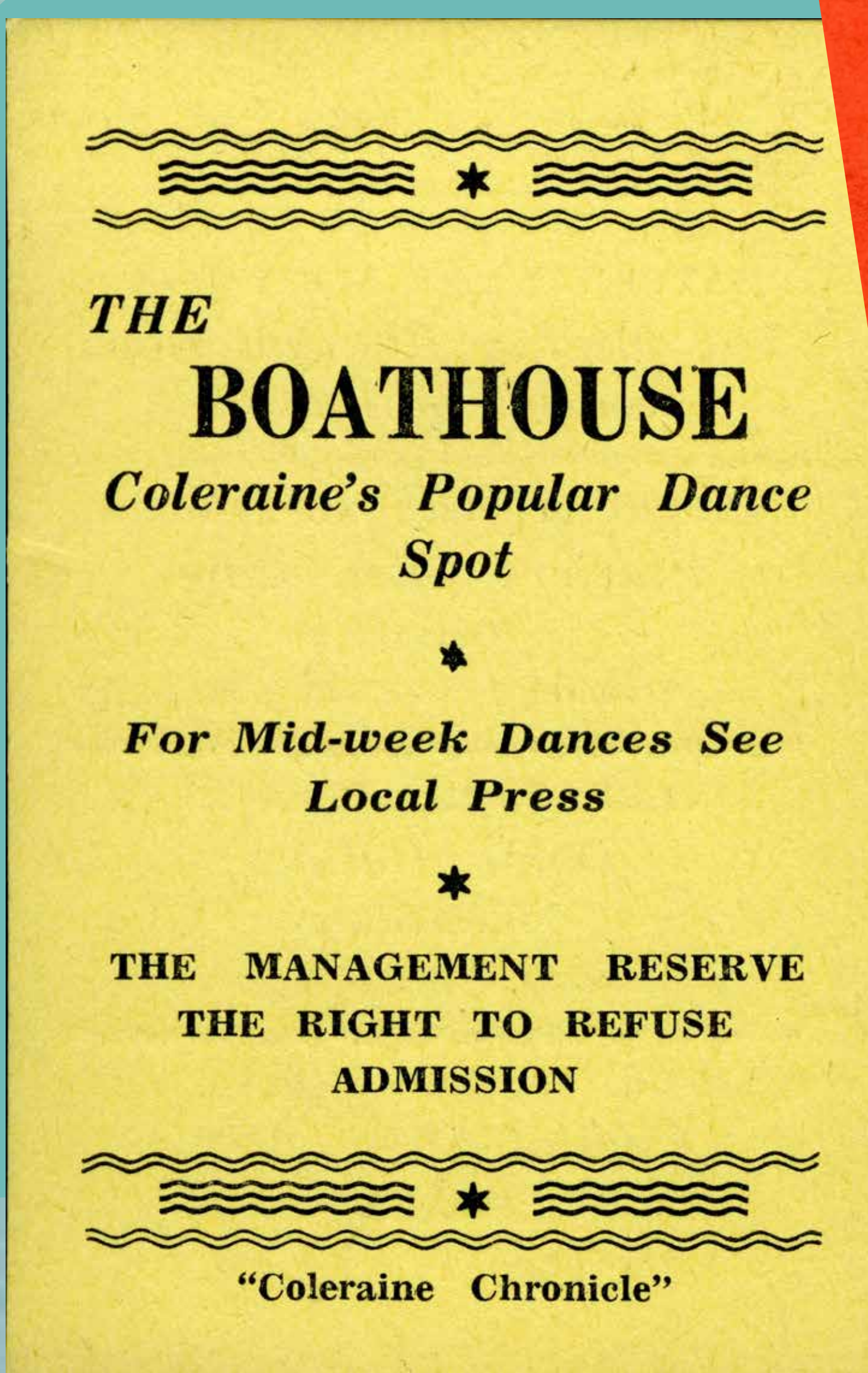
The Boathouse dancing season ran from the end of September through to the end of March, offering dancing during the winter months. Other local ballrooms, such as the Arcadia in Portrush and Palais de Danse in Portstewart opened from Easter onwards for the summer season.

The Palais de Danse was located at the end of The Crescent, Portstewart. In 1959, it was taken over by Belfast boxing promoter George Connell, and re-named the Top Hat.

Bobby booked Bob Miller and the Millermen, from England, to play to a capacity crowd at the Boathouse in January 1962. Their trumpet player was Stanley Dwight, Elton John’s father. Courtesy Coleraine Chronicle, 20 January 1962.



Booklets were handed out to patrons to promote future dances. Courtesy Bobby Platt collection.



Season ticket holders were entitled to discounted entrance for performances. Courtesy Bobby Platt collection.



Advertisement for the opening of the Top Hat Ballroom, with different bands and artistes for every dance. Courtesy Coleraine Chronicle, 20 June 1959.

