

Amici 35th Anniversary Dinner

Saturday 23rd February heralded the arrival of a very special event in the Amici Singers history. Since the choir's inception, it was never envisaged that the choir would be making music together thirty five years later. However the choir has grown considerably and despite the cold and bitter weather a staggering 79 members (past and present); friends and honoured guests gathered to celebrate another wonderful milestone. Among our guests were the Amici President Bryan Shaw, our vice president Bill White and all 7 chairmen who still sing in the choir today. In the sumptuous surroundings of the John O'Gaunt golf club, Sutton, bedecked in all our finery we assembled in the restaurant.

There were eight tables in all and in perfect keeping for such a special occasion, each one was named after a different composer – Coombes, Vaughn-Williams and Elgar to name but a few. Once everyone had taken their seats, the evening got underway with a rousing rendition of the Amici Grace, a beautiful tradition, sung firstly in unison, then in harmony before we sang it through in rounds.

As the first of our three courses were served by a most efficient and smartly dressed team of waiters and waitresses, we didn't waste any time in whiling away a most pleasant evening chatting and laughing with friends. After a delightful three course meal and feeling considerably more replete, it was time for the much anticipated speeches and entertainment. After some brief words from our chair person, we heard from our vice president who after some well-chosen words led us to make two toasts – one to our wonderful Musical Director without whom, I hope you will agree, the Amici Singers would not be what it is and the other toast to the future of the Amici Singers.

Of course, no birthday celebration would be complete without a cake and we certainly weren't going to miss out. Our very own Lesley Hammadani rose to the challenge and made a lovely cake, decorated with musical notes and inscribed with the words "if music be the food of love play on", which incidentally features in our upcoming concert on 2nd March in the world premiere of songs from "Shakespeare Dances". Douglas and one of the founder members Rosemary were invited to cut the cake before we were introduced to our wonderful guest speaker Brian Mack who entertained us with lively reminiscences of his work with some of the world's musical greats including Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Junior, Shirley Bassey and his work in the orchestra pit of "Phantom of the Opera" in London's West End. Reluctantly the evening drew to a close and it was time to wind our weary way back home but I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to everybody who made the evening so memorable.