

RICHARD GREEN

WILFRID DE GLEHN RA NEAC RP

London 1870 - 1951 Stratford Tony, nr. Salisbury

Ref: CD 234

The Merry Month of May, Stratford Tony



Signed lower right: *W G de Glehn*
Oil on canvas: 25 ¼ x 30 in / 64.1 x 76.2 cm
Frame size: 33 x 38 in / 83.8 x 96.5 cm
Painted *circa* 1940s



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FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

Provenance:

Christie's London, 3rd March 1989, lot 61;
David Messum, London;
Private collection, Gloucestershire

Wilfrid de Glehn's success in the suggestion of sunlight through paint, and his particular talent for portraying women with a freshness of pose and expression is exemplified by his wonderful Spring landscape, *The Merry Month of May, Stratford Tony*. In her biography of De Glehn, Laura Wortley writes of the location, 'Surrounded by lawns and herbaceous borders it was the sort of house which Wilfrid had told Rachel [his sister] he would never be able to afford and its situation in a tiny hamlet boasting only a church and few cottages was in complete contrast to the sophistication of Cheyne Walk. Amusingly, one of its chief attractions for Wilfrid was that a small trout stream, the Ebble, ran along the edge of the garden.'¹

A painter of portraits, nude studies and landscapes, and an occasional designer of stained glass, the strikingly naturalised style of Wilfrid de Glehn represents a most important contribution to Impressionist painting in England.

Born in London, de Glehn first studied at the Royal College of Art. He then went to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris and studied under E Delaunay and Gustav Moreau. During the 1890s he visited America and was introduced to John Singer Sargent, whom he assisted with the murals for the Boston Public Library. In 1904 he married Jane Emmet, an artist in her own right, known primarily for her portrait drawings. They then moved to London and took a home at 73 Cheyne Walk. During the First World War de Glehn served on the Italian front, and in 1941, following the destruction of their house during the Blitz, Wilfrid and Jane moved finally to the Manor House in Stratford Tony, where he spent the rest of his life.

Stylistically, de Glehn's virtuosity and handling of paint, his use of thick impasto and the high key of his colour, reflect the influence of his close friend and colleague Sargent, whom the de Glehns frequently accompanied on sketching tours abroad. De Glehn travelled extensively during his lifetime, visiting Italy, France and America on many occasions, and achieving considerable international acclaim.

He exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Paris Salon and the Galerie Durand-Ruel. His first one-man show at the Carfax Gallery in 1908 was followed by exhibitions at the Goupil Gallery and Knoedler's. De Glehn became a member of the New English Art Club in 1900 and a Royal Academician in 1932.

¹ Laura Wortley, *Wilfrid de Glehn: A Painter's Journey*, The Studio Fine Art Publications, London 1989, p.72.