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Wartime role of Hollywood star is cast again

An evocative sculpture capturing Norfolk's wartime link to a Hollywood legend has become the centrepiece of an artistic new venture in Burnham Market.

Tanner and Lawson is a gallery and "art café" which opened earlier this month in the renovated Old Forge on North Street, due for an official launch in October.

Among the craftsmanship on display is a sculpture named Jimmy, a collaboration between London-based artist Nina Mae Fowler and Tim Hannam of the Bronzecraft foundry in Attleborough.

It recreates a famous photograph of James Stewart taken at Old Buckenham airfield in 1944, when the actor was serving with the 453rd Bomb Group. He is depicted sitting on the railings of the control tower, watching for his crew's safe return.

The photograph was taken just 10 miles from the Attleborough foundry where the £7,900 model was cast in aluminium, including some melted-down parts of a Second World War aircraft.

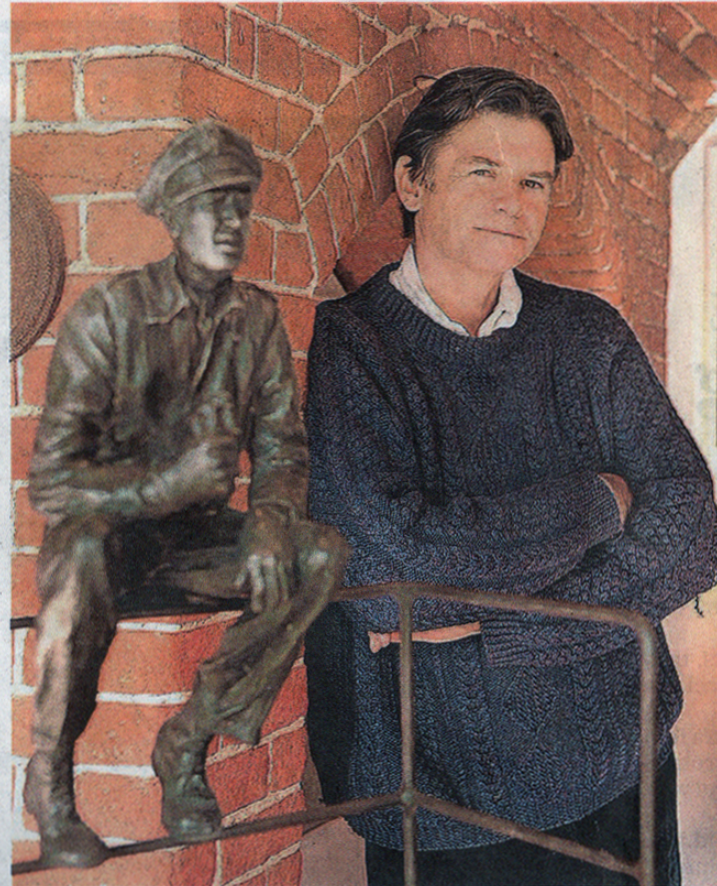
Chris Hill

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Richard Swallow, who runs Tanner and Lawson with John Tanner, said: "As soon as I saw this piece I thought: 'There's a great story here which local people will want to hear'. Nina has big Norfolk connections and her parents live not far from here.

"The price is down to the reputation of the artist and the quality of the piece. The craftsmanship is outstanding and it is beautifully-made. But art is not just about having a pretty thing on the wall. It is the story behind it that makes it so compelling and interesting. It is like watching a movie – it could be beautifully shot, but if there is no story behind it, you won't get it."

Mr Swallow had previously run an art gallery in London with Mr Tanner, but as they had strong links to Norfolk and many of their customers were in the county, they decided to relocate. He said: "I have lived in Norfolk for 27 years, and I've worked



■ Above, Richard Swallow at Tanner and Lawson in Burnham Market with the sculpture of James Stewart. Right, James Stewart pictured on the old control tower railings at Old Buckenham airfield.

Main picture: IAN BURT

both here and in London. And I can tell you the people coming in here are similar to those you might get in the West End.

"I wouldn't describe it as an art gallery because that sounds so elitist.

I like the term 'art cafe'. It is a place where people can sit and have a cup of coffee and have a natter and look at beautiful British craftsmanship.

"We want to celebrate beautifully-made things, whether that's paint-

ings, leatherware, pottery or sculpture."

■ Are you embarking on a new business venture? Contact chris.hill@archant.co.uk