



THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION OF SAVOY ORDERS

Seventh Savoy History Lecture

The American Foundation of Savoy Orders was pleased to present its **Seventh Annual Savoy History Lecture** on Tuesday, October 27, 2009. It was the first time that the Foundation partnered with another New York-based institution, the **St. George's Society of New York**, in sponsoring this event. The subject of this year's lecture was particularly appropriate to such a collaboration: *The House of Savoy: Thirteenth Century England and the Mediaeval European Community*. The title, in fact, interestingly drew attention to the intermingling of dynastic, cultural and economic interests which were to have lasting historic significance both for the House of Savoy and the House of Plantagenet. The theme was chosen by the Lecture Series **Chairman, Comm. Marco Grassi**, on the advice of **Uff. Dott. R. Brandon Fradd**, and was planned with the enthusiastic support of **Uff. John Shannon**, Executive Director of the St. George's Society.



Comm. Marco Grassi introduces Professor Christopher Tyerman, Guest Lecturer from New College, Oxford University

In the now-established tradition of varying the venue for each lecture, the Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium was selected for this year's event. The facility is adjacent and part of the Museum of the Colonial Dames of America on East 61st Street and its ample space allowed for a reception and buffet dinner to be offered on the premises as part of the program.

Christopher Tyerman, author and distinguished professor, was the featured speaker. Professor Tyerman, M.A., D.Phil, serves as Senior Research Fellow and Tutor in History at Hertford College, Oxford and lectures on Mediaeval History at New College, Oxford. His most recent publication is *God's War*, a comprehensive history of the Crusades. Among Prof. Tyerman's other published works are: *England and the Crusades* and *A History of Harrow School*.



Victor E. Stewart, President (left) with Uff. John Shannon Executive Director of St. George's Society of New York



Comm. Marco Grassi, President of the American Foundation of Savoy Orders (left) with Mr. Victor E. Stewart, President of St. George's Society of New York

The illustrated lecture began by tracing the genealogy of King Henry III of England and his wife Eleanor of Provence. Henry, born in 1207, was the grandson of King John on whom the barons of the realm imposed the Magna Carta in 1215. Eleanor was the daughter of Beatrice of Savoy and, after her royal marriage in 1236, was followed to London by her two Savoy uncles, Boniface and Peter. “The Savoyards”, as they became known at court, were to play a significant role during the reign of Henry III, who was lavish in his patronage and favor to his queen and her relatives. Boniface was named the Archbishop of Canterbury, built Lambeth Palace and became England’s most powerful churchman. His brother Peter was elevated to the title of Earl of Richmond and played an influential role as favorite and adviser to the king. Among the many benefactions he received, was a large tract of land between the Strand and the Thames on which he built the Savoy Palace, at that time, London’s grandest. The hospital that replaced it in the sixteenth century was destroyed by fire in the nineteenth, being replaced in its turn by the Savoy Hotel and the Savoy Theater. The only part of the original palace complex that was rebuilt and survives to this day is the lovely, gothic Savoy Chapel. It is still officiated and serves as the seat of the Royal Victorian Order, which is conferred by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II, of which our late American Delegate, Cav. di Gr. Cr. James C. Risk C.V.O., was an honorary member.

King Henry III’s long reign of 56 years is remembered as particularly splendid and was surely much enhanced by the presence of his Savoy relations. Professor Tyerman’s lecture revealed in surprising details how cosmopolitan and well-travelled the members of his court were, and how the intricate dynastic connections among the great houses of Europe stimulated cultural as well as economic development during the late middle-ages.



Uff. Dott R. Brandon Fradd (left) with Prof. Christopher Tyerman



Cav. di Gr. Cr. Avv. Carl J. Morelli, Chairman of the American Foundation of Savoy Orders with Dama di Gr. Cr. Baronessa Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimò



*Cav. di Gr. Cr. Avv. Carl Morelli with Keith E. Simpson
Secretary of St. George's Society of New York*



*Savoy Foundation Friends and St. George's Society Members
enjoying dinner at the Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium after
the Lecture.*

Despite the inclement weather that evening, the lecture was attended by over one hundred members and friends of both the American Foundation of Savoy Orders and the St. George's Society of New York. It was followed by a reception and buffet dinner catered by "Bistro 61", a well-known nearby restaurant. As in past Savoy Lecture events, the wines were generously donated by Marchesi de' Frescobaldi of Florence, kindly arranged by that firm's representative in New York, Mr. Alessandro Lunardi.



*(l to r): Dama Larissa Van Duser, Prof. Tyerman,
Dama di Comm. Mira Zivkovich, Professor Tyerman's son
and Cav. Avv. Joseph Giminaro at the Lecture Reception*



*(l to r): Guest, Mr. Jeffrey Ryan, Cav. Dott. Igor Alexandroff
and Prof. Tyerman at the Reception after the Lecture*

- Comm. Marco Grassi