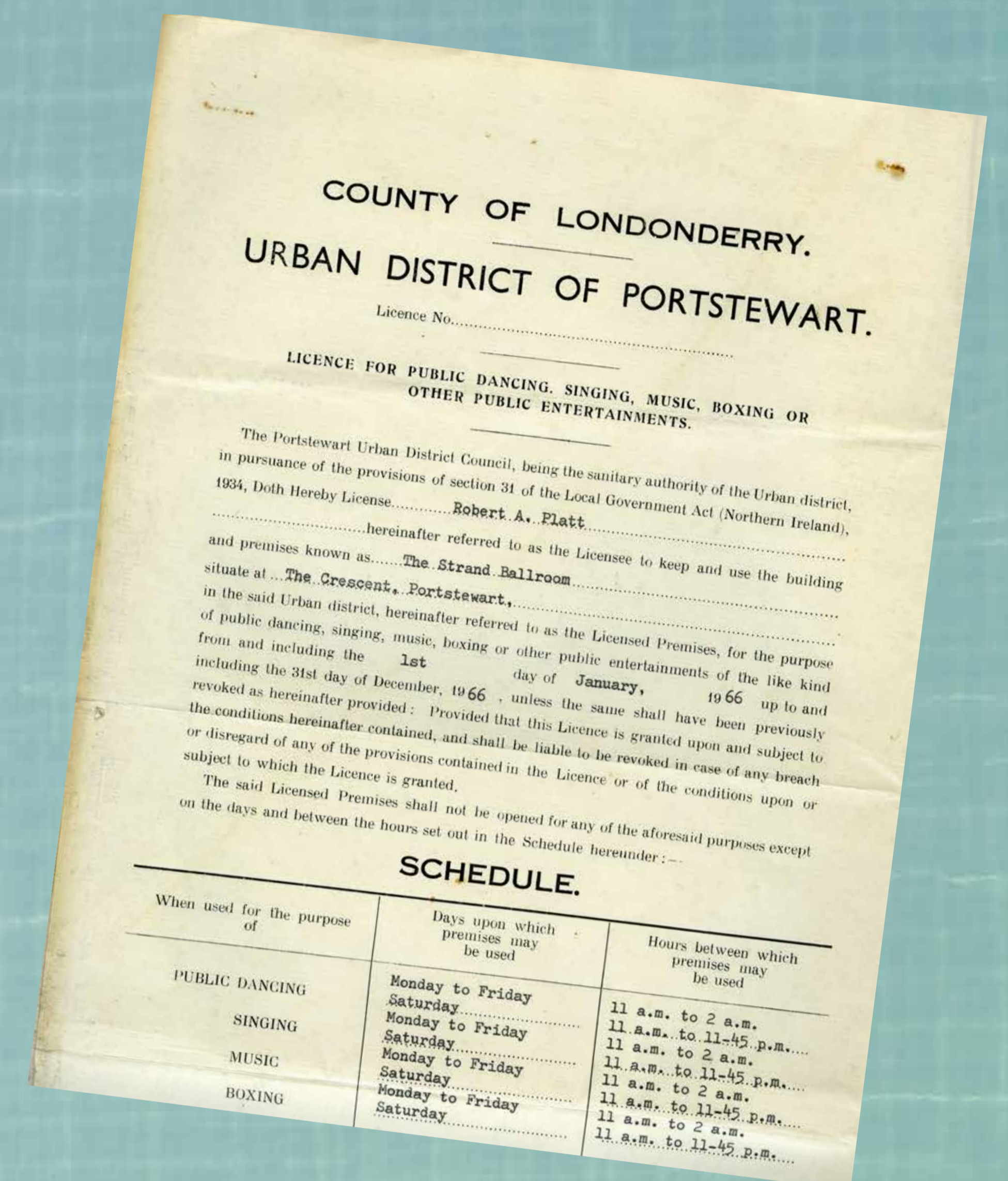


# ‘This to me was the most exciting enjoyable scene, where the young and not so young could dance, meet the bands and artists, and relax.’

The licence for the Strand Ballroom was only for entertainment. The mineral bar sold glass bottles of Pepsi and Mirinda, a carbonated orange drink, supplied by Peerage Bottlers Ltd of Beresford Road, Coleraine. Dancing was permitted until 2am Monday to Friday, but only until 11.45pm on Saturdays, no dancing was permitted on Sundays.

As the majority of dancers were in their teens and early twenties they did not drive, or could not afford a car. It was common for dance promoters to arrange buses to collect dancers from the surrounding towns and villages and return them after the dance, for a small additional cost.



Strand Ballroom licence for 1966. Courtesy Bobby Platt collection. Bobby said, ‘The dancers are getting more time for their money on Friday evenings, as on a Saturday the dance hall closes before midnight, while on Fridays it opens until 2am.’ Courtesy Coleraine Chronicle, 5 February 1966.

“ ...In my day the refreshments at the dance was tea, coffee, or mineral, and packets of crisps, Tayto.”

May Aitcheson

“ ...there was always about four or five double deckers maybe sitting up at the Promenade there on top where the witches hat is...”

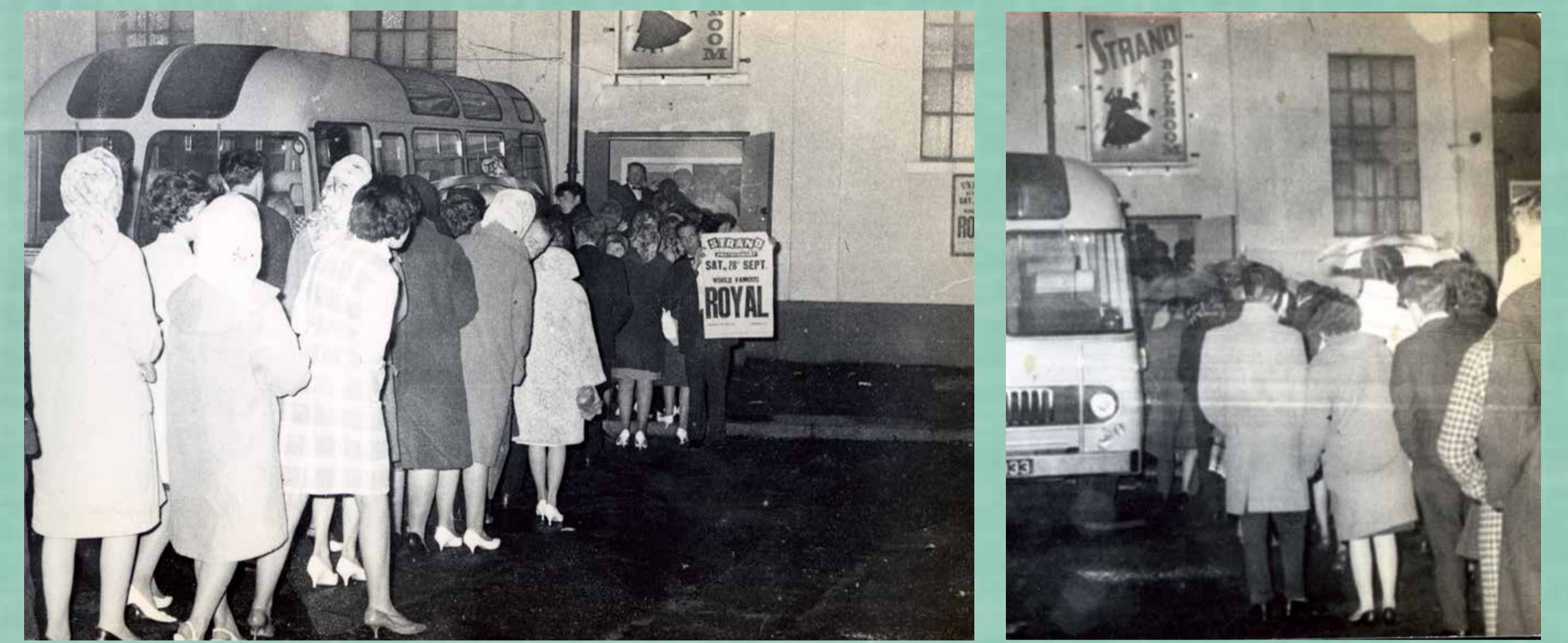
Brian Henry

“ You could hardly get into a dance in those days... without wearing a tie.”

Edgar Aitcheson



Newspaper advertisements for the Strand Ballroom with details of transport arrangements. Courtesy Coleraine Chronicle, 2 February 1963, 15 December 1962.



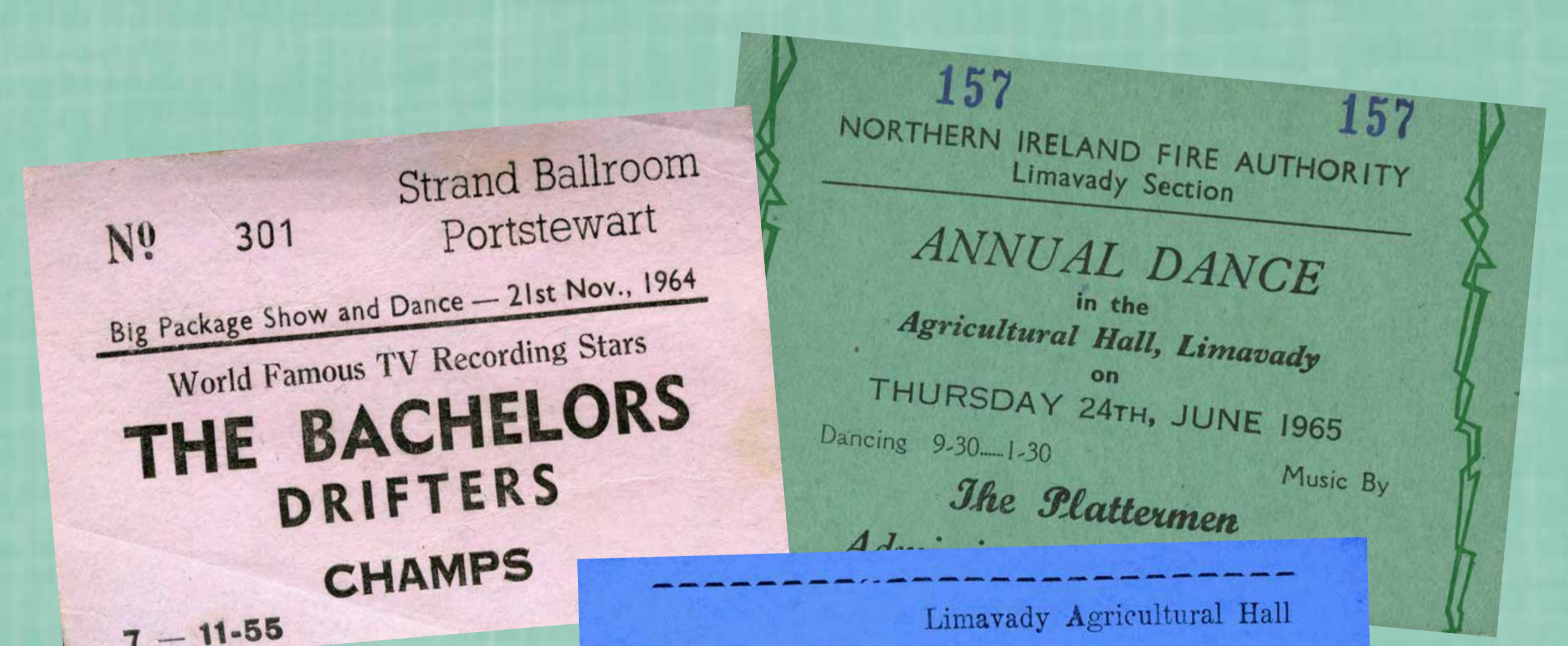
Dancers queuing for the Royal Showband in February 1963. Courtesy Bobby Platt Collection.

Dances at the Strand Ballroom and Limavady Agricultural Hall were advertised in the local newspapers, *Coleraine Chronicle* and *Northern Constitution*, as well as the *Belfast Telegraph*. Colourful flyers and programme booklets were produced to inform patrons of upcoming appearances. On arrival at the dancehall, even with a ticket bought in advance, queues could be long.

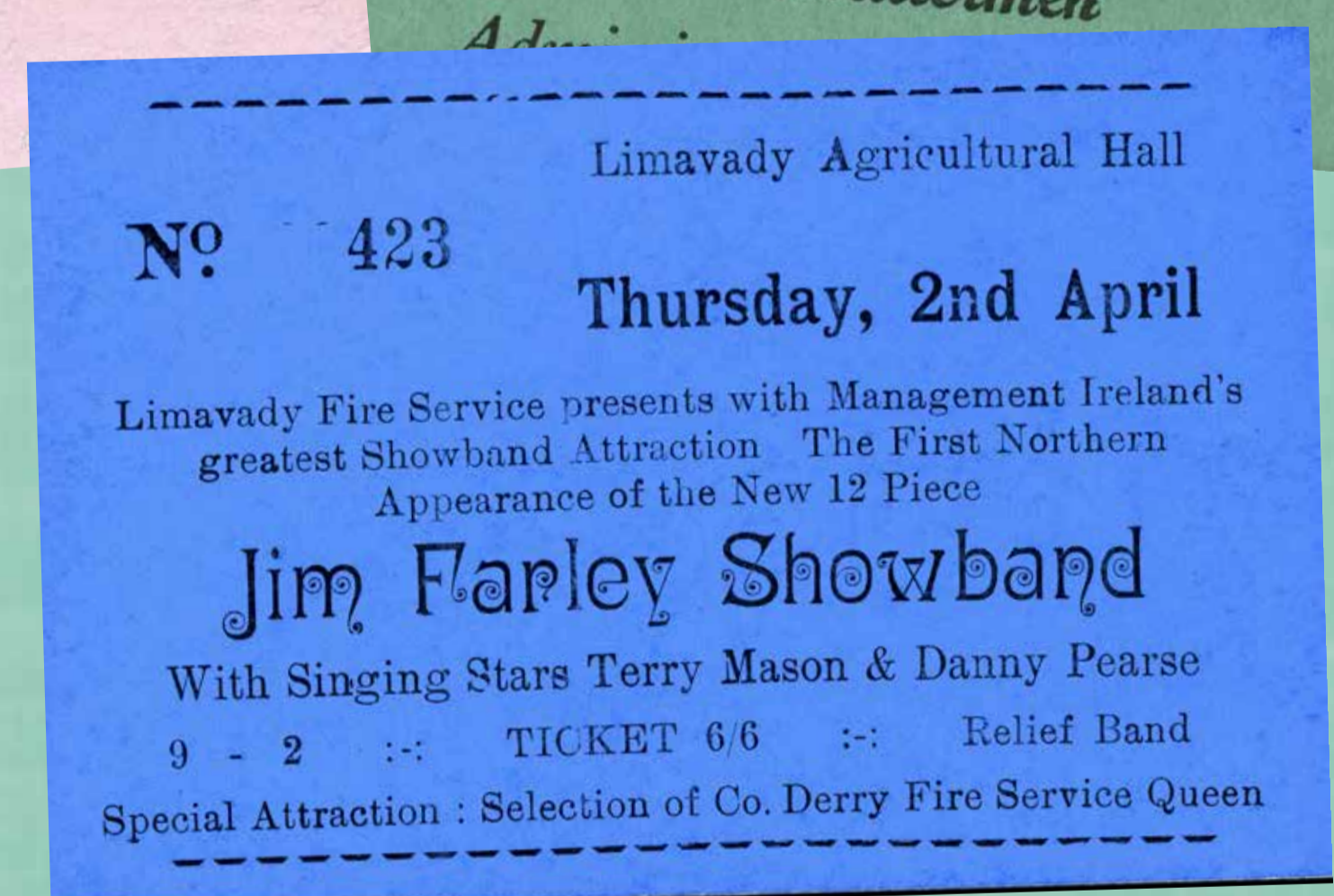
By 1967 adverts for the Strand Ballroom mentioned that ‘proper dress’ was required, and that the dress code of being ‘clean, neat, and tidy’ would be enforced. The ‘modern’ style of clothing with shorter, sleeveless dresses in brighter colours for ladies, and slim-fit tailored suits and shirts with skinny ties for men became more popular than the pastel colours and full skirts of the early 1960s.

Advert from *Coleraine Chronicle*, 4 November 1967, showing modern dress was acceptable at the Small Faces performance, as they were one of the most influential mod groups of the 1960s. Unfortunately, this performance, and the rest of the Small Faces’ dates in Ireland were cancelled due to singer Steve Marriott being taken suddenly ill.

Advert for the Strand Ballroom with dress code as ‘clean, neat and tidy.’ Courtesy *Coleraine Chronicle*, 2 December 1967.



Dance tickets. Courtesy Bobby Platt Collection.



**STRAND BALLROOM, Portstewart**  
 FRIDAY, 3rd NOVEMBER, 9-11.45. 10/-.  
**CREAM**  
 (ONLY APPEARANCE IN NORTH-WEST)  
 Also Playboys Showband

SATURDAY, 4th NOVEMBER-  
**COSSACKS**  
 FRIDAY, 10th NOVEMBER-  
**SMALL FACES**

PLEASE NOTE:  
 Only those tidy and properly dressed will be admitted to all dances. Modern dress permitted. The Management reserve the right to refuse admission on all occasions.

**STRAND BALLROOM, Portstewart**  
 This SATURDAY, 2nd DECEMBER, 8-11.45. 6/6.

**SHOWBAND NIGHT**  
**TOM E. KING and RAYDOTS**  
**NEXT SATURDAY - \* BREAKAWAYS.**  
 Please note that only those over 16 years, of neat, clean and tidy appearance, will be admitted and we reserve the right to refuse admission at all times.

