

Painting of German wartime surrender is sold for £60,000

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A painting depicting the German surrender at the end of the Second World War was sold for an astonishing £60,000 at auction in Stansted yesterday (Tuesday) – four to six times its expected price.

The picture, which features a British Army intelligence officer whose son lives locally, had been expected to fetch £10,000 to £15,000.

Terence Cuneo's masterful rendition of a famous news photo of the momentous wartime event was part of Sworders' modern and contemporary art sale on Tuesday.

On May 4, 1945, a German delegation arrived at the headquarters of British Field Marshal Bernard "Monty" Montgomery at Lüneburg Heath, east of Hamburg.

They signed an instrument of unconditional surrender of the Nazi forces – four days before VE (Victory in Europe) Day on May 8, the 80th anniversary of which will be celebrated next month.

The story goes that Monty regretted

the absence of an official war artist at the meeting and later approved suggestions that Cuneo, who was the official artist for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, might recreate the scene from a few photos that were taken.

While the artist preferred to work from life drawings, he agreed the commission in 1968 and finished it in February the following year. It is said that Monty was delighted with the result.

Originally, the oil on canvas was intended for display in the restaurant of Fortnum & Mason, but instead it stayed with the publisher, James Haworth & Brother.

Avid art buyer David McCleave bought it directly from a member of the Haworth family in 2006. It comes for sale from his collection.

Following news of the picture's sale, local resident Peter Murphy contacted Sworders to say that his father is in the picture.

Intelligence officer Lt Col Louis Michael Murphy, known as Spud to his fellow soldiers, is the figure standing at the back in full uniform with a red ribbon on his hat.



Terence Cuneo's painting depicting the German surrender at Lüneburg Heath on May 4, 1945, was auctioned at Sworders yesterday

Peter Murphy has a photo of the scene that he bought from Sworders some years ago – but regrets that the painting may be beyond his means.

Trio arrested over £23,000 airport items

A Takeley man was among three arrested after goods worth £23,000 were recovered as part of an ongoing operation to target theft at Stansted Airport.

In March, officers in the airport's neighbourhood policing team from Essex Police received reports of thefts of perfume and tobacco.

Following several lines of enquiry and building up an intelligence picture of the offences, officers were able to identify when the next thefts were expected to take place. Early on Monday last week (April 7) they arrested three suspects.

A 33-year-old man from Takeley and two other men, aged 41 and 33, from Braintree were arrested on suspicion of theft. They have been released on police bail pending further enquiries.

In addition to tobacco, cigarettes and perfume worth £9,000 found in the trio's possession, searches of the men's addresses yielded another £14,000 of goods believed to be stolen.

A total of 432 packets of cigarettes, 311 pouches of tobacco and 27 bottles of perfume were recovered, as well as £1,000 in cash at one of the addresses.

Inspector Tom Stokes said: "This is a huge volume of stolen goods kept out of criminals' hands."



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