

RICHARD GREEN

JOHN SMELLIE

1886 – Glasgow - 1925

Ref: CB 145

On the Clyde



Signed lower right: *John Smellie*

Oil on canvas: 20 x 26 in / 50.8 x 66 cm

Frame size: 26 ¼ x 32 ¼ in / 66.7 x 81.9 cm

Painted *circa* 1920



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Provenance:

Private collection, UK, purchased 1942-43;
by descent in a private collection, UK

Painted *circa* 1920

This painting captures the sparkling light of long, northern summer days and the fresh breeze as the ship steams into the western horizon. Smellie is a subtle colourist, employing a palette of soft blues and greys enlivened with touches of plum and mustard in the holidaymakers' clothes. Brighter tones halo the figures against the strong sunshine. The atmosphere is of leisure and stylish sophistication, while the powerful diagonals of the boat's deck give a sense of forward movement. Smellie would sketch his family on day trips and holidays 'doon the watter'. The principal figure is his sister Mary, his favourite model.

Influenced by the elegant, fluid Post-Impressionism of Sir John Lavery (1856-1941), he painted views of summers on the West Coast of Scotland, particularly Largs, Millport, Tarbert and Hunter's Quay, all bustling resorts in their 1920s heyday. Smellie exhibited extensively at the Royal Glasgow Institute, The Royal Scottish Academy and the Paisley Art Institute between 1909 and 1925. In 1923 he was elected a member of the Glasgow Art Club and in 1925 won a prize for the best picture by a younger member. His obituary in *The Herald* in July 1925 described him as a 'young artist of great ability and promise, a refined and sensitive colourist and master of technique'.