

The Friends of Osterley Park

A Supporter's Group for the National Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 62 September 2006

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

"FRIENDS" EVENTS:-

Wednesday, October 25th - Autumn Reception and Presentation on Garden Developments in the Park 7 for 7.30 pm, in the Old Brew-house - see opposite page.

Thursdays, 15th February, 1st, 15th, and 29th March - "Winter Lectures", St Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley Road, 7.30 for 8 pm. - details of speakers in next issue.

TRUST EVENTS	(Details in enclosed leaflet):-
Sunday October 22 nd	"Osterley's Autumn Colours"
Sunday October 29 th	"Family Ghost Tour"
Tuesday October 31 st	"Halloween Ghost Tour"
Friday November 3 rd	"Putting the House to Bed" (including lunch.)
Saturday November 4 th	"Putting the House to Bed" (including Morning Coffee)
Thursday 7 th December -	"Christmas Decorations Workshop"
Saturdays & Sundays, 2 nd , 3 rd , 9 th , 10 th , 16 th , & 17 th -	"Christmas at Osterley"
Sundays, 3 rd , 10 th , & 17 th -	"Carols in the Stable Yard"

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES.

IAN CONACHER.

The major story featured in this issue is the announcement by the Trust of their decision to separate the "Pleasure Grounds" and the field and woodland behind the House from the remainder of the Park, with an admission charge for this area. The hope is that this will provide funds for repairs and improvements to the paths and buildings and allow the re-creation of Mrs Child's 18th Century Flower Garden. Full details of the proposals are given on a later page, and will be presented to Members at the Autumn Reception in the Old Brew-house on 25th October, at 7 for 7.30 pm. A glass of wine will be served before the meeting. Please be prompt, as the Park gates will close at 7.30

I apologise for the short notice; this news has broken at the time when I was endeavouring to compile this Newsletter, and has inevitably caused further delay in going into print.

The situation is aggravated by the lack of response to my appeals in the last issue for a member able to spare time put together the Newsletter, writing up the news and liaising with the Printers. Nor has any member offered to fill the post of Hon. Treasurer, left vacant by the resignation of Paul Lucas, or to take on the job of finding speakers and arranging our series of talks. I hope that some help will be forthcoming before our A.G.M. in May, as with other pressures on my time I shall not be able to continue with these extra duties beyond that date.

In spite of these problems, the "Friends" have continued to function through this past summer thanks to the support of members of the Committee. Once more Jim Tickle has provided a series of day trips each month, and a full and varied itinerary for the summer tour. This year the chosen venue was Cornwall, and I have had glowing verbal reports from members participating - but nothing in writing! Hopefully someone will give me an article for the December issue.

Many members will be aware that this has been a difficult year for me personally, due to my wife's health problems. I am glad to say that she is still in good spirits; our thanks are due to the support of the Committee in recent months.

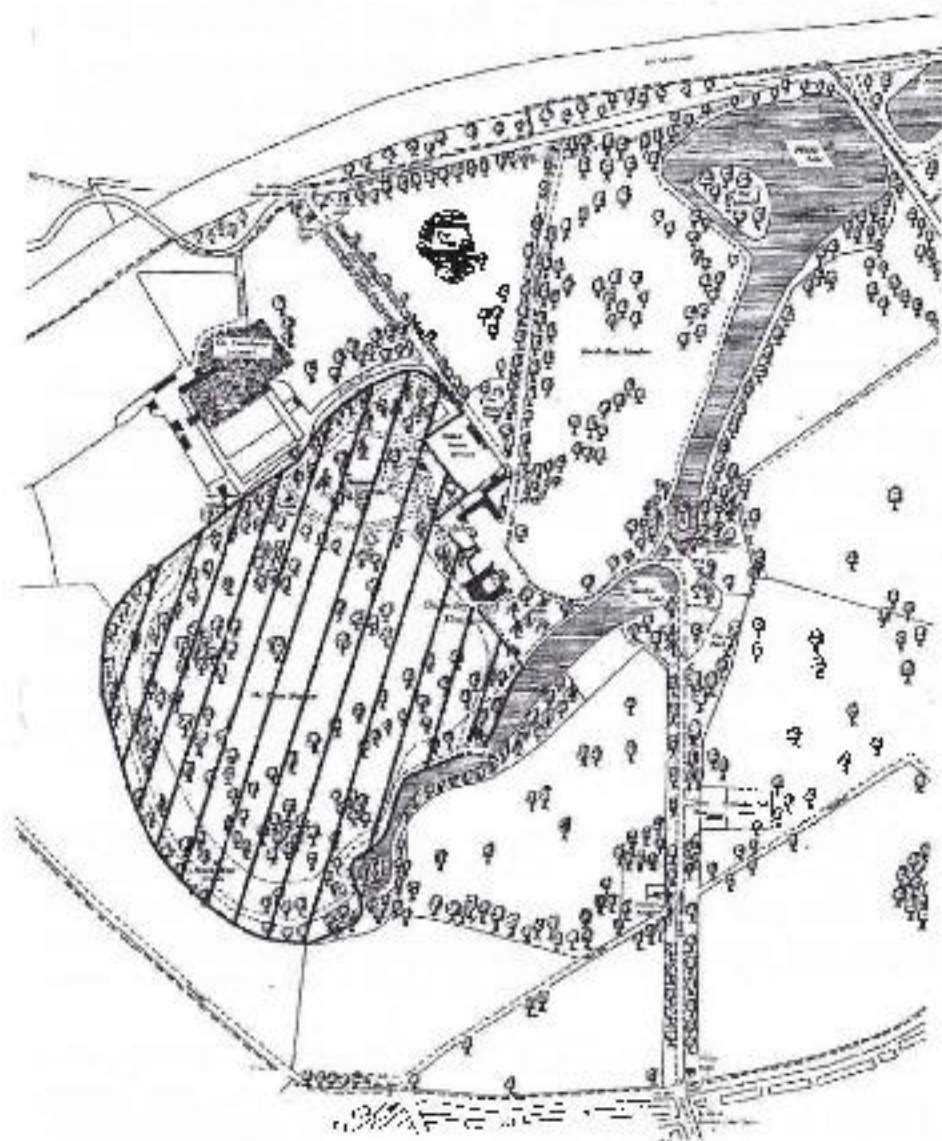
The proposal to develop the ground behind the House was announced to a special meeting of Volunteers on 30th September. It is intended that the existing Pleasure Grounds will be developed to recreate Mrs Child's Flower Garden, providing formal areas where 18th century guests could have strolled at their leisure. This will also include restoring the Grade I listed buildings in the Garden, dredging the lake, and repairing walls and paths.

To fund these works and make improvements to visitor facilities, an entry charge will be introduced for the new Garden Area, with the West Meadow and woodlands. To allow the work to proceed, the area will be closed from 17th December 2006 to 14th March 2007. Opening hours will be 11 am to 5 pm, Wednesdays to Sundays. Entry will be free to Trust members; admission for non-members to House and Garden will be £7.50 and Garden only £3.00.

The plan to develop the Gardens, and introduce charging for admission, has been under consideration for many years. Indeed I can recall discussions on this subject with the then Regional Land Agent in the early nineties. At that time it was my view that the condition of the area in question did not offer sufficient "added value" for charging to be acceptable. However the improvements already made and those projected have changed the situation.

The need for this has become more pressing with the increased costs of managing the Property, which is now over £1,000,000 a year. Funding for this expenditure would ideally be provided by a capital endowment, but, as with many other Trust properties, Osterley's endowment fund falls drastically short of the sum required. It is hoped that ultimately the costs of the improvements to the Park and Gardens will not only pay for themselves but generate additional income to offset the shortfall in the endowment.

A map showing the location and extent of the area to be enclosed is shown opposite.



Plan showing proposed garden area.

NEWS OF MEMBERS.

It is with regret that I have to advise of the deaths of a number of Members in recent weeks.

David Beckett, of Jersey Road, had been a member since our formation in 1991.

Leslie Eckersall also joined in our early days; he was a Member of Heston & Isleworth Rotary Club, and with his wife Rene was a regular volunteer Room Steward in the House.

Tom Folley was also a volunteer, frequently driving the "Courtesy Bus". He had spent many years overseas with his wife Margaret, as Station Manager for B.O.A.C., later British Airways

Pat Head was at one time a patron of Jim Tickle's trips, before her health deteriorated.

Geoff Spice was a Member of Isleworth Probus Club, and also a volunteer Courtesy Bus driver.

Miss D. Young was also a Member from the early days of the "Friends".

Our sincere condolences go to the families of these Members.



It would be a pleasant change to be able to hear occasionally from Members who have good news to share with us, of special family events, children's or grandchildren's successes, and so on!

THE MOUNTING BLOCK - MARGARET FRIDAY.

The very fine mounting block in the stable-yard at Osterley is pictured on our centre pages; there are many other examples around the countryside. Several churches in Kent have similar blocks, including Herstmoceaux, Sandhurst, and Lympe, for the use of ladies who preferred to ride to church but needed the assistance of a block to remount. An example was seen at Trelisick in Cornwall during the "Friends" summer tour.

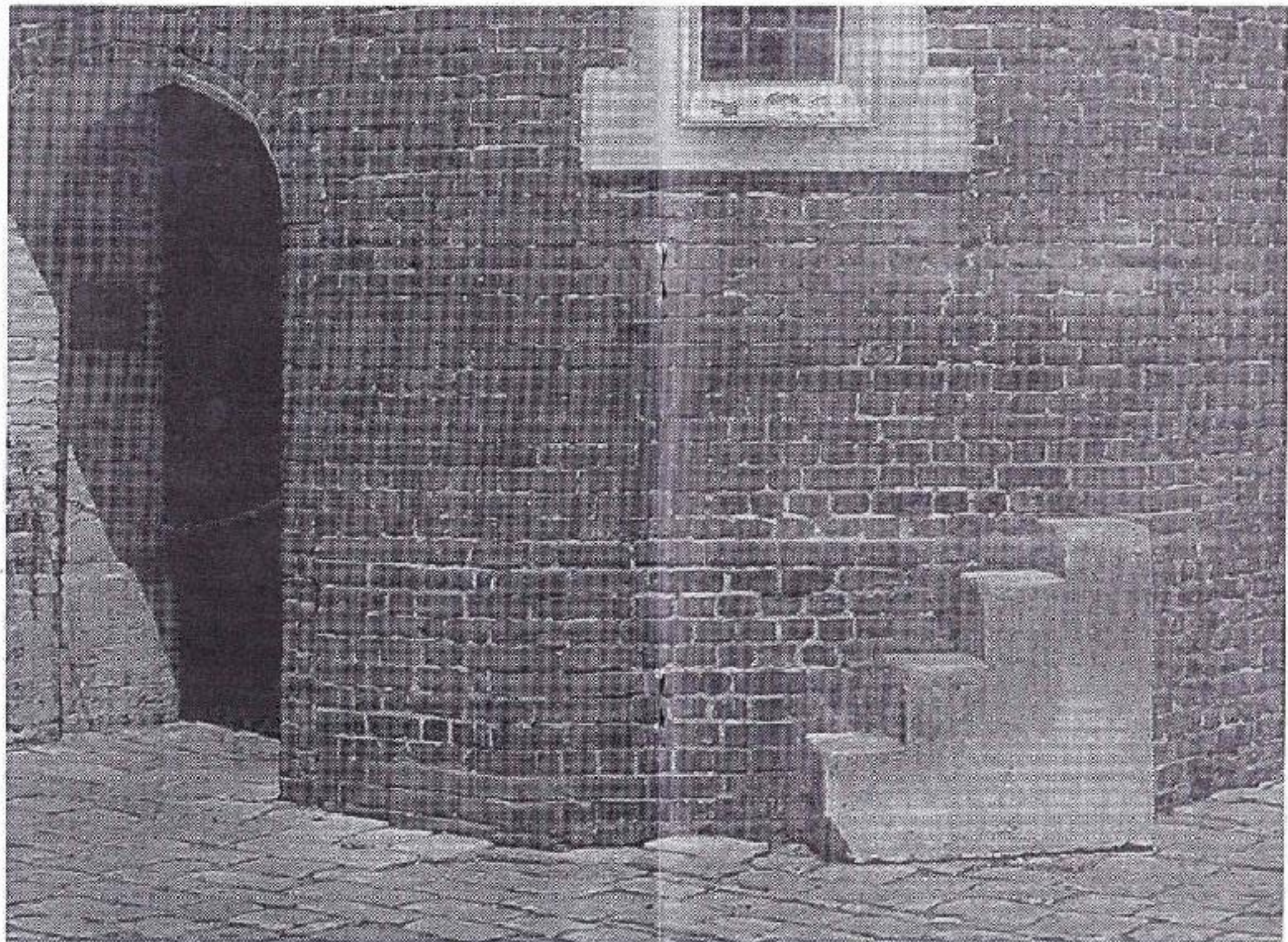
There were very specific rules for the proportions when constructing a mounting-block, which have been published by Ride UK. Height of the block, depth of the steps and space surrounding the block are carefully listed.

There is no evidence telling us how long this block has been in the stable-yard. We know that there were very fine horses in the Osterley stable. The ladies of the Child family and their visitors probably enjoyed riding, and there is a colour sketch of Robert Child with his wife and daughter with a chestnut horse and a small dog.

In the 15th Century ladies rode side-saddle, and wore long specially styled skirts for this activity. Mounting a horse from the ground would not have been feasible in the long skirt and female version of the hunting jacket. It would have been much easier to mount a horse from the block.

It is probable that the block was also used by gentlemen whose love of wine and food had rendered them incapable of mounting a horse without its aid!

(The Osterley example would seem to have been carved from one block of stone. It now finds use as an adventure playground for young children!)



OSTERLEY DAY, 9TH JULY.

The sun blazed down on the Park on this eventful day; not only was this a big day for Osterley; it was also Men's Finals Day at Wimbledon and the football World Cup Final in Berlin. Whether it was due to these competing attractions or simply the heat, visitor numbers were fewer than in previous years.

Members of the Committee joined Audrey and myself on the fund-raising stalls. Our traditional efforts with Bric-a-Brac, Books, and Tombola were supplemented on the day by donations; Hilary Ranger's team of flower arrangers, who fill vases for display in the House throughout the season, produced a number of small arrangements for sale, and Jean Beckett gave us 20 punnets of fresh picked cherries! In total, approximately £650 was raised by our efforts. Thanks are due to Members and their relations for their help in achieving this total.

SUMMER IN THE PARK.

Sadly, the seven cygnets whose arrival was recorded in our last issue have not survived. We are not sure of the cause of their demise - whether it was slaughter by foxes or some toxic algae in the lake; however the herons and visiting terns are still fishing!

The water level in the Garden Lake fell to a very low level by late September, and we shall need more than a few heavy showers to bring it back to the level where it overflows into the Lower Lake.

Horse Chestnut trees in the Park - and in local streets - have been seriously affected by the activities of a leaf miner moth, whose larvae destroy the veins of the leaves; these then turn brown and fall early. The moth, *Cameraria Ohridella*, was first seen in the U.K. in 2002, at Wimbledon, and has spread widely in South East England. Its long-term effects are not known.

STAFF NEWS.

Custodian, Philip King, left Osterley in mid-August, as forecast in our last issue. The Post was filled temporarily by Kathleen Paterson, who has in turn moved on to a new post with the Tate Galleries. LOUISE AYRES has now been appointed as the new Custodian, and will take up the post in November. Louise started working for the Trust at Dunham Massey, and later as Assistant House Steward at Ham. This was followed by time at the Treasurer's House, York, and Blickling Hall, Norfolk. She has been Custodian at Sutton House since April 2005. In the meantime, Property Manager Sian will be supporting Alan Rideout in the running of the House.

We recorded the appointment of CAROLINE SKETCHLEY in our last issue. Originally from Dorset, we now learn that she comes trailing clouds of glory, with a degree in Arts and Heritage Management from the University of Greenwich. She has worked previously at Dunster Castle in Somerset. Her interests are Theatre, painting in watercolours, and drawing.



Osterley House from the West.



The Adam Garden House



The Temple of Pan

"FRIENDS" HUNDRED CLUB.

As most of you will know, this is a fund-raising scheme which includes a number of Prize Draws. There are 4 draws every year, each with a top prize of £100. Members pay a subscription of £12 each April – or £3 for each draw. Half their subscription goes into the prize draw fund, and the other half goes to fund the activities of the National Trust at Osterley.

The first draw of 2006/7 was held on July 9th, Osterley Day, and the winners were:-

£100	96	Ms M.C. Cooper
£ 50	127	Mr & Mrs O. Bignell
£ 25	78	Miss C. Diwell
£ 10	81	Miss A.M. Gibbs
£ 5	98	Mr & Mrs McMichael.

The second draw will be held at the Autumn Reception on 25th October, and the third at the Volunteers Christmas Party on December 2nd.

Any "Friend" who wishes to join the "100 Club" for the last three draws of this series should send a cheque for £9.00, made out the "Friends of Osterley Park", to:-

Ron Piper,
44, Kibbown Avenue,
Northolt, UB5 4QT.

Cheques should arrive by 21st October. Please enclose a stamped self addressed envelope for your membership card

THE EAGLES AT OSTERLEY PARK

The two eagles which add to the majesty of the entrance stair at Osterley were a heraldic emblem of the Child family. Originally the birds held adders in their beaks but these were stolen at sometime in the past and never replaced.

The 1782 inventory drawn up by Israel Lewis and William Linnell lists a pair of large leaden eagles in the Great Greenhouse, which burnt down in 1950. Were these birds later mounted on the pedestals by the stairs? This building burnt down in 1950; did eagles adorn other buildings at Osterley?

The eagle appears in the house carved above a mirror in the family rooms upstairs, and again in the State bed designed by Robert Adam in May 1776 at the request of Robert Child. The Child crest of the eagle with the adder in its beak is worked into the valance along with the marigold. As the silver embroidery has tarnished to grey, it is now difficult to see these details today.

The only eagles bearing coronets around their necks are the pair at the entrance. The coronets are thought to have been added after 1804 when Sarah Sophia married George Villiers, who became the 5th Earl of Jersey in 1805.

The eagles were repaired in about 1995. It was then found that these heavy birds, so frequently climbed on by children, were fixed in position by a very small holding screw. It was fortunate that the eagles did not topple off the balustrade when mounted by an energetic child. They are now securely fixed; however, even with their precarious position, with steps on one side and a sheer drop to the ground on the other make them unsuitable climbing frames, they still attract children to climb on them!

"FRIENDS" AUTUMN RECEPTION.

OLD BREWHOUSE,

OSTERLEY PARK,

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25TH, 7 pm.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS FOR
GARDEN AREA TO WEST OF HOUSE BY
PROPERTY MANAGER, SIAN HRRINGTON.

Wine will be served during the evening.

Car Parking in the stable-yard.

PLEASE COME EARLY

PARK GATES WILL BE CLOSED AT 7.30 pm

UNTIL AFTER THE MEETING.