JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

“A country family picking their own hops”

GEORGE SMITH Of Chichester

£ POA



REF: 374881

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Description

London, England

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GEORGE SMITH of Chichester 1714-1776English School“A country family picking their own hops”Oil on canvas, signed 42.6 x 62.6 cms163/4 x 245/8 insOverall framed size 55.3 x 73.5 cms 213/4 x 29

Exhibited: London, Free Society of Artists, 1761, no. 23, as A country family picking their own hopsThe Fine Art Society, London, 1964, no. 788.Provenance: Collection of Baron Sir Henry de Bath (1823 - 1907)His estate sale; Sotheby's, London, 13th May 1931The Fine Art Society, London, 1964, no. 788,Literature: A Catalogue of the Paintings, Sculptures, Models, Drawings, Engravings, &c. Now exhibiting in the Great Room belonging to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce in the Strand, London, 1761, p. 4, no. 23. The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and the Nottingham City Museum each have a painting in their collection by William Pether (1713-1819) bearing the title: The three Smiths, Brothers and Painters, Natives of Chichester, aka George, John and William Smith of Chichester. All three brothers were talented artists who specialised mainly in landscapes and were popular with collectors in their lifetimes. M H Grant writes that George sold more landscapes in his lifetime than Richard Wilson and Thomas Gainsborough combined and that “Fashion placed him in the front rank…”George is the best known and was the most skilful of the trio and his landscapes included Arcadian scenes rather in the manner of Claude Lorrain and pastoral and wooded scenes that reflect the influence of the leading 17th Dutch masters Meindert Hobbema, Jan Wijnants and Jacob Ruisdael. By the mid-eighteenth century, with a burgeoning middle class with an interest in collecting art, there was a shift in taste away from topographical scenes and an appreciation for more naturalism in art. The ensuing rediscovery of the Dutch masters coincided with George Smith and his brothers’ portrayal of well-executed and pleasing scenes of rural life.George was the second eldest son of a family of five. There were three boys with the eldest brother William Jnr, born in 1707, who went on to work as a portrait painter as well as a landscapist, and his younger brother John who was born in 1717 and produced landscapes, sometimes in collaboration with George. There were also two sisters, Elizabeth and Sarah. Their parents, who had married at West Chiltington in 1705, were William Smith, who was a cooper involved in making barrels, buckets and wooden casks but later became a baker and Elizabeth, née Spencer, who was the daughter of a butcher from Horsham.William Smith Jnr., although producing some landscapes and still-lifes, had set out to become a portrait painter and his work had impressed the 2nd Duke of Richmond who enabled him to study in London at the studio of a portrait painter in St. Martin’s Lane. George had been intended to continue his father’s trade as a cooper and was apprenticed to an uncle but did not find it to his liking and went to London to study with his older brother. George’s initial training was as ...

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