



# High Weald Hero Activity Card

## Artists in the High Weald Landscape - A Case study



### Famous Artist who was inspired by the High Weald landscape

George Smart was born in 1774 and died a pauper in Frant, Sussex in 1846.

During these years he served as a soldier, worked as a tailor, was married and raised a daughter. He also created unique artworks that are recognised as hugely important within the idiom of English Folk Art.

Smart's most popular subjects are the characters Old Bright, The Postman and The Goosewoman. These were real people, not inventions - locals he would have seen passing his shop window in Frant everyday - and his backgrounds depict landscape features you can see in the area today.



Smart's fabric collage pictures and standing animal figures were popular souvenirs for early 19th century tourists. A book dedicated to his work was released in 2016 - *George Smart the Tailor of Frant - Artist in Cloth and Velvet Figures* by Jonathan Christie.

In 2014 the spotlight finally fell on George Smart when 21 works, by him, appeared in the Folk Art exhibition at Tate Britain, London. His work is also now celebrated in Tunbridge Wells Museum where there is a collection of his work including *The Felt-covered Blackbird Model* (circa 1840). This is an extremely rare surviving example of a 'dummy board' (a flat painting mounted on wood in a realistic style and then cut and shaped to resemble a person, animal or object).



The use of fabrics in art can easily be translated into classroom activities. Children from Speldhurst Primary School ventured out on their Welly Walk and here are some examples of how the landscape combined with George Smart's artist style inspired them. Please see *Artworkshop Pack*.

