

For Immediate Release  
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**CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER L.S. LOWRY'S 1935 CLASSIC  
*A MARKET PLACE, BERWICK-UPON-TWEED* IN MAY 2009**

- Acquired in 1945 for 30gns, it will be offered at auction for the first time



**20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art**

**Thursday, 21 May 2009 at 2.00pm**

**London** – Christie's announce the sale of *A Market Place, Berwick-upon-Tweed*, 1935, by Laurence Stephen Lowry, R.A. (1887-1976), which will lead the auction of *20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art* on Thursday, 21 May 2009 (estimate: £300,000-500,000). This classic work by the artist is completely fresh to the market, having been acquired directly from Lowry's agent, the Lefevre Gallery, London, in 1945 for 30gns, by Henry Morris, Chief Education Officer of Cambridgeshire County Council. It is now being offered for sale by *The Cambridgeshire Schools' Art Collection* of Cambridgeshire County Council in order to raise necessary funds which will safeguard the cultural programme.

**Rachel Hilderley, Christie's International Specialist and Director, 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art:**

*"This is a wonderful example of a top quality work by one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's most popular artists. The painting is a classic street scene by L.S. Lowry, painted during the golden, middle years of his career, and depicts the town of Berwick upon Tweed, just before the Second World War. The picture has a joyful appeal, showing a bright and bustling street with Lowry figures going about their daily business. With its unbroken primary source provenance, and excellent original condition, this is a highly desirable work of art."*

**Councillor David Harty, Cambridgeshire County Council Cabinet Member for Learning:**

*"I am very excited about this sale. The painting was a shrewd investment by Henry Morris on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council more than 60 years ago, and we believe the time is now right to sell it. All the money raised will go towards the Cambridgeshire Culture programme, to support the cultural experiences of children and young people."*

The 1930s and 1940s are recognized as the greatest period in Lowry's oeuvre, when his vision was strongest. Dating to 1935, this signed oil on panel depicting the Market Place in Berwick-upon-Tweed was executed when the artist was advised by his doctor to go to Berwick for the quality of air; as a respite from

looking after his ailing mother. As the colourful, dynamic palette of this work reflects, Lowry loved the market town - so much so that after his mother's death he actually considered moving there.

Bustling with life, the larger figures in the foreground are characteristic of Lowry's works from this period. The joyful use of reds and blues dotted throughout the figures, in to the evocative houses and up to the thick impastoed sky add further vibrancy. Not one but three of his famous, mischievous dogs scamper through the scene. This is one of Lowry's most 'directional' works, with the perspective drawing the eye through what is known as Marygate to the statuesque Town Hall; a view which is largely unchanged 74 years on in 2009. As with the best of Lowry's paintings, this picture presents the viewer with a multiple of shared and private moments. Intriguing vignettes include the figures descending the Town Hall steps, which some of the passers-by appear to be watching with interest. Lowry powerfully controls and portrays a natural human characteristic: curiosity – that of the viewer and his subjects.

This painting has been exhibited at Cambridge, Magdalene Street Gallery, *Lowry Loan Exhibition*, April - May 1967 and Salford Quays, *The Lowry*, on loan, 2003 – 2009, where it has been enjoyed by an international audience. It was also used as the illustration on the back cover of Shelley Rohde's 2007 book *L.S. Lowry: A Life*.

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Images available on request  
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## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

### **Sale date:**

#### **20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art:**

Thursday, 21 May 2009 at 2.00pm: Christie's King Street, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT

### **Public Viewing dates**

**Dublin:** The Merrion Hotel, Dublin on 23 and 24 April 2008 (part of season highlights on tour)

**London:** Christie's King Street, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT: Sunday 17 May to Wednesday, 20 May 2009

### **About Cambridgeshire Culture and Cambridgeshire Schools Art Collection:**

Cambridgeshire Culture is a steering group made up of officers and members from all political parties, its aim is to encourage all schools to sign up to a culture guarantee. This painting is owned by The Cambridgeshire Schools Art Collection which is part of Cambridgeshire Culture, which is part of Cambridgeshire County Council. The decision to sell was made by Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet in October 2006. The work is being sold to raise money to support cultural activities across the county, such as the visual and performing arts, film and media, literature, sport and heritage. A limited number of prints have been produced for schools, courtesy of the Lowry Estate. The money to buy the painting in 1945 was donated for cultural purposes, therefore any proceeds from the sale must be used for the same purposes. Cambridgeshire County Council did sell some other original works of art in its ownership in 2006, but this Lowry is the last work that is planned to be sold. Other prints and paintings in the collection are on loan to Cambridgeshire schools. ***For more information please contact:***

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### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2008 that totaled £2.8 billion/\$5.1 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 57 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.