



The rise of the showbands was perhaps the greatest entertainment ever in Ireland at the time, made many young people happy. On going to see many bands all over Ireland I saw the extent of the showband popularity. The showbands and ballrooms provided work for many people and tremendous enjoyment.

Bobby Platt



Hamie [Trenniers' lead singer Hamilton Reid] he used to jump off the stage and dance twist with the audience...all young people having fun...

Victor McCullough



The Plattermen on stage at the Quay Road Hall in Ballycastle. The Plattermen, originally known as The Platters, were regularly booked by Bobby. Courtesy Coleraine Chronicle, 5 February 1966.

Musicians regularly moved between showbands, and often solo touring artists were supported by local showbands while on tour.

In his early career, Victor McCullough from Portstewart played in the Trenniers Showband, the Walter Lewis Showband, and the Beltona, appearing at the Strand Ballroom several times.

Victor then moved to London and joined the Blue Dukes. They rehearsed at the Strand Ballroom before touring Ireland in February 1965.

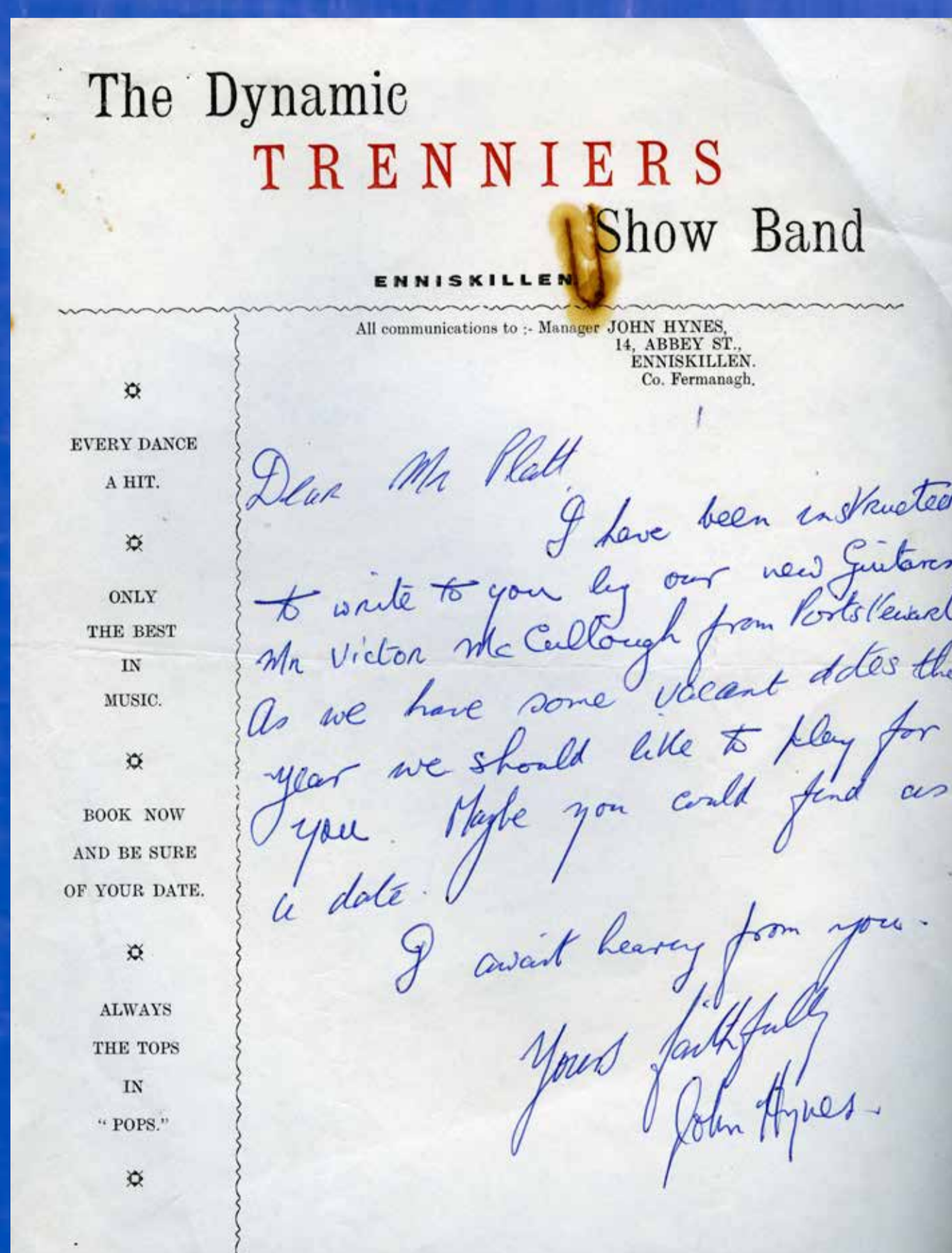
Many of the top showbands took a share of the dance hall takings, typically contracts specified the band would be paid 60 or 70 percent of the admission fees. As showbands were reliant on the ballroom owner to promote the appearance, a minimum fee would also be specified, just in case turnout was lower than expected. Many of the showbands toured Britain, and further afield to Canada and the USA.

The majority of showband booking confirmations and appearance fees were negotiated by letter, as often bands were managed by a relative or a local dance hall owner, without access to a telephone. The delay of a few days in responding was a challenge for booking availability.

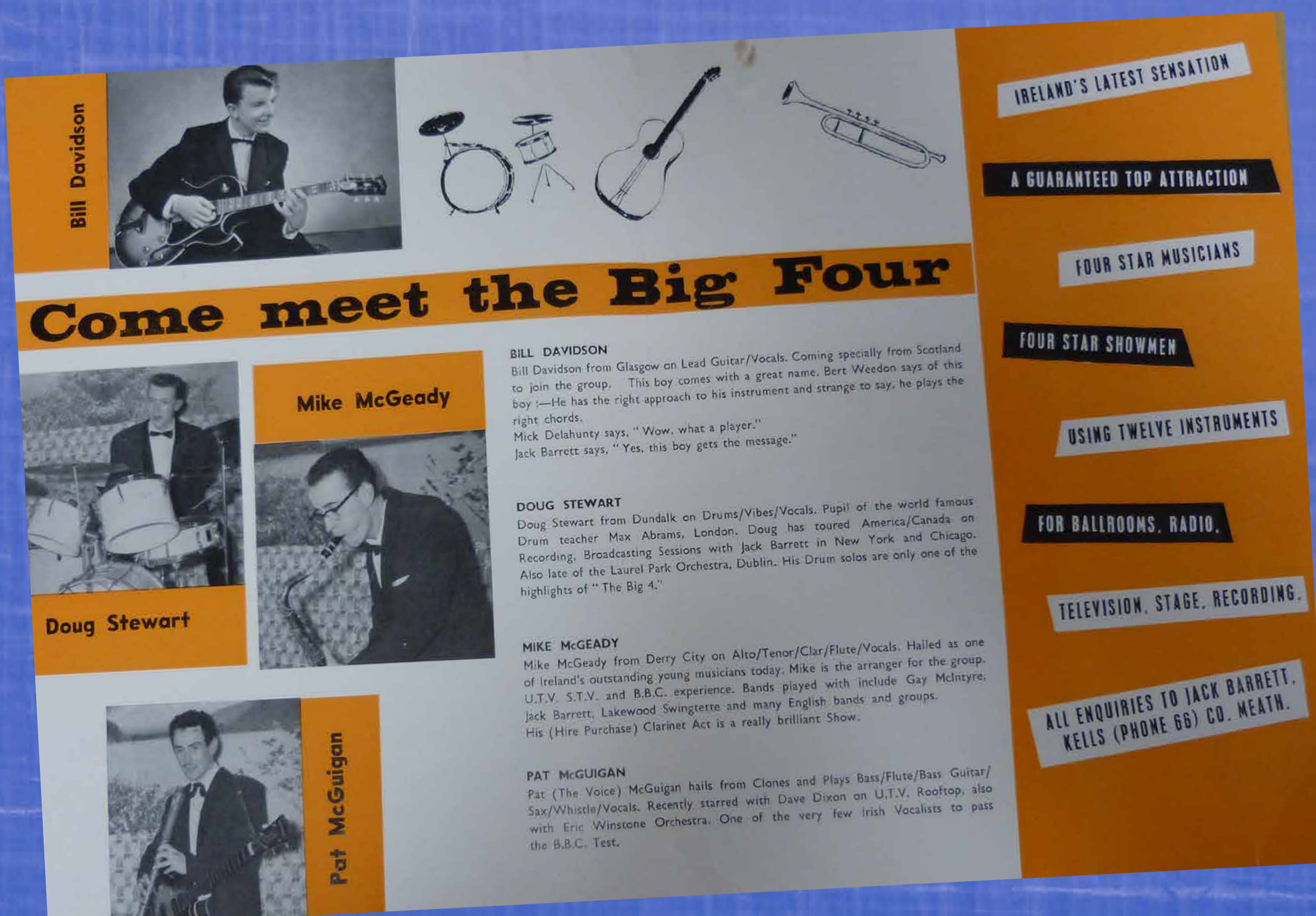
Letter from Trenniers manager John Hughes, asking Bobby about potential bookings for the Strand Ballroom. Courtesy Bobby Platt collection.

The Blue Dukes rehearsing at the Strand Ballroom. Courtesy Coleraine Chronicle, 6 February 1965.

The Capitol Showband from Dublin were also popular with local dancers. Courtesy Bobby Platt collection.



Promotional photo of The Plattermen from 1967 with longer hair styles and modern dress. This style update led to threats of demonstrations if the band appeared in the North Coast area. Courtesy Bobby Platt collection.



Promotional leaflet for the Big Four, who played at the Strand Ballroom reopening night in September 1962. Bass player Pat McGuigan is the father of boxer Barry McGuigan. Courtesy Bobby Platt Collection.

