

Over the 46 years of the choir's history, members have performed about 44 Christmas and Summer concerts (no concerts during the Covid-19 Pandemic!) in venues around their home base in Bedfordshire. However, that is just the tip of the iceberg for the Amicis – they have always thoroughly relished the chance to travel throughout the UK, Europe, and USA, sharing their love of singing and enjoying each other's company.

Early Amici experiences included making recordings at the BBC, where their founder, Douglas Coombes was a producer of school's music programmes, and the first foreign trip to Kortrijk, Belgium. Already, the choir's reputation for high-quality music was firmly established.



[Founder and early members of the Amicis with Douglas]

In 1983 the choir crossed the Atlantic for the first of ten visits to the United States of America. Connections with music groups attached to churches of various denominations enabled the choir to experience home stays, give concerts and enjoy visits to many fascinating tourist destinations. During these trips friendships were built which have lasted decades, and reciprocal visits by friends from USA have always been a great pleasure. The most poignant event was in April 2002 when the choir was permitted to sing The Celtic Blessing at the site of the Twin Towers in New York, which had been destroyed six months earlier in the terror attack.



[Amicis on the 1st USA trip]

The Amicis have an extremely wide repertoire. With a composer and arranger as their Musical Director, they have always been fortunate to enjoy a broad range of musical styles and genres as well as the chance to work with professional musicians and orchestras through to school choirs.

In the UK the choir has sung evensong in Norwich cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey, Wells cathedral, Bristol cathedral, Carlisle cathedral; they have performed concerts in Ely cathedral, Westminster cathedral, the grounds of Lambeth Palace and numerous churches large and small across the country.

For several years reciprocal visits were made to Senlis, France to share music-making with the Collegium de Senlis and enjoy trips to Paris and the surrounding areas.



[Daniel Humbert, Ronnie White, Douglas Coombes, Elizabeth Gammell – Senlis, France.]

Other thoroughly enjoyable trips abroad by the choir have been to Gibraltar, 2016, Germany, 2012 & 2015. In 2014, the choir had the honour of singing at the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, Ypres – as part of the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of WWI.



[Amici Quedlinburg trip 2015]

The choir has also taken two Fred Olsen cruises – one on the Seine, France, 2018, and the other to the Scottish Isles, 2019.



On several occasions, the choir has held “Conducting Days” when amateur conductors have tried their hand at conducting the Amicis – always enjoyable and a challenge for the choir to follow an unfamiliar conductor.

The Covid-19 Pandemic was a difficult period for the Amicis. Singing was recognised as a risk of spreading the virus and the choir had to cease in-person rehearsals and performances. However, they still met virtually via Zoom and as soon as possible, sang outside before they were permitted to resume normal rehearsals.



The choir has resumed their UK travel post-pandemic. In May 2023 they toured the West Country, based in Weston-Super-Mare and performed two concerts and two Evensongs (Bristol and Wells cathedrals).

Future plans include a four-day visit to Carlisle in May 2024.