

The Five Saxonias – a family band of the early 1900s

Gavin Holman, 16 March 2026

This photograph is of the “Five Saxonias”, a musical act which consisted of a father, mother and three children. Their actual names are not (yet) known, but they started their stage performances and touring in June 1905 and continued through to March 1914, after which the family apparently ceased performing.



The Five Saxonias, photographed in Belfast in 1911

The ensemble usually performed as the “Five Saxonias” but also occasionally as the “Five Saxonias Family”. They were proficient saxophone players, but also included xylophones, cornets, concertinas, and handbells in their repertoire of instruments. Their programmes consisted of various novelty musical items, together with more serious items such as the “*William Tell Overture*” and “*Poet and Peasant*”.

Their act included various stage effects, a ‘blaze of coloured lights’, and bright uniforms.

Their touring life started at the Northampton Opera House in June 1905, and concluded at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh in March 1914. In the intervening years they toured the country, largely in the north of England, Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Northern Ireland.