

Rothesay Brass Band – entertaining the excursionists fresh off the paddle-steamers on the Isle of Bute

Gavin Holman, 24 February 2021

Rothesay is the main town on the Isle of Bute. It was a burgh of barony from an early period, and it became a Royal Burgh in 1400 by a charter from Robert III of Scotland. In the mid-1800's it developed as a seaside resort, with all the features and facilities expected of such places. Sitting on an attractive bay, it quickly became popular with visitors from Glasgow and around, which having made the rail journey to Wemyss Bay, took one of the paddle-steamers across to Bute for their excursions to Rothesay, or perhaps they went "doon the watter" [the Clyde] with ships that went direct from Glasgow.



Rothesay was also the location of one of Scotland's many hydropathic establishments during the 19th century boom years of the Hydropathy movement. The town also, later, had an electric tramway - the Rothesay and Ettrick Bay Light Railway - which stretched across the island to one of its largest beaches.



As the town developed its tourist trade, the need for musical entertainment became clear, and a series of professional bands were engaged to supply this to the visitors in the summer months. In 1873 a bandstand was erected on the Esplanade (which would stand for nearly 40 years until being replaced in 1911) and bands would perform there on afternoons and evenings. The bandstand was gifted by Thomas Russell, who owned the large Saracen Iron Foundry in Glasgow, and who was born in Rothesay. He was also responsible for having the Front cleared and the Esplanade built.

Aside from the professional bands, the first local brass band was that of the 1st Buteshire Rifle Volunteers. The Rothesay Rifle Volunteers Band was active from 1872 to 1874, but does not seem to have played a major part in the town's activities, being regarded mainly, and properly, as an adjunct to the volunteer corps.

In May 1875, the Training Ship Cumberland Brass Band, which was based at Helensburgh, opposite Greenock on the Clyde, visited Rothesay and inaugurated the concert season on the bandstand with their performance, conducted by Howard H.

Smith - who was still at their helm until 1889, when the ship was replaced by H.M.S. Empress.



Rothesay Brass Band was founded in September 1875. At its formation, the secretary was John McAlpine, 43 Montague Street, and the band trainer was Mr Buckle – who was responsible for bringing the professional bands to the island. Its first conductor was R.S. Farquharson (he was one of the few survivors of the famous charge at Balaclava). There followed G.W. Dearlove in 1878, E. McTavish in 1880, George B. Laidlaw in 1882, James Orr McNab in 1883, and George B. Laidlaw again, in 1887. Edward McNab was secretary in 1883. John McNab played trombone in 1887.

Sadly, no pictures of this Rothesay Brass Band have been found.

A successor band, the Royal Rothesay Silver Band, was formed in the 1920's – more about this, later.

Saturday 2 October 1875

Royal Burgh of Rothesay Brass Band. The above Band consisting of about Twenty-six Instruments, is in course of formation. Any young men, having taste for Music, desirous of joining, will please leave their names with Mr Edward McTavish, Montague Street; Sergt.-Major Geo. Madden, 72 Montague Street; or with the Secretary, J. McAlpine, Montague Street.

Saturday 11 December 1875

Rothesay Brass Band. Amateur First-class Brass Band (composed of Young Men connected with the town) having, general desire, been organised, to be known as the "Rothesay Brass Band," a Committee has been formed for the purpose of completing the necessary arrangements and, having already met with most liberal support from

some influential Gentlemen who take an interest in Rothesay, they beg leave to make general appeal their fellow townsmen favour of this object.

The Instruments are intended to be the property the Burgh, and under the control of the Provost and Magistrates. Steps will be taken to secure an Efficient Bandmaster for the purpose of training the Band, and every arrangement made which will tend to make it one of the finest in Scotland, and an honour to the town of Rothesay.

There are Brass Instruments, as undernoted (costing £125 16s), which, with three Drums and Cymbals, will bring the number Players up 26: 2 Soprano Cornets, 5 Ordinary Cornets, 2 Flugel Homs, 4 Tenor Horns, 2 Baritones, 2 Euphoniums, 2 Bombardons, 1 Monster Bombardon, 2 Trombones, 3 Drums, 1 Pair Cymbals.

Subscriptions of any amount gladly received by the Committee, the Agent of the City of Glasgow Bank, Rothesay, or Mr John McAlpine, Secretary and Treasurer, 43 Montague Street. The following have been received:

A. B. Stewart, Ascog Hall	£50 0s	John Kirsup, Glasgow	£1 1s
Thomas Russell, Glasgow	£25 0s	Bailie Montgomerie, Rothesay	£1 1s
Chas. Dalrymple, M.P., Ardenraig	£5 5s	Henry Stuart, Montford	£1 1s
John Duncan, Woodend	£5 0s	Robert Taylor, Rothesay	£1 0s
Provost Orkney, Rothesay	£3 3s	M J. Bolden, Fullarton, Kilmichael	£0 10s
The Earl of Glasgow	£3 0s	Lachlan Milloy, Rothesay	£0 10s
John T. Wilson, Rothesay	£2 0s	John Johnstone, Rothesay	£0 10s



Rothesay West Bay

Saturday 1 January 1876

Anniversary of St John. On Monday evening the brethren of Rothesay St John's celebrated the anniversary of their Patron Saint. They met in the lodge and installed the recently elected office-bearers, and then paraded the principal streets of the town by torchlight, headed by the first public appearance the Rothesay Brass Band - which made an exceedingly creditable debut.

Tuesday 9 May 1876

The band performed at the Bute Farmers' Society annual cattle exhibition, in the Public Park.

Saturday 13 May 1876

Rothesay Brass Band. Secretary and Treasurer acknowledges receipt of the undernoted subscriptions:

Councillor D. Duncan, Victoria Street	£1 1s
William Herbert, Beechwood	£1 1s
John C. Sharp, Montague Street	10s
Alexander Duncan, Ladeside Street	10s
Councillor W. Mackirdy, East Princes Street	10s
Lodge Rothesay St John's (No. 292)	£2 2s
Court Bute (5630), A.O.F.	£3 3s
Bute Farmers' Society	£4 4s

Saturday 13 May 1876

The Bute and Rothesay Bands

Music being one of the chief attractions to strangers in Rothesay during the "season," we are glad to learn that arrangements are being made to secure again the services, from June, of Mr Buckle and his celebrated band of professionals for the coming season. The Rothesay Brass Band, consisting of local amateurs is making gratifying progress, and though they could not expected to play daily varied programmes, they are a valuable acquisition to the town for occasional service during the whole year.

Monday 22 May 1876

The Bute Band of professional players, under the leadership of Robert Buckle, has again been engaged for the season, and will arrive on the 1st or 2nd of June. The Rothesay Brass Band, of local players, is making satisfactory progress under Mr R.S. Farquharson (late 4th Dragoons), and will play in the bandstand on the Queen's Birthday.

Saturday 8 July 1876

The band accompanied the grand pleasure trip to Millport and Largs, on the steamer *Marquis of Bute*.



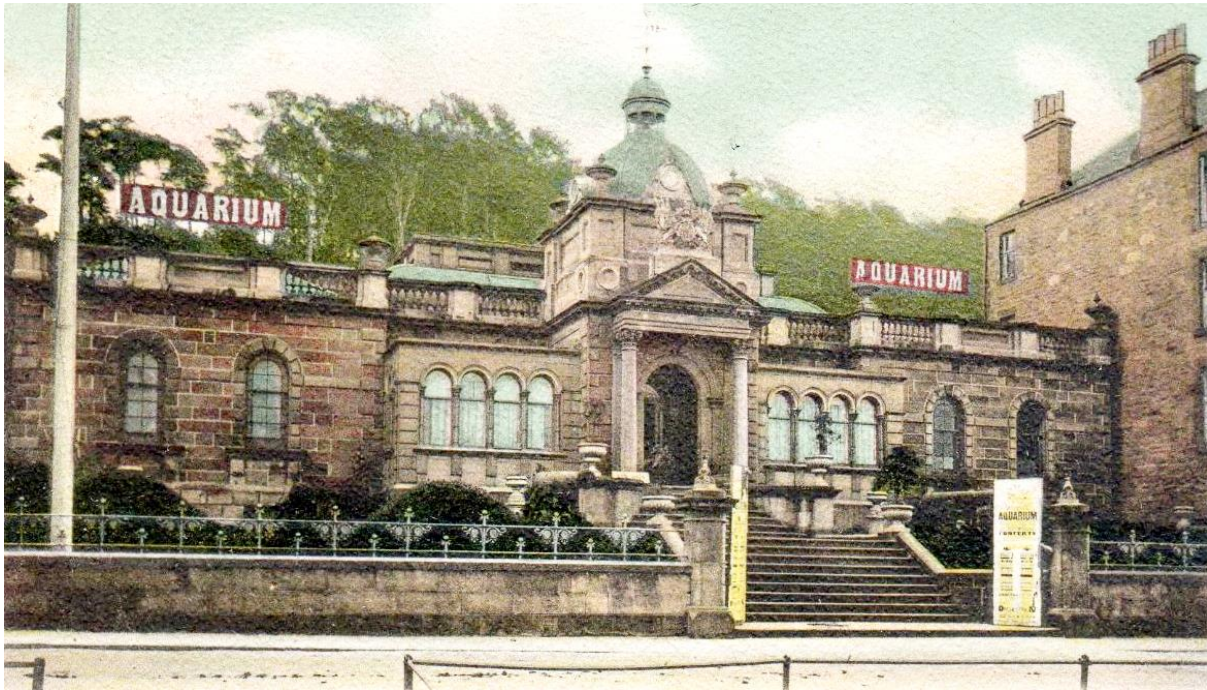
The Marquis of Bute

Saturday 5 August 1876

The band accompanied the grand pleasure trip to Millport and Largs, on the steamer *Marquis of Bute*.

Saturday 19 August 1876

The floral exhibition of the Bute Horticultural Society takes place in the Aquarium on Friday and Saturday first. The combination of the beauties of the floral world with the sights of the Aquarium is a good idea, and thousands will, no doubt, go to witness the novel and pleasing combination. The Rothesay Brass Band is to be in attendance.



Friday 29 September 1876

H.R.H. Prince Leopold, the youngest son of Queen Victoria, arrived in Rothesay. Following a day of celebrations, the Rothesay Brass Band played an attractive programme of music in the pavilion on the Esplanade, in a very creditable manner, and their performances were thoroughly appreciated and complimented by the throng of spectators.

Saturday 2 December 1876

Masonic Funeral. On Saturday the remains of John Summers, spirit-merchant, were consigned to their last resting place in the High Churchyard. The brethren of Rothesay St John's turned out in large numbers to pay their last tribute of respect to the memory of their deceased brother. The cortege was headed by the Rothesay Brass Band playing the dead march, and the Rev. Brother Canon Weldon read the beautiful masonic ritual at the grave.

Thursday 14 December 1876

Rothesay Brass Band held a concert in aid of their funds, at the Victoria Hall, with Miss Elizabeth Hunter (soprano), Mr Charles Stewart (tenor), Mr R.S. Farquharson (solo clarinet), and a glee party composed of members of the band. A dozen pieces were gone over exceptionally well. The band performed a valse in a way which showed that they would make no mean appearance on the band stand of the

Esplanade. It is very creditable to the musical talent of Rothesay that a score of young men are found perfectly able to play on the beautiful set of instruments which the munificence of Mr A.B. Stewart, and others provided. The concert was (lightly) disturbed by the gods.

Wednesday 9 May 1877

The band were engaged to play at the Bute Farmers' Society Annual Cattle Show, in the Public Park, Rothesay.

Thursday 22 August 1878

The band led a procession of the Bute Volunteers as they turned out to receive the Caledonian Challenge Shield, won by Lieutenant McIsaac. The Artillery Corps and the 1st Bute Rifle Volunteers comprised the parade.

Wednesday 1 January 1879

The band occupied the bandstand in the forenoon and thereafter paraded the streets of the town.

Saturday 26 April 1879

A concert given by the band in the Pavilion on the Esplanade, at 7 o'clock, was: March "*Scotch*" (Basquit), quadrille "*Royal Irish*" (Riviere), polka "*The Bombardon*" (Jones), anthem "*Glory to God*" (Shaw), march "*My Grandfather's Clock*" (Round), valse "*La Jolie Hongroise*" (Fischer), euphonium solo "*Cavatina*" (Bellini), quadrille "*La Fille de Madame Augot*" (Coote), and galop "*Haymarket*" (De Lacy).

Monday 9 June 1879

The Town Council Band Committee agreed to renew their subscription to the Rothesay Brass Band of £3 3s.

Saturday 21 August 1880

The I.O.G.T. Grand Temperance Excursion to Arran took place, via the steamer "*Adela*", accompanied by the Rothesay Brass Band.



The Adela

Saturday 4 December 1880

The band, conducted by E. McTavish, gave a concert in the Esplanade bandstand at 8 o'clock – March *"The Highlander"* (introducing *"My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose"*, *"Maggie Lauder"*, etc.), march *"The Stranger"* (introducing English airs), valse *"Beautiful Loch Lomond"* (introducing *"Auld Robin Gray"* (variated), *"Blue Bonnets"*, *"The Flower o' Dunblane"*, *"Wha Widna Fecht for Charlie"*, *"There's Nae Luck About the Hoose"*, *"Charlie is My Darling"* (bass solo), *"Ye Banks and Braes"*, *"Caller Herrin"*, etc.), polka *"Bijou"*, schottische *"Earnsdale"*, march *"By and Bye"* (introducing *"Sweet By and Bye"* and *"Whosoever Will, May Come"*), anthem *"Vital Spark"*, galop *"Just in Time"*, and *"God Save the Queen."*

Saturday 11 December 1880

The band, conducted by E. McTavish, gave a concert in the Esplanade bandstand at 8 o'clock – March, including *"In the Garb of Old Gaul"* and *"Argyll is My Name"*, waltz *"Cyprus"*, glee *"Hark, Apollo Strikes the Lyre"*, march *"Royal Advance"*, polka *"Rustic"*, mazurka *"Rose Queen"*, valse *"Water Lily"*, march *"The Home Over There"* and *"God Save the Queen."*

Monday 13 December 1880

The Harbour Trust and Town Council met and voted £5 and £3 respectively towards the funds of the Rothesay Brass Band, following a letter received which stated that the band had been practising since June last, and that they had frequently played on the Esplanade. They desired that a room in which to practice might be given them.

Friday 24 December 1880

The Rothesay Brass Band occupied the Band Stand for nearly an hour from 11.30 p.m., and played the following fine selection of Christmas carols, etc. The weather was clear and calm, though bitterly cold: March *"Sweet Home,"* *"Isle of Beauty,"* etc. glee *"See our Oars,"* anthem *"Hail, Promised Saviour,"* Christmas Carols *"While Shepherds Watch"* and *"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"*, valse *"Christmas Gathering"*, polka *"Christmas Chimes"*, schottische *"Christmas Welcome"*, finale *"God Save the Queen."*



Saturday 25 December 1880

The Rothesay Brass Band occupied the Band Stand for an hour at midday, playing suitable selections.

Friday 31 December 1880

A large crowd gathered on the Esplanade shortly before midnight, and heard the band perform the following selection of music, appropriate to the birth of the Year: Song "*Auld Lang Syne*", hymn "*The Sweet By and Bye*", psalm "*Old Hundred*", song "*A Guid New Year*", glee "*Hail Smiling Morn*", polka "*Bijou*", quadrille "*Pretty Little Bessie*", valse "*Cyprus*", schottische "*Home, Sweet Home*".

Tuesday 15 February 1881

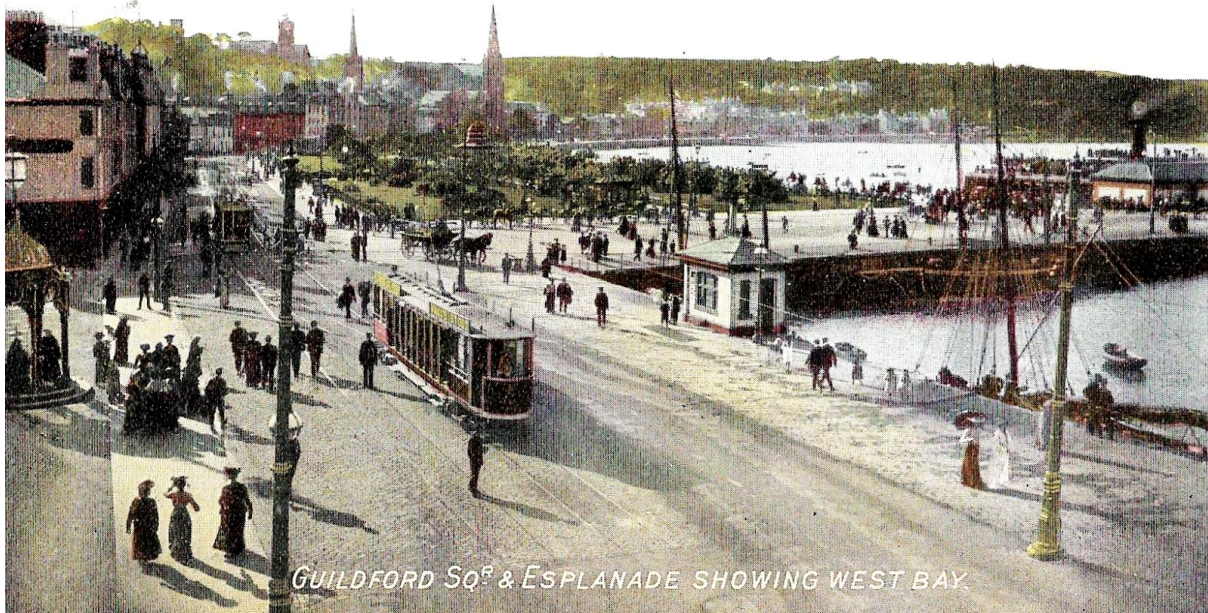
The Rothesay Good Templars took the steamer "*Adela*" to Innellan, accompanied by the Rothesay Brass Band, to meet with other brethren from Bute and Cowal.

Saturday 14 May 1881

The band accompanied 60 members of the Rothesay and North Bute Foresters Courts on a march round the shores and the town.

Saturday 18 June 1881

The band played on the Esplanade in an evening concert: march "*Bold Robin Hood*", valse "*Jasmine*", anthem "*Hail, Promised Saviour*", glee "*See Out Oars*", polka "*Bijou*", schottische "*Earnsdale*", quickstep "*Highlander*", quadrille "*Sweet Little Blue Eyes*", galop "*Weltenstrumer*".



Monday 20 June 1881

The band played on the Pavilion and on the drawbridge of the Old Castle, which was illuminated for the occasion, as part of the celebrations on the news of the birth of a son to the Marchioness of Bute.

Tuesday 25 July 1881

The band took part in the Bute Sunday Schools demonstration.

Wednesday 26 July 1881

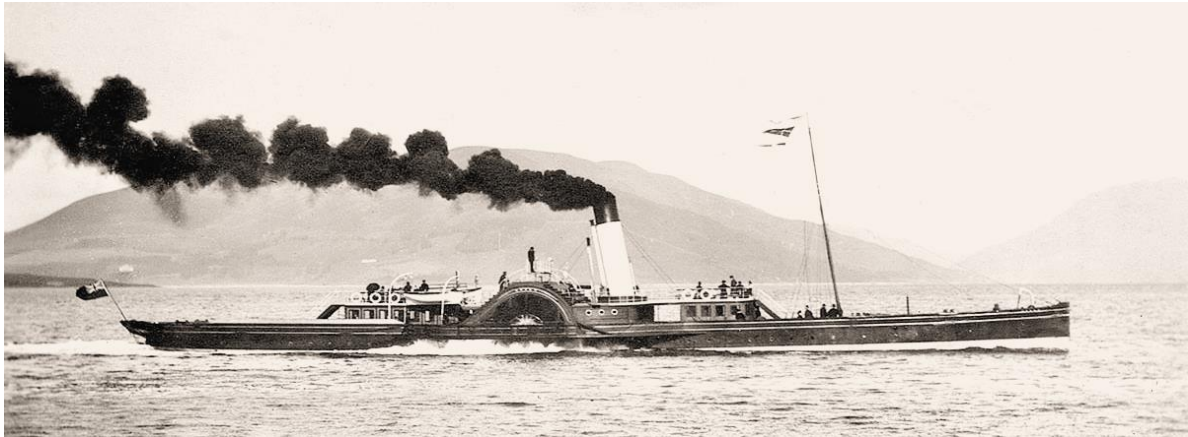
The band accompanied the children from the islands of Bute and Cumbrae (some 2,000 in all) on their excursion, on three of the Wemyss Bay steamers, courtesy of the Marquis of Bute, to Kilchattan Bay, where eatables, sweets, and amusements of various kinds were provided in abundance.

Saturday 28 July 1881

The band performed at the friendly tennis match between the Bute and Paisley clubs.

Saturday 6 August 1881

The Rothesay Good Templars took the steamer "Adela" on an excursion to Ayr, accompanied by the Rothesay Brass Band.



The Adela

Saturday 24 December 1881

The band gave a good concert in the bandstand in the evening, conducted by E. McTavish.

Saturday 31 December 1881

The band's evening (9pm to 11pm) concert in the bandstand was: March "Cambrian", quadrille "Little Blue Eyes", polka "Bijou", valse "Jessamine", march "British Champion", schottische "Christmas Welcome", gavotte "Le Bijou", march "Eclipse", selection "Scotch", polka "Christmas Chimes", anthem "Hail, Promised Saviour", quadrille "Pretty Bessie", valse "Water Lily", galop "Weltenstrumer".

Saturday 11 March 1882

The band gave a concert in the bandstand in the evening, conducted by G.B. Laidlaw.

Saturday 18 March 1882

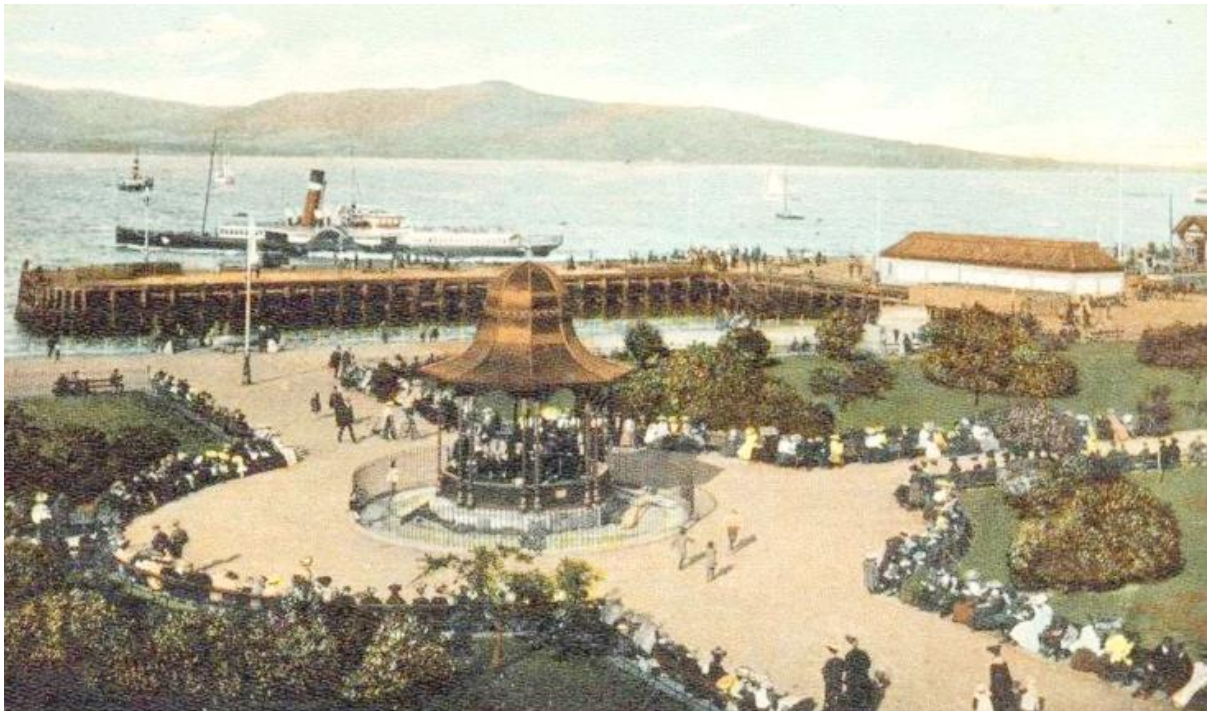
The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: March "The Farmer's Boy", selection "Over the Border (Scotch)", polka "Weltondale", quadrille "Plough Boy", valse "Morning Mirth", march "Jacobite", schottische "La Souvenire", galop "Weltenstrumer".

Saturday 25 March 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: March "*Bold Robin Hood*", valse "*Pauline*", schottische "*Early Dawn*", quadrille "*Royal Scottish*", march "*Messiah*", valse "*Water Lily*", polka "*Bijou*", glee "*Hail Smiling Morn*", galop "*Roulette*". The band treasurer, Mr G. Madden, made a request for subscriptions to help pay for the hall rent and other necessary expenses.

Saturday 1 April 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: March "*Village Pride*", valse "*Blanche*", anthem "*Jerusalem my Glorious Home*", quadrille "*Albion*", polka "*Fanny Dell*", march "*March at Ease*", schottische "*Flexible*", gavotte "*La Murska*", galop "*Orphée aux Enfers*".



Saturday 8 April 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: March "*Home, Sweet Home*", selection "*King of the Kristys*", euphonium and baritone solos, polka "*Rustic*", anthem "*Hail, Promised Saviour*", march "*Cambrian*", valse "*Harvest Moon*", schottische "*Maidens*", galop "*Speedwell*".

Saturday 15 April 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*Eclipse*", fantasia "*Il Trovatore*", polka "*Chiming Bells*", valse "*Wild Rose*", march "*Thou Bonnie Woods*", quadrille "*Pretty Bessie*", schottische "*Clotilda*", galop "*Clocken*".

Saturday 29 April 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*Demonstration*", mazurka "*Rose Queen*", quadrille "*Scotch Caledonians*", polka "*Ramsgate*", march "*La-di-da*", valse "*Village Maiden*", galop "*Du Concert*".

Saturday 27 May 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*Criterion*", valse "*Harvest Moon*", polka "*Weltandale*", quadrille "*Patience*", schottische "*Earnsdale*", march "*March at East*", quadrille "*Plough Boy*", galop "*Just in Time*".

Tuesday 30 May 1882

The band accompanied day trippers on the steamer "*Marquis of Bute*" to Millport, playing selections of popular music in the village.

Monday 5 June 1882

The band led the procession of the Argyll and Bute Artillery Volunteers as they paraded through the town for their annual inspection.

Saturday 10 June 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*The Little Hero*", overture "*L'Amour au Village*", polka "*La Rus Belle Rose*", glee "*Hark, Apollo Strikes the Lyre*", march "*Reception*", valse "*Ehern on the Reine*", lancers "*Durham*", galop "*Orphée aux Enfers*".

Saturday 17 June 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*My Pretty Jane*" (Wellesley), selection "*Congress*" (Metcalf), polka "*Violet*" (Bonnisseau), gavotte "*La Bijou*" (Harris), quadrille "*Billee Taylor*" (Coote), schottische "*Earnsdale*" (Tidswell), valse "*Jessamine*" (J. Robinson), galop "*Just in Time*" (Metcalf).



Wednesday 21 June 1882

The band led the procession of the Bute Rifle Volunteers as they paraded through the town for their annual inspection.

Saturday 1 July 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*Royal Advance*" (Kelly), valse "*Silvia*" (W. Harris), glee "*Hail Smiling Morn*" (Spofforth), selection "*Pirates of Penzance*" (A. Sullivan), polka "*Ramsgate*" (Marsden), quadrille "*Patience*" (C. D'Albert), schottische "*La Souvenire*" (Davis), galop "*Jolly Brothers*" (F. Budik).

Saturday 8 July 1882

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*Eclipse*" (W.V. Scholes), valse "*Harvest Moon*" (W.H. Birch), mazurka "*Rose Queen*", selection "*Congress*" (Metcalf), schottische "*Clotilda*" (E. Marie), quadrille "*Plough Boy*" (C. Godfrey), valse "*Cyprus*" (J. Brook), galop "*Weltonsturmer*" (Muller).

Monday 10 July 1882

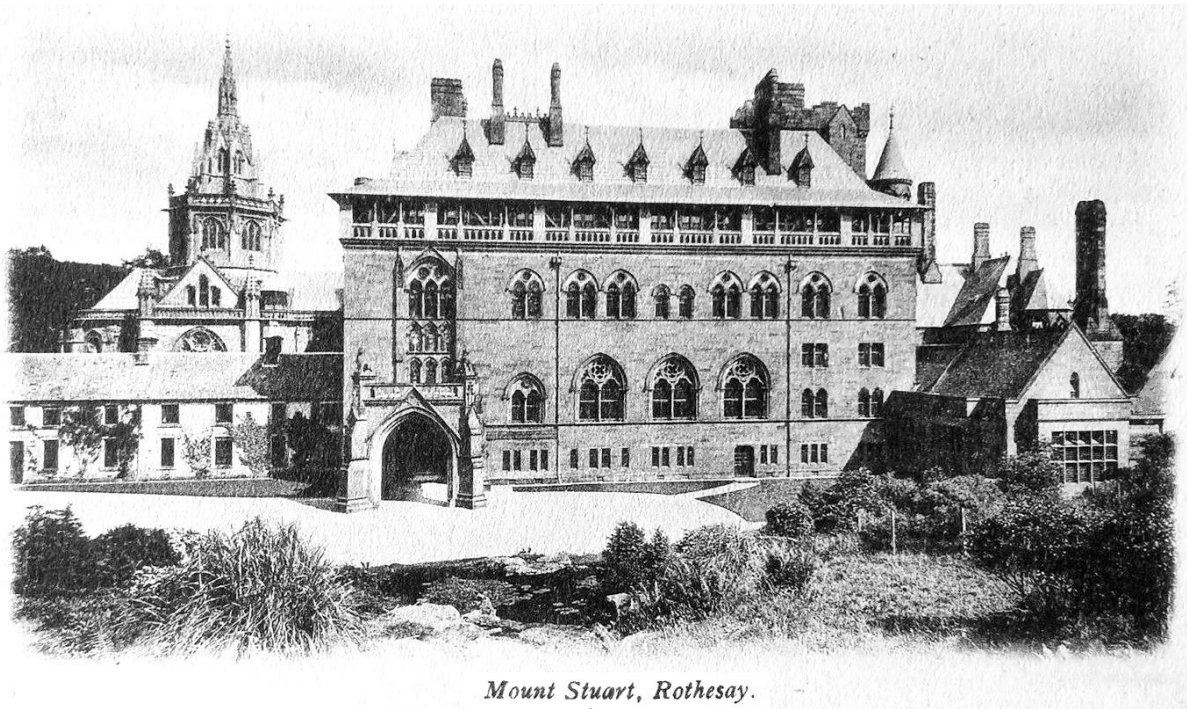
The Town Council voted £8 for the funds of the Rothesay Brass Band.

Thursday 10 August 1882

The Rothesay Good Templars took the steamer "*Adela*" on an excursion to Inveraray, accompanied by the Rothesay Brass Band.

Saturday 26 August 1882

The band was engaged to play at the Mountstuart Regatta and Sports.



Tuesday 23 January 1883

The band played the "*Dead March*" in the procession for the funeral of John Howard, of the St John's Masonic Lodge.

Saturday 3 March 1883

The band accompanied the procession for the funeral of Charles Simpson, of the St John's Masonic Lodge and the Court Bute of the A.O.F.

Saturday 4 August 1883

The band accompanied the evening cruise to Carrick Castle and Lochgoilhead on the swift steamer *Marquis of Bute*.

Thursday 9 August 1883

The Rothesay Good Templars took the steamer "*Bonnie Doon*" on an excursion to Campbeltown, accompanied by the Rothesay Brass Band.



The Bonnie Doon

Saturday 11 August 1883

The band accompanied the evening cruise to Carrick Castle and Lochgoilhead on the swift steamer *Marquis of Bute*.

Saturday 20 October 1883

The band accompanied the procession of Bute Artillery Volunteers for the funeral of Gunner William M. Ferguson.

Saturday 23 August 1884

The band accompanied the evening cruise to the head of Loch Striven on the steamer *Marquis of Bute*.

Saturday 27 September 1884

The band travelled to Paisley to take part in the large demonstration which resulted from the Reform Crisis, leading the carters in their procession.

Saturday 4 October 1884

The band's evening concert in the bandstand was: march "*Eclipse*" (W.V. Scholes), quadrille "*Pretty Little Bessie*" (Metcalf), selection "*Bonnie Scotland*" (Metcalf), valse "*Wild Rose*" (Garbutt), lancers "*Durham*" (Keelip), polka "*Ramsgate*" (Marsden), glee "*Hail Smiling Morn*" (Spofforth), galop "*Jolly Brothers*". Conductor was James O. McNab.

Saturday 4 April 1885

The band's evening concert on the Esplanade was: march "*Auld Caledonia*" (Denny), overture "*Clanronald*" (Denny), lancers "*Durham*" (Keelip), valse "*Les Grands de l'océan*" (Hoyle), polka "*Bouquet of Sparks*" (Hartner) (G.B. Laidlaw, solo cornet), quadrille "*Belle Mahone*" (Metcalf), valse "*Cordelia*" (Smith), quickstep "*O Nannie wilt thou gang wi' me*" (Denny).

Saturday 9 May 1885

The band's evening concert on the Esplanade was: march "*The Borderers*" (Denny), overture "*Clanronald*" (Denny), quadrille "*Bonnie Doon*" (Denny), selection "*American and Christy Minstrel Airs*" (Metcalf), valse "*Harvest Moon*" (Heigh), glee "*Hail Smiling Morn*" (Spofforth), quickstep "*O Nannie wilt thou gang wi' me*" (Denny).

Tuesday 26 May 1885

A meeting of the band members was called, by the secretary Edward McNab, at the Victoria Hall, for them to bring their instruments and music. Those unable to attend were required to send their instruments and music.

Saturday 15 August 1885

The band accompanied two cruises. The first, at 5 o'clock, in an excursion round the Island of Cumbrae on the steamer *Marquis of Bute*. The second, at 7.30 pm, to the head of Loch Striven on the steamer *Marquis of Bute*.



The Marquis of Bute

Saturday 22 August 1885

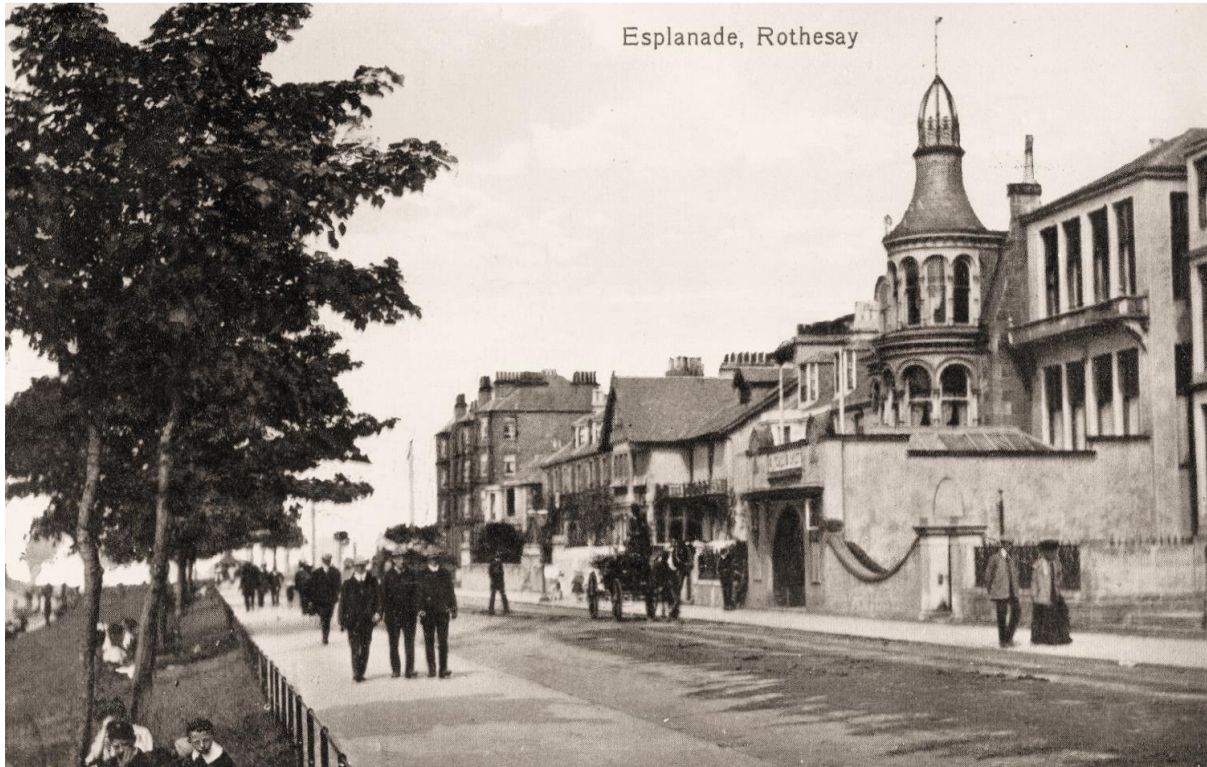
The band accompanied the cruise and excursion around the Island of Bute on the steamer *Marquis of Bute*.

Tuesday 15 September 1885

On the visit of the great violinist, Paganini Redivivus, to Rothesay, the band escorted him through the principal streets in the town.

Thursday 24 December 1885

The band's evening concert at the Pavilion on the Esplanade was: march "*Jenny Darling*" (Newton), selection "*The Congress*" (Metcalf), quadrille "*Isle of Bute*" (W.V. Scholes), anthem "*Hail, Promised Saviour*" (Round), valse "*La Belle Fantasque*" (Smith), carol "*Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*" (Mendelssohn), hymn "*Dennis*" (Naegel), schottische "*Elsie*" (Smith), polka "*L'Aurore*" (Linterie), galop "*Just Off*".



Monday 15 February 1886

The Town Council voted £3 for the funds of the Rothesay Brass Band.

Monday 8 March 1886

The Harbour Committee voted £2 for the funds of the Rothesay Brass Band.

Saturday 26 June 1886

The band were engaged to play at the Rothesay Academy Athletic Sports, in the Public Park.

Saturday 21 August 1886

The band accompanied the cruise and excursion around the Island of Bute on the steamer *Marquis of Bute*.

Thursday 26 August 1886

The band performed at the Bute Highland Games, held in the Public Park.

Saturday 25 December 1886

The Rothesay Brass Band turned out in their new uniform, and although the weather was cold and wet, they marched round the town and played a good selection of music. The new dress, which was dark blue with yellow facings (Royal Horse Artillery

uniform), is an acquisition which was hoped would lead them to let the public have little more benefit from their musical abilities.

Saturday 1 January 1887

The band paraded the town, starting about eight o'clock, when a programme of appropriate music was discoursed.

Tuesday 16 August 1887

The Rothesay Good Templars took the steamer "*Adela*" on an excursion to Inveraray, accompanied by the Rothesay Brass Band.



Thursday 6 October 1887

At the Sheriff Court, before Sheriff Orr, was heard of the 'Disruption of Rothesay Brass Band'. One section of the brass band claimed two instruments which were in the possession of the other section. It was alleged that two of the band members called at the houses of other members and procured their instruments, which were band property, and now declined to hand them up. For the defence it was argued that the instruments in their possession were band property, and they (the defenders) were the band. The band minutes were produced showing that on the 5th ult., those who had the instruments were suspended; while the defenders held that although pursuers retained the minute book, and in all probability did suspend them, they having a majority of the members on their side, were justified in retaining their instruments. The Sheriff stated that could not make head nor tail of the case as it was presented to him, and Mr G. Thomson, who acted for the pursuers, withdrew the case in order to bring it up again in another form.

Friday 14 October 1887

The band performed a concert on the bandstand: grand march “*Romaine*” (George B. Laidlaw), valse “*Mikado*” (Bucalossi), fantasia “*Argyll of the Isles*” with solos for principal instruments (Denny), mazurka “*Evening Star*” (George B. Laidlaw), trombone solo “*Death of Nelson*” soloist J. McNab (Braham), overture “*Knight Templar*” with horn and cornet solos – soloists Messrs McFarlane and McTaggart (H. Round), lancers “*Dorothy*” (Bucalossi), galop “*Post Horn*” (Koenig).

Saturday 15 October 1887

“There is a dispute present between two parties as to which has the right to call the Rothesay Brass Band. With the merits of that dispute we have nothing to do, but can testify that a very efficient amateur band, led by Mr George B. Laidlaw occupied the bandstand for a couple of hours last night and played an attractive programme, including one or two solos. The favourite trombone solo, “*The Death of Nelson*” was admirably given by Mr John MacNab. We believe it is the intention of Mr Laidlaw’s band to appear once a fortnight in public, and certainly that is the best means that could be adopted for convincing the public of their title to support.”



Saturday 29 October 1887

The Rothesay Brass Band, announced as “George Laidlaw’s band”, gave an evening concert on the Esplanade: march “*Forgive and Forget*” (Newton), valse “*Sibyl*” (Mitchell), glee “*Willie brew’d a peck o’ meat*”, (Denny), gavotte “*Clarissa*” (Talbot), grand descriptive fantasia “*Storming of Commassie*” (Round), polka “*Saucy Nell*” (Dufresne), quadrille “*Mikado*” (Bucalossi), schottische “*Highlanders*” (Newton).

5 November 1887

“The following subscriptions have been received in aid of the funds of the Rothesay Brass Band (G.B. Laidlaw, bandmaster). This band played an interesting programme last Saturday afternoon in a very creditable manner, and such performances on bright winter days have a cheering effect on residents and visitors, besides giving a grand impression of the town too those passing in the *Grenadier* and other steamers:

H.G.F. Newell	£1 1s	Robert McGee	5s	Mrs Walker	2s 6d
Andrew Hunter	£1 1s	James Heaton	5s	D. Munro	2s 6d
John McAlpine	10s	J.M. Kippen	5s	R. Taylor	2s 6d
A Friend	6s	J.C. Sinclair	5s	A. Brown & Son	2s 6d
James Cunningham	5s	D.M. Taylor	5s	R.M.	2s 6d
Thomas Aitchison	5s	Mrs Dickie	5s	J.C. Stewart	2s 6d
Daniel McLachlan	5s	Daniel Lamont	3s 6d	D. McGilp	2s 6d
D.I. Morris	5s	John Paterson	3s	A. Miller	2s 6d
F.H. Squair	5s	James Hunter	3s	M. Service	2s 6d
David Lawson	5s	John Lamont	2s 6d	C. Duncan	2s
James Smith	5s	James Reid	2s 6d	P. Guthrie	2s
W.W. Rathie	5s	D.W. McQueen	2s 6d	S. Mitchell	2s
David Robertson	5s	Mrs J. Wilson	2s 6d	Sums under 2s	4s

Tuesday 15 November 1887

The Rothesay Brass Band gave an evening concert in the Bandstand: march “*The Stormy Petrel*” (Scholes), valse “*Blumen am Wege*” (Keller), overture “*Gems of Ireland*” (Waldial), concert polka “*The Fusilade*” (Metcalfe), cornet solo, selection “*Beauties of Scotland*” (Newton) introducing the following melodies – [*Bonnie Dundee, Scots wha ha'e, Kenmures on an' awa' Willie, Ye Banks and an' Braes, Wha wadna fecht for Charlie, Lord Gregory (Cornet Solo), Maggie Lauder, Duncan Gray, Oh Mary dear departed shade (Euphonium Solo), Kinloch of Kinloch, John Anderson my Jo John (Trombone Solo), Whit's a the Steer Kimmer, Charlie is the Darling, Caller Herrin, Within a mile o' Edinburgh (Horn Solo), My love is but a lassie yet*], quadrille “*Dorothy (comedy opera)*” (Bucalossi), mazurka “*Sultana*” (Round), galop “*Pell Mell*” (Liddell).

“The band had an admirable night for the performance of their programme, for although it was cold there was not a breath of wind, and the music was well heard considerable distances round the bay. Mr Laidlaw, and those who answer to his skilful call, went through their parts very commendably, and we are glad the public are encouraging these programmes on suitable occasions during the winter.”

Monday 12 December 1887

The band gave an evening concert in the Bandstand: march “*The Black Brunswicker*” (Jebb), valse “*Venitienne*” (Waldteufel), fantasia (cornet solo) “*Con Amore*” (Enschell), polka “*Rosebud*” (Little), grand fantasia “*The Wedding Day*” (Round), schottische “*The Happy Pair*” (Round), quadrille “*Robert Burns*” (Nicolaie), galop “*Post Horn*” (Koenig).

The “*Wedding Day*” was written for the Grand National Brass Band Contest at Knowsley [in 1880] and contains the following: “*Awakening of Nature*” with recitative for principal cornet and solo for horns, “*When the Rosy Morn Appearing*” quartette and grand tutti with running basses, “*The Manly Heart*” duet for solo cornet and euphonium, “*Haste to the Wedding*” tutti with effects, “*The Wedding Chimes*” solo and cadenza for principal cornet, “*Angel of Love*” duet for euphonium and trombone with obligato for cornet, “*The Fine Old English Gentleman*” trombone solo with comic accompaniment in fugue for basses, “*Mendelssohn's Wedding*

March” grand tutti, *“Wedding Dance”* with novel effects of counterpoint, *“Oh Happy Blissful Fate”* solo for cornet, *“Hail Love Divine”*, *“Heaven’s Brightest Gift”* grand finale with bass solo.

Thursday 15 December 1887

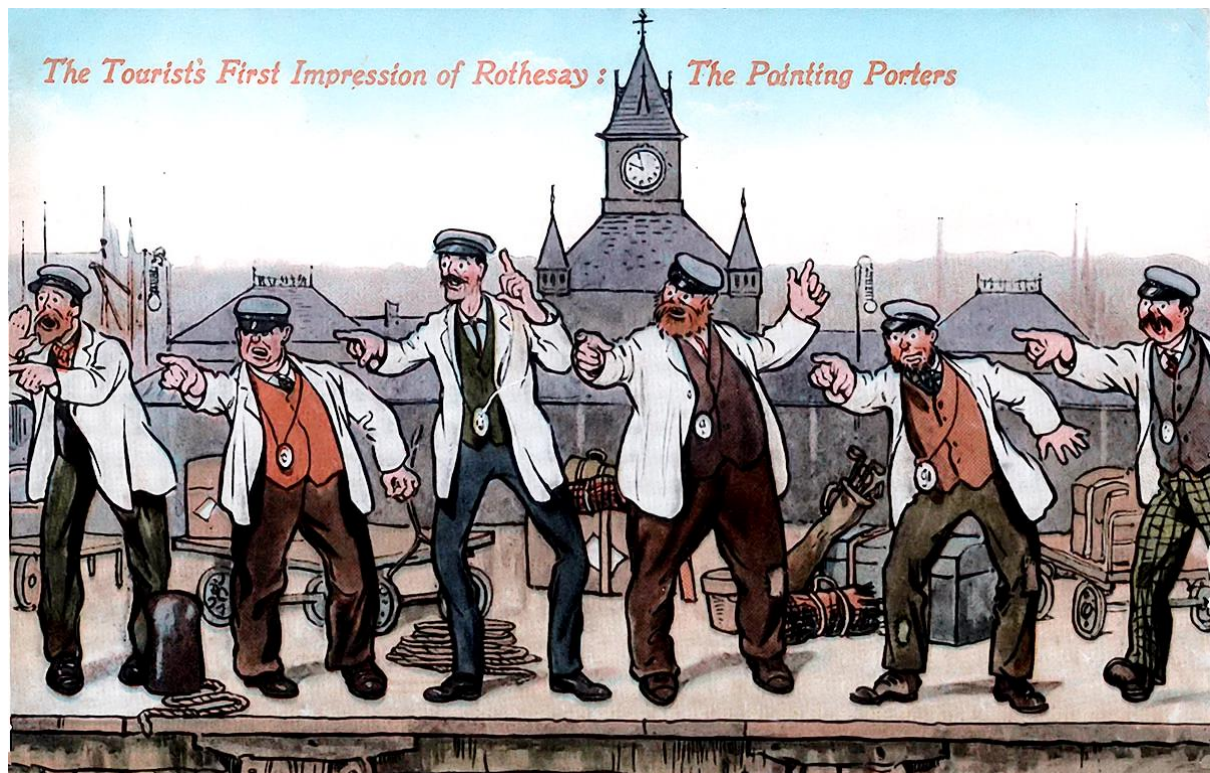
The band took part in a grand concert at the Public Halls, Rothesay, which included vocal and dance acts.

Monday 12 June 1893

“The Rothesay band committee [*part of the Town Council*] have acted wisely in again engaging the local volunteer band [*Rothesay Brass Band*] to occupy the stand. In former years the professional bands did not make the same effort, being inclined to make a mere holiday of their engagement; but Mr Laidlaw has the local band well up, and takes care to get hold of the very latest popular music. The band commences this season on the Esplanade tonight, and Mr Laidlaw means to excel all previous efforts.”

The future of the Rothesay Brass Band at this point is unknown, at present. Further research will indicate whether it continues through to WW1 or fades before then.

As an aside, one of the perils that faced visitors to Rothesay was that of the “pointing porters”. The porters who stood on the quayside, awaiting the arrival of the ships, would size up the disembarking passengers and, having identified their ‘client’ (usually one with expensive clothing or luggage), they would point at them. The recipient of the ‘point’ would then accept the porter’s offer of service by pointing back, thus completing the engagement.



Royal Rothesay Silver Band



This band appears in 1927, making its debut in concert on the Rothesay Esplanade in 1927, with conductor, James Morrison, chairman Neil McNicol, and secretary James Lamont. It appears to have been active through the 1930's, but probably did not survive WW2.

Sunday 31 July 1927

An ingenious dodge to raise money was revealed at the Rothesay Police Court, when two Glasgow men were charged with soliciting alms in the street. The two men were George Withers, bootblack, 259 Gallowgate, Glasgow, and John McGrowth, street singer, Auchentoshan Terrace, Glasgow. When the Royal Rothesay Silver Band was discoursing music to large at Battery Place, a member of the band executive noticed two men, whom he did not know, collecting money from the audience, who were evidently under the impression that the collection was for the band. One of the men had a tin can, and the other used his cap. Both men were fined £1, or seven days' imprisonment.



Friday 27 August 1927

The Rothesay Silver Band took part in the fancy dress parade through the town for the annual Illumination. The town was crowded with visitors, while a large number of steamers brought excursionists from Glasgow, Greenock, and many watering-places in the Firth. The town was brilliantly illuminated, the houses on the heights being outlined with padella lights and devices shown on the field at Ardbeg, Beechwood, and elsewhere. The shore-line was also outlined with lights, about 20,000 padellas in all being used. A firework display, costing £100, was also given from the shore in front of the Skeoch Woods, and coloured flares set off at intervals gave dissolving views of the scene. The whole display was considered one of the most successful yet given.

25 January 1936

The Rothesay Silver Band provided music during the Proclamation at Rothesay by Sheriff-Substitute Ballingall for the new King, following the death of King George V.

22 May 1939

The band secretary advertised for two first cornet players to play with the band for three months during the summer season.

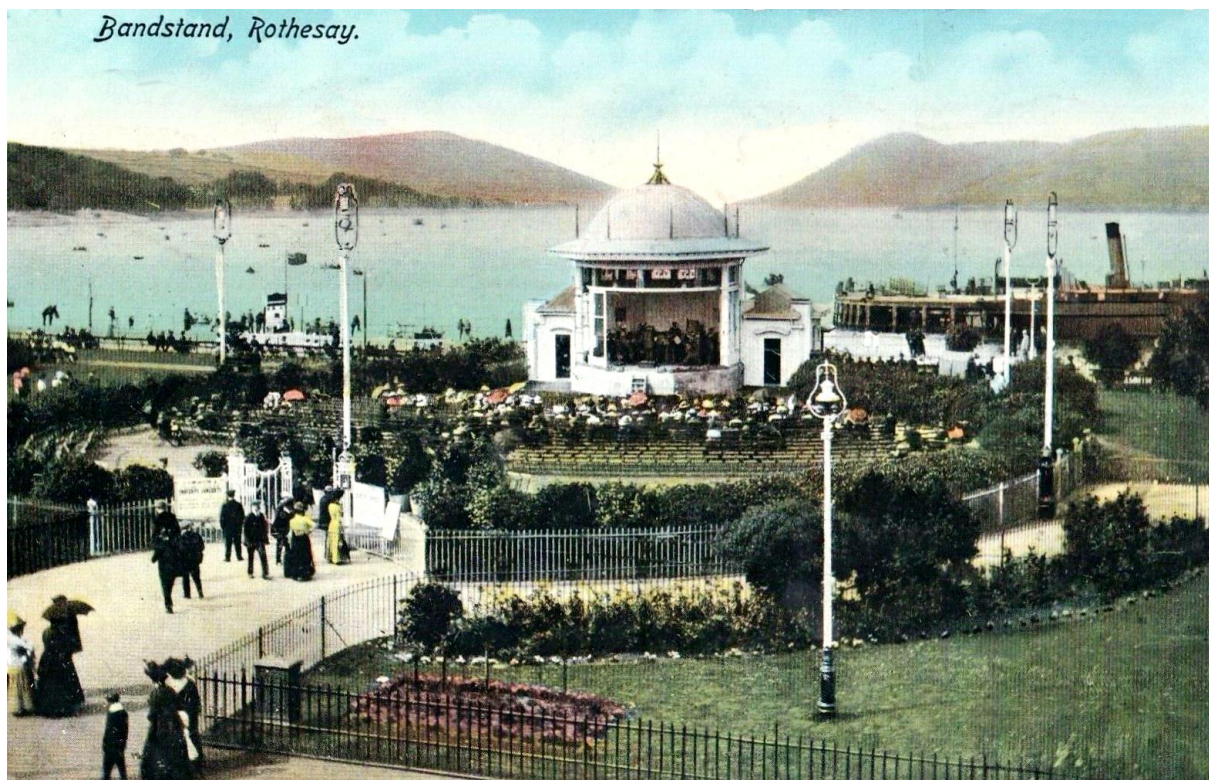


LMS ROYAL ROTHESAY LNER
THE HOLIDAY CAPITAL OF THE CLYDE COAST

A description of Rothesay in August 1904

GLASGOW'S DOON THE WATTER. "RO'SAY" AND ITS ATTRACTIONS.

Rothesay, the "recuperative," did you say? Why, the wear and tear upon one's nerves in the Clydesdale Madeira is thousandfold keener than in busy, bustling Glasgow itself. On these long, warm days, Rothesay is far from being a lounging, lazy, health resort. From early morn to dewless eve the sounds of the many trippers' revelry assail one's ears. Even in the semi-twilight of the wee sma' 'oors there are always a few noisy roysterers who link one day's merry laughter and frolic with that of another - feeling, perhaps, less cramped in their chosen time, for truly throughout the day there is little surplus road room for the inebriated. Great as is the daytime in Rothesay, evening brings climax to the frivolities of this un-Scottish resort. Any time before the tea hour is the children's chosen period, when they may paddle and romp and shout to their heart's content, what time their elders sit placidly by occasionally knitting, more often reading the "*People's Friend*." Up and down the silver Firth - oh, yes, it's often silvery at Rothesay - beat the great Clyde paddle steamers, those pioneers of tourist navigation. On their decks are seemingly endless crowds of holidaymakers coming and going, day in, day out, seemingly always exactly the same, yet in reality always changing. Glasgow's daily output of "doon the watter" voyagers must be immense. Rothesay is their favourite haunt - bright, bustling Rothesay, as different from aristocratic Toward as Paris is from Perth. Even on holiday the Glaswegian doesn't like to feel lonely, hence his passion for Dunoon and the Madeira of the Clyde.



Bandstand, Rothesay.

The new bandstand, after 1911

Evening witnesses, as I remarked, the climax of the Rothesay day. The river boats have discharged their human freight at the long pier, the living freight has toddled home, washed up, enjoyed a generous high tea - with Bute-grown strawberries as an

accompaniment - and is ready to sally out again for light entertainment and the Pierrots. Smartest costumes are donned, whether male or female, and a start made to the Esplanade, pavilion, pier, or front - call it what you will. The great carnival of the evening is a truly Parisian affair. All is life and animation. Softening effects of eventide tend to tone down somewhat crude and vulgar millinery, the freckled faces, and the frowsy flummery. Paterfamilias and his happy brood experience an expending good nature as daylight fades, and the electric lamps suddenly flash out their brilliant illumination. Rothesay Town Band, silk hatted, frock coated, and eminently respectable in appearance, takes possession of the stand, the commanding seats are eagerly secured, and the air is laden with the smoke of cheap cigars and cigarettes which, alas, are cheaper still.

THE POPULAR EXCURSION ROUTE
GLASGOW AND LAND O'BURNS.

CALLS AT GREENOCK KIRN DUNOON LARGS MILLPORT ARDROSSAN AND TROON.

CARRIAGES FOR MONUMENT ON ARRIVAL RETURNING IN TIME FOR SAILING

THE NEW SALOON STEAMER,
"BONNIE DOON"

SAILS DAILY FROM GLASGOW AT 7.A.M., RETURNING FROM AYR AT 2.30.P.M.

But the Band has no monopoly. Far from it. Hard by a wildly excited Salvationist (inspired, mayhap, by the daily booming of his "General"), is gesticulating violently, and preaching loudly to a constantly changing stream of passers-by. Farther a German Band caters for overflow from the town's select audience, and here and there groups of independent entertainers are all doing their best to gather a little financial hay while the sun of the summer tripper shines.



Torchlight Cruises from Rothesay—Pipers and Dancers. 1904

Experiencing utmost difficulty in steering a straight course (how nautical, by the way, one becomes after a trip on a paddle-boat from Gourock) along the parade, I remark a resident that Rothesay is uncomfortably crowded. "Why, Rothesay's empty." he, retorts, you should have been here the Fair week." "I wasn't here, nor am I sorry." Rothesay, with all its charms, is but Glasgow transported for a time from its familiar haunts; Glasgow very much Glasgowfied, with most of its virtues and all its vices.

