

Poodle in a punt

'Poodle in a punt' is a painting by Stubbs. It is known to have been in Ashton Court at some point, but was not there at the time of the 1947 sale.



Image: Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Esme was known to have disposed of some paintings in 1930. She gave the portraits of Dame Emily and the Hon. Gilbert Irby to the Bristol Art Gallery. The portrait "Two Ladies of the Lake Family" was sold to Messrs Duit and it was eventually acquired by the Tate Gallery.

Distant relatives, the Smyth-Pigotts, who had a similar collection of portraits disposed of some of theirs when times were hard.

'Poodle in a punt' is not specifically mentioned in the 1901 or 1915 inventories although it may have fallen into the '*various paintings*' category, and it was not in 1947 sale catalogue.

'Poodle in a punt' is now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Judy Egerton author of *George Stubbs, painter : catalogue raisonnee* (1984) gives the painting a date of 1780 and provenance as follows:

'; Mrs Esme Smyth, Ashton Court, near Bristol Somerset; Lord de Mauley, sold Christies 8 July 1949 (131), bt. F.T. Sabin; 21st Earl of Shrewsbury and Winterford, Ingestre Hall, Staffordshire, 1951, sold Sothebys 23 March 1960 (63, repr.) bt. Colnaghi for Mr Paul Mellon K.B.E.'

The Illustrated London News of the 30th of April 1960 reported that 'Poodle in a punt' was:

' ... sold recently at auction in London by Lord Shrewsbury for the astonishing figure of £17,000'.

The Birmingham Daily Post of 24th of March 1960 also commented:

'What was more astonishing to me was to watch the bidding for the Earl of Shrewsbury's Stubbs portrait of a poodle in a punt (a delightful woolly dog looking very much like a clerical schoolmaster of mine) soar up to £17,000, delightful painting through this was – and sold not so many years ago for £500 or £600'.