



The Hills

## In 1903 trains were hired just for a local fete or concert

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In the early days of the 20th century, people in our area largely made their own entertainment.

Occasionally, something special was staged and this was true of events held at Loreto Convent at Normanhurst.

Whether it was a fete day or a concert, events at Loreto were well attended and both men and women took the opportunity to wear formal clothing, Events were well organised and attractive.

In 1903, a special train was advertised in the newspapers, running from Milson's Point to Hornsby in time to make a connection with a train to Normanhurst.

The train was for the convenience of people attending a concert at Loreto.

A concert held in 1909 drew the attention of the press, with detailed reports being printed. One paper said "A very enjoyable matinee at the Loreto Convent, Normanhurst, deserves more than passing notice".

According to the report, the concert hall was decorated with festoons of white and mauve wisteria blossoms. Arum lillies were arranged to provide a feast of floral decoration.

The 1909 concert featured an orchestra of over 20 pupils. Their instruments included double bass, violins, pianos and organ.

Perhaps the most enjoyable piece on the program was Elgar's "Snow", performed by the chorus, while some scenes from the life of Blessed Joan of Arc were performed. At interval, the visitors were provided with afternoon tea.

A similar concert in 1903 included both pianoforte and orchestral items. Again, the floral decorations were spectacular and the girls presented in white frocks.

Another contemporary outing was provided by the fete days held at Waitara in aid of the Foundling Home. In 1900, such a fete was opened by the cardinal.

The trip out from Milson's Point was spectacular as the train passed through the October blooms of gardens and orchard trees. Peaches and apples were in full blossom.

The fete was in a good cause and the orphans were on display as the visitors arrived. As was usual with fete days, various stalls were conducted by the ladies, who were drawn from the Catholic population of the area.

Those who ran stall included Mesdames Collins and Baker (needlework), Mesdames Hughes, Mullins and Barlow (refreshments), Mesdames Loughrey and Davis (sweets) and Mrs Doyle and Miss Doyle (fishpond). The stalls were inside a large marquee erected for the occasion.

One of the fetes at Loreto was the subject of very early newspaper photographs. The quality of them is inferior to modern photographs but they give a superb picture of the grand social occasion that these days provided.