

# Unravelling Uppark

Over the last three years, Unravelling the National Trust has offered artists and makers the opportunity to produce and exhibit new work against the stunning backdrop of three National Trust properties, evoking histories, stories and a sense of place. The project launched in 2012 at Nymans House and Gardens in Sussex, continued at the Vyne in Hampshire and culminates in 2014 with the final exhibition (on show until November 2) at Uppark House and Gardens in West Sussex.

This year's chosen artists have created site-specific works referencing Uppark's intriguing history and echoing elements from its significant collections of ceramics, textiles, plasterwork, silver and furniture.

Uppark was built in 1690 by Ford Grey, the first Earl of Tankerville. An ardent Protestant, the earldom was bestowed upon him by William of Orange for plotting against the Catholic James II. Grey honoured his title by building Uppark in the Anglo-Dutch style. In 1747, Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh bought the property after inheriting a fortune made from wine and coal trading. Together with his wife Sarah they redecorated the house extensively and established most of the existing collection. Their only son Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh inherited Uppark in 1774 and further contributed to his parents' collection by acquiring French furniture and ceramics.

Sir Harry was something of a wild child. He was a close friend of the Prince Regent and his entourage included Emma Hart (the future Lady Hamilton, best remembered as Lord Nelson's lover), who allegedly once danced naked on Uppark's dining table. Middle-age saw Sir Harry become something of a recluse but in 1825, the then 70 year old scandalized society by marrying Mary Ann Bullock, his 20-year-old dairymaid.

Another interesting resident of the house was influential science fiction author HG Wells, who spent part of his boyhood there whilst his mother was housekeeper. Uppark's tunnels are said to bear a strong resemblance to the underpasses in his novel *The Time Machine*. Inspired by Wells' novels, Helen Felcey and Alice Kettle have produced an installation called *The House of Eloi*.

Other participating artists with work on show are Steven Follen, Zoë Hillyard, Jini Rawlings, Robert Cooper, Gen Doy, Matt Smith, Agnes Jones, Caitlin Heffernan and Stella Harding, Andrew Burton and Simon Ryder.

[www.unravelled.org.uk](http://www.unravelled.org.uk)



Clockwise from above: *The House of Eloi* by Helen Felcey and Alice Kettle  
*In the Red Drawing Room* by Zoë Hillyard

*The Lost Buckets* by Matt Smith  
*lo and Euthenia* by Agnes Jones  
Caitlin Heffernan's *Remnants*  
Uppark House and Gardens  
Photography: Jim Stephenson

