

OSTERLEY PARK IN 1668: THE PROBATE INVENTORY OF SIR WILLIAM WALLER

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SUMMARY

Sir William Waller died in 1668. His probate inventory, printed here in full, provides much information about Osterley Park as it was before the alterations of Robert Adam. It lists 44 rooms, but it is clearly incomplete. The domestic rooms include a nursery, dining room and withdrawing room. There is a chapel and 11 service rooms, including brewhouse and dairy, and the integration of the house into its agricultural setting is apparent. There is no indication of the order of the rooms and it is difficult to establish any close relationship between the house revealed in this document and that revealed in the inventory of 1782.

Osterley Park in Middlesex is a dazzling example of the work of Robert Adam. His first designs date from 1761 and the rebuilding was completed in about 1780. A detailed inventory was made in 1782 of the contents,¹ including the splendid furniture, much of which Adam also designed. A great deal is known of Adam's work, since many of his designs have survived and he himself published a selection of them in his *Works of Architecture*, which appeared between 1773 and 1822. But, as with so much of Adam's work, he did not build from scratch. Instead he remodelled an existing building dating from the last quarter of the 16th century. Sir Thomas Gresham bought the estate in 1562 and, according to Norden,² had completed 'a faire and stately building of bricke' by about 1575. After Gresham's death it passed through the hands of several owners and was eventually bought by Sir Francis Child in 1711.³ Of this building far less is known, although much may be learned from the probate inventory

of Sir William Waller,⁴ who owned the property at the time of his death on 19 September 1668, and which is published here in full.⁵

Sir William Waller was a successful parliamentary general during the Civil Wars, particularly in the west country, where he captured Malmesbury and Hereford from the Royalists and broke the siege of Gloucester. He became increasingly opposed to the power of the army, and was imprisoned between 1648 and 1651, and again in 1659. He recovered his seat in Parliament in 1660 and in February of that year was on the Council of State and advocated the recall of Charles II. He was Member of Parliament for Westminster in the Convention Parliament.

The inventory was compiled by four appraisers, of whom one is a certain Francis Child. It is tempting to identify him with the Sir Francis who bought the property in 1711. If the two are in fact the same, then the Francis recorded here would have been 26, unmarried and only comparatively recently out of his apprenticeship as a goldsmith. His advice may have been sought over the valuation of the plate, worth £108 17s 6d. The suggestion that the wealthy and successful banker who bought the property in 1711 had already seen it some 43 years ago when his career was only just beginning is attractive but cannot at present be substantiated.

The inventory lists 44 rooms and two passages. It is clearly incomplete. It mentions 'the roome next Esq Waller's Chamber', without listing Esq Waller's room, 'the next roome to Sir William's' without listing Sir William's room itself, and the

'maidens' Chamber in the Upper Gallery' without mentioning the Upper Gallery, which may or may not be the same as the Gallery for which there is an 'Inward roome'. The Library is mentioned only because the books therein are valued but not listed. In addition there is listed a 'red Roome in the Third Story', the only one mentioned in this location, but very unlikely to have been the only one there.

There are in all 26 domestic rooms. Some have descriptive names, such as 'the red damaske Roome', 'the greene Sattin roome' and the Black Velvett Roome'. Their furnishings must have been of high quality if the total prices are any guide, but the descriptions are too brief to be of any real assistance in forming a clear picture of the internal appearance of individual rooms. There were plenty of chairs and stools, and it is apparent that carpets were still on tables rather than on the floor. Tapestry hangings were to be found in many of the rooms, which otherwise appear to have been rather sparsely furnished. This appears to be in line with what is known of contemporary practice, but it can be deceptive, since it is not unknown for objects specifically bequeathed in a will not to be included in the inventory,⁶ although there is no evidence of this in Sir William's own will, which is largely concerned with legacies to servants and the sale of Osterley for the benefit of his sons.⁷ There is a Nursery Room, a Dining Room and a Withdrawing Room, probably two galleries, one called Painted, with 24 pictures in it, two parlours and two halls. There is a chapel and a room for the chaplain. There are five servants' rooms, two for maids and one each for the cook, the coachman and the falconer.

There are 11 service rooms, including a still house, a brewhouse and a dairy, where cheese was made. These, together with the listing of hay, corn, pigs, cart and ploughs, make it clear that Osterley Park, like other great houses at the time, was still very much a self-contained community, providing for many of its everyday domestic needs from its own resources.

There is no indication of the order of the rooms, and only five are actually called 'Chamber' and two of these are for maids. This makes it particularly difficult to establish any close relationship between the house revealed through this inventory and that left by Robert Adam. Thus we know that the house built for Sir Thomas Gresham had four corner towers, since they are shown on the drawing of the house on

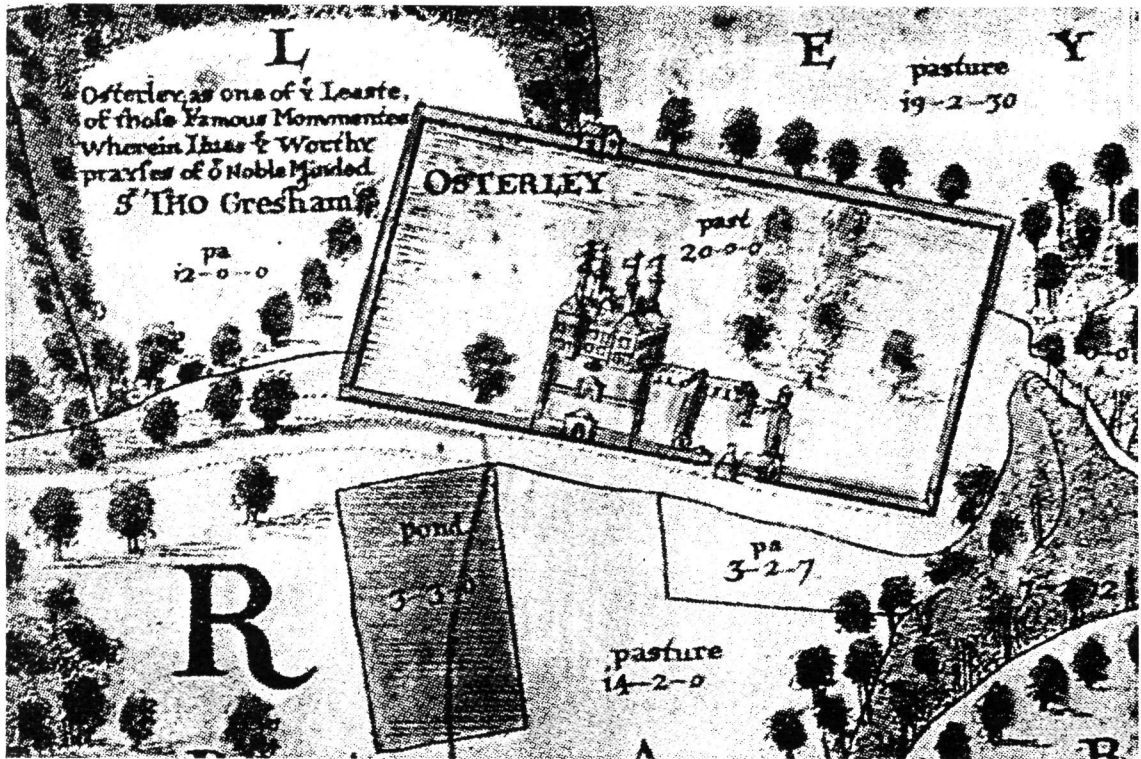
a map of 1635 made by Moses Glover,⁸ but there is no obvious mention of them in this inventory. The most likely point of contact is the Gallery, although it is unusual to find this on the ground floor of a 16th century house. This inventory almost certainly poses as many problems for the historian of Osterley Park as it solves. What it does do, however, if it is compared with the inventory of 1782, is underline in stark terms the astonishing difference between a great 16th century and 18th century house.

The inventory itself presents few problems. The 'fan-handle' listed towards the end is set with emeralds. The 'squabs' mentioned on several occasions can be either couches or cushions, depending upon context. The Esq Waller whose room is referred to is perhaps to be identified with the William Waller who signed the inventory, and he is probably William, the son of Sir William by his second wife, Lady Anne Finch, daughter of the first Earl of Winchilsea. The 'Office of Prizage or Butlerage', listed at the end of the inventory, was clearly a valuable one. It is described by Blackstone⁹ as the right to take two tons of wine from every ship importing into England 20 tons or more. It was a very ancient hereditary duty belonging to the Crown, considerably older than the Customs. It was exchanged during the reign of Edward I for a duty of 2s for every ton imported by merchant strangers and called butlerage because it was paid to the king's butler, an office concerned with the supply of wine to the royal household.

The inventory

The inventory is transcribed in full. Spelling, capitalisation, punctuation and the use of Roman and Arabic numerals have been preserved.

An Inventory of all and Singuler the Goods Chattells and Debts of Sir William Waller late of Osterley Parke in the parish of Heston in the County of Middlesex Knight deceased, Taken and prized the Foureteenth day of December in the year of our Lord God One Thousand Six hundred and Sixty Eight and in the Twentieth year of the Reigne of our Sovereigne Lord Charles the Second of England France and Ireland King Defendor of the Faith etc By Francis Child Thomas Rogers Edward Millington and Henry Beckle as followeth vizt:



Osterley Park in the 17th century. Detail from Moses Glover's map of 1635 (reproduced by permission of His Grace, the Duke of Northumberland)

In the Red Chamber

Inprimis Six peeces of Tapestry hangings one redd cloath bed lined with Crimson sarcenet, one Counterpane one mattrice, and one old downe bed and bolster one paire of blanketts two Carpetts and two Tables, one Couch with ende only, Ten Chaires and Stooles covered with bayes, one little paire of Andirons one paire of Doggs and a paire of bellows with a bedsteed.

45 10 0

Item the passage hanged with stript stuffe 1 5 0

In the blew Velvet Roome

Item eight peeces of old Tapestry hangings one blew Velvet bed, vizt. Curtaines and vallence lined with blew sarcenet, one Counterpane one feather bed and bolster a holland quilt and a paire of blanketts five Chaires and stooles and a blew damaske screene a red squab one paire of Andirons a paire of Doggs and a paire of Tonges shovell and a paire of bellows, window curtaines of blew bayes and rodds two Cushions and a

bedsteed all att

95 0 0

In the little blacke and White Roome

Item the roome hanged with wrought Dimetee, and a wrought bed of the same a feather bed and bolster a bedsted matt and Cord, a rugg and blankett a Table and one Stoole

6 15 0

In the red damaske Roome

Item five peeces of Tapestry hangings of Lanskip, a redd damaske bed with Six Chaires and stooles and Counterpane two pictures one paire of Andirons and a paire of doggs a Table three greene old window Curtaines and rods, the matt in the roome feather bed bolster and blanketts

54 0 0

In the greene Sattin roome and in the dyning Roome

Item eight peeces of Tapestry hangings, one greene old Sattin bed bedsteed and Counterpane, Ten Chaires and Stooles two squabs and foure Cushions, foure Window Curtaines of Bayes and two rodds, five pictures two Carpetts two Tables,

one Couch with ends, fourteene Chaires and Stooles covered with red bayes one paire of Andirons, one paire of doggs one Iron backe fire Shovell and Tongs and a paire of bellowes foure sconces and five window curtaines and rodds

122 10 0

In the matted withdrawing Roome and passage

Item six peeces of Tapestry one black Cabinet, fourteene old greene Chaires and stooles, three window Curtaines and rodds, three pictures a paire of doggs andirons fire shovell and Tongs all att

94 15 0

In the black Velvett Roome

Item eight peeces of Tapestry hangings one black embroydered Velvet bedd lyned with clouded Sarcenet a Counterpane one feather bed and bolster a paire of blanketts, two holland quilts, seaven Chaires and Stooles, and two Cushions one paire of Andirons and a paire of Doggs fire shovell and Tongs and Table a looking glasse window curtaines and rodds and one Carpet

141 10 0

In the painted Callicoe Roome

Item foure Callicoe hangings one bed of the same, one featherbed rugg and two blanketts one Table a stoole and a close-stoole and pan

3 2 0

In the painted long Gallery

Item Twenty foure pictures a Table and a paire of doggs

12 0 0

In the Nursery Roome

Item the hangings about the roome of white wrought Dimitey a bed of the same two bedsteeds, two feather bedds and bolsters, two paire of blanketts and other odd things

6 15 0

In the roome next Esq Wallers Chamber

Item stript hangings to one side of the Roome a Carpett a rugg and other odd things

1 2 0

In the next Roome to Sir Williams where his servants lay

Item some old striped hangings in the Roome, one old redd bed a bedsteed a featherbedd and bolster rugg and a paire of blanketts and other odd things

2 18 0

In the Purple Roome

Item the roome hanged with purple Perpetuana being old and a bed of the same a Screene a Couch and foure Chaires and stooles a feather bed and bolster a Counter paine and a paire of blanketts and other odd things att

6 2 6

In the Maids Chamber

Item, two halfe headed bed steeds, two feather

bedds and bolsters ruggs and blanketts and other odd things

4 17 0

In the great Parlour

Item two Tables and two Turkey-worke Carpetts two old leather Carpetts Twenty Turkey worke Chaires Ten Cushions eleaven pictures a paire of fire grates a paire of fire Shovell and Tongs and a paire of bellowes

18 10 0

In the with drawing Roome within the Parlour

Item Guilt leather hangings about the Roome sixteene greene Cloath Chaires with guilt leather borders one Table and Carpett a paire of Andirons and a paire of Doggs

24 10 0

In the Chappell

Item Seaventeene Turkey worke Chaires two formes and a pulpitt Cushion

3 13 0

In the Still house

Item one old Chest, two Turkey worke Carpetts, one Table, three pewter Stills some glass bottles and some white earthen ware and some other Lumber

3 15 0

In the Hall

Item one Table and a Clocke and a paire of old Andirons

2 15 0

In the Buttery

Item one bin for bread a Cupboard and a glasse Case a Table a napkin presse and a chaire some other Lumber and a Copper Cesterne

3 1 6

In the Cellar

Item five stands one old Candle Chest six butts and Eight hogsheads with basketts and hampers and other Lumber

3 16 0

In the Little Hall

Item one Table and five formes

0 12 0

In the Little Parlour

Item the roome hanged with striped stuffe, three Tables one fyre grate and a paire of Bellowes

1 12 0

In the Kitchen

Item one Jacke weight and Pulleys a fyre grate two fire Shovells Tongs and forke one Racke five spitts one Table and Some other odd things two Iron potts a Cleaver and Chopping Knife

2 2 0

In the Larder

Item one powdering trough two powdering Tubbs one Safe one chopping block and some other Lumber

1 12 0

In the Washouse

Item some Tubbs and boles and halfe tubbs and other Lumber 1 5 0

In the Dayry

Item some boles a Cheese fatt a Cheese presse and some other odd things 1 3 4

In the Wardrobe

Item one Persia Carpet and three Cushions in one Chest, one standard two Carpetts old chaires five Chaires and Stooles with some other old Lumber 10 5 0

Item one Trunck of Diaper and damaske Linnen and sheets and Table linnen and all other linnen in the house 35 13 4

Item one white wrought Counterpane, and some peeces of damaske other odd things and some slippes for a bed 4 12 0

Item one old field bedd and some other old odd things 1 7 6

In the red Roome in the Third Story

Item the roome hanged with red broad bayes a red bed a bedsted feather bed and bolster Rugg and a paire of blanketts one stoole one skreene and a paire of Doggs and other Lumber 7 16 0

In the maides Chamber in the Upper Gallery

Item one bedsted featherbed and bolster blanket and rugg and stript stuffe about the bed and three old Chaires 3 14 0

In the roome where Mrs Mary and Mrs Hester lay

Item grey bayes hangings about the Roome, one grey stuffe bed a bedsted eight Chaires and stooles a window rodd Table and Carpet and a paire of doggs 12 10 0

In the Chaplins Chamber

Item one bedsted with striped curtaines and feather bedd and bolster rugg and a paire of blanketts and some old Chaires and stooles and other odd thinges 3 10 0

In another red Chamber

Item red linsy Woolsey hangings about the roome one old red cloath bed and bedsted three Chaires and stooles a Table and Carpett a featherbed and bolster and a paire of blanketts 10 2 6

In an Inward roome in the Gallery

Item one bedsted a feather bed and bolster and a paire of blanketts 2 17 0

In the wainscott Roome

Item one paire of old greene Purpetuana Curtaines and vallence a feather bedd and bolster a Rugg and blanketts, fower Stooles a Table and Carpett 4 10 0

In the Falconers roome

Item one paire of olde greene Curtaines and vallence a bedsted and feather bed a bolster and a paire of blanketts and some other odd things 2 17 0

In the Cookes Roome

Item one paire of striped curtaines and vallence one bedsted and feather bed and bolster a paire of blanketts a Covered a Table a Carpett and three Chaires 4 15 0

In the Landry

Item one Table a Stoole a fyre iron and a paire of bellowes and other odd thinges 0 12 0

In the Linnen Roome

Item one Truncke and a Chest, two Hampers, and other Lumber 0 6 8

Item one Fan-handle sett with Emrodds and fower Emrodd dropps, a small Cristall looking glasse one gould ring a braslett of seed pearle and Cornelian a bracelett of Philosophers stone and two dropps for Pendants 38 0 0

Item foure hundred Thirty five ounces and halfe of white Plate att five shillings per ounce 108 17 6

In Sir Williams Studdy

Item one Table and Carpett a nest with drawers three little Cabinetts a Chaire and a Stoole and shelves about the roome and other odd things 2 10 8

Item Two hundred forty two pounds of pewter fine and course att 8d. per pound 8 17 4

Item a small Copper seaven small brasse panns three skilletts seaven small brasse pans two sawce pans and seaven old little patty pans 2 2 6

In the Coachmans Roome

Item two halfe headed bed steeds matts and Cords two flocke beds and bolsters, two ruggs and two paire of blanketts 1 10 0

Item the Coach and Seaven horses with their harnes 43 0 0

Item the Carte and plowes and Cart harnesse 3 10 0

Item two old Cowes 3 10 0

Item two naggs and an old mare	5 10 0	
Item the swine	4 10 0	
Item the hey and Corne	60 0 0	
Item the Coale	4 10 0	
Item the Copper and vessells in the Brewhouse	11 15 0	
Item the Bookes in the Library	90 0 0	
Suma totalis hujus Inventarij (1151 5s 6d in fact 1159 19s 4d)	MCLi 5 6	
Also a small Silver hand candlestick omitted in the Inventory valued att	40s	
Also Rents due to the deceased att his death about	100	
Sum	102	
Also the Office of Prizage and Butlerage for Forty yeares ensueing the decease of the Testator valued Communibus annis to the yearly summe of Fifteene hundred pounds.		
Will.Waller		
(Total of the inventory £2761 19s 4d including the office)		

NOTES

¹ M Tomlin, 'The 1782 Inventory of Osterley Park', *Furniture History*, 22, (1986), 107-134

² J Norden, *Speculum Britanniae: the first part, an historical and chorographical description of Middlesex*, (1598)

³ The basic facts of the history of Osterley are given in *Osterley Park*, first published by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1972 and subsequent editions

⁴ The inventory is in the Public Record Office, PROB 5. 2019

⁵ The house was briefly described in 'Osterley before Adam, how it looked in the 17th century' by James Yorke, *Country Life*, 183 (14 Sept 1989), 220-222

⁶ For this practice see my own 'The Ipswich Probate Inventories, 1583-1631', *Suffolk Records Society*, Vol 22, (1981), p 1

⁷ PCC 1669, 78. Now Public Record Office PROB 11, microfilm reel no.330, f 168

⁸ Reproduced in J Yorke, *op cit* The original is in the possession of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland at Syon House, Middlesex. It appears to be the only extant view of Osterley before the mid-eighteenth century alterations. The earliest views of Osterley listed in J Harris, *A Country House Index. An index to over 2000 country houses illustrated in 107 books of country views published 1715-1872*, (2nd ed, 1979), are of 1779 and c. 1788. A water colour by Anthony Devis (1729-1817) in the Toledo Museum of Art, USA, is reproduced in the Victoria and Albert Museum Guide mentioned in note 3

⁹ W Blackstone, *Commentaries upon the Laws of England I*, (1765), p 315