

Beatrix Potter
Drawn to Nature

FEBRUARY 23 TO JUNE 9, 2024

LARGE PRINT LABELS

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Morgan
Library &
Museum

Beatrix Potter with her dog Spot, ca. 1880–81.

V&A: BP 405, Linder Bequest LB 378. Photo: © Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Spring, the Nuttery (garden), Harescombe Grange,
Gloucestershire, ca. 1903**

Watercolor and pen and ink

**V&A: LC 4/A/1, given by the Linder Collection. Photo:
Courtesy of Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd. © Victoria & Albert
Museum, London.**

**Beatrix Potter, May 1913. Photo: Charles G. Y. King.
NPG P1825. © National Portrait Gallery, London.
Reproduced by permission of Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd.**

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943), *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* (1904), page 53. The Morgan Library & Museum; PML 87744. Photo: Carmen González Fraile. © Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 1904, 2002.

TOWN HOUSE

Beatrix was born in Kensington, London, on July 28, 1866, to Rupert Potter, a lawyer, and Helen Potter (née Leech), who came from a merchant family in the north of England. Their London home, 2 Bolton Gardens, was a five-floor town house situated in a neighborhood favored by upper-middle-class professionals. Each home featured a front yard and rear garden, as well as a horse stable. A house inventory from 1914 documented the Potters' taste for decor, which mingled Japanese lacquer furniture with English Wedgwood ceramics—the black basalt vase features in one of Beatrix's still-life drawings, drafted when she was thirteen.

Wedgwood (est. 1759)

Potpourri vase, 1800

Jasperware ceramic

Vase, 1871

Black basalt

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

BEATRIX POTTER, YOUNG ARTIST

The contents of the Potter family's town house at 2 Bolton Gardens offered Beatrix numerous sources of inspiration and models for early artworks. Pieces by Victorian artists hung on the walls, and she sometimes depicted the home's decor in drawings, studying it closely to master the texture of different materials. Stone and glass feature in this still life, made when Beatrix was thirteen years old. Copying such intricate detail—seen in her rendering of the handles and decorative drapery around the vase—would become a hallmark of her artistry.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Still life of black basalt vase and glass tumbler,

December 1879

Chalk and graphite

V&A: LC 1/B/1, Given by the Linder Collection

IN TOWN

FAMILY PHOTOS

Rupert Potter was an amateur photographer, and his daughter was his favorite model. This page shows Beatrix around age ten, with her parents (*top left* and *center right*) and her younger brother, Bertram. Beatrix was naturally shy, but her confident attitude in front of the camera is evident in these portraits.

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

Family photograph album, 1868–86

Albumen prints

V&A: AAD/2006/4/459, Given by Joan Duke

MEET THE GRANDPARENTS

Beatrix was fond of her grandparents and idolized her grandmother Jessy Potter for her strong character and lively temperament. In Derbyshire, Beatrix's grandfather Edmund Potter made his fortune in calico printing—fabrics from his company are seen here. He later helped to found the Manchester School of Design. Beatrix never knew her other grandfather, John Leech, who also obtained his wealth through trade and who built a large mansion called Gorse Hall, where her mother, Helen Leech, grew up.

Dinting Vale Print Works (act. 1825–1990s)

Sample book of dye-printed cottons, 1848–63

V&A: T.398-1972

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

View from Bolton Gardens, London, October 1889

Photo: © Victoria & Albert Museum, London

MEET THE FAMILY

The Potter family were all artistic. As a student, Rupert filled sketchbooks with drawings from nature and illustrations, including the one shown here featuring a nature study and an illustration of Mother Hubbard's dog. Helen enjoyed drawing (a landscape she created at Gorse Hall as a young woman is shown above). Beatrix's younger brother, Bertram, became an etcher and landscape painter and occasionally exhibited his work at the Royal Academy until about 1906, when he settled as a farmer in the region around the Anglo-Scottish border.

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

Sketchbook, inscribed September 1, 1853

Pen and ink

Bertram Potter holding one of his paintings at Lingholm, Keswick, October 1901

Albumen print

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.782 and BP.1534

CREATIVITY AT HOME

Rupert and Helen Potter shared their love of nature and art with their children. The children and their father copied animals from instructional drawing books or Jemima Blackburn's prints of birds, sometimes transferring their images onto ceramics. In 1876, on her tenth birthday, Beatrix received a beautifully bound copy of Blackburn's *Birds Drawn from Nature* (1868). She adored the book and remembered dancing around the house with it.

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

Plate with blue tit, ca. 1870–80

Transfer print on ceramic plate

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Trivet with rabbits, February 1881

Transfer print on ceramic tile

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Helen Leech (1839–1932)

Newton from near Tower, Gorse Hall, ca. 1850–60

Sepia ink, wash, and graphite

V&A: AAD/2006/4/415, Given by Joan Duke

INSPIRED BY ART

INSPIRED BY ART

The walls of 2 Bolton Gardens were decorated with landscapes and still lifes, like the bird's nest painting by William Henry Hunt, which Helen acquired before she married. Rupert bought drawings by Randolph Caldecott, the prominent children's book illustrator and namesake of the Caldecott Medal, awarded from 1938 to the "most distinguished American picture book for children." These works were displayed in the drawing room and inspired Beatrix, who described Caldecott as an "immortal."

Close to the Potters' home lived the painter John Everett Millais, whom young Beatrix would visit with her father. She remembered that the artist gave her "the kindest encouragement," telling her, "plenty of people can draw, but you . . . have observation."

William Henry Hunt (1790–1864)

***Bird's Nest and Blossom*, ca. 1850**

Watercolor and gouache

Manchester Art Gallery

Randolph Caldecott (1846–1886)

Sketch for *A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go*, 1883

Pen and ink, white heightening, and graphite

Manchester Art Gallery

John Everett Millais (1829–1896)

***The Eve of St. Agnes*, ca. 1863**

Pen and ink

V&A: D.141-1906

SECRET DIARY

From her teenage years onward, Beatrix kept a diary in code, which provides glimpses into her home life and shows her honing her storytelling skills. On this page, expressing mild disappointment at having been away from home during an earthquake, she added sarcastically (tenth line from the bottom) the quote reproduced on the wall. Beatrix and her mother were increasingly at odds during these years, as recorded in the diary's encrypted entries.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Journal written in code, showing entries for March 31–
April 29, 1884**

Ink and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Andrew Finlay Mackenzie (1846–1940)

Studio portrait of Beatrix Potter, ca. 1892

Albumen print on gilt-edged, lithographed card

V&A: AAD/2006/4/472, Given by Joan Duke

ART STUDY

ART STUDY

Beatrix's parents encouraged her artistic talent by arranging private lessons. From the age of twelve, she learned "freehand, model, geometry, perspective and a little water-colour flower painting" from Miss Cameron. The art historian and family friend Lady Elizabeth Eastlake introduced her to a professional artist, "Mrs A," for lessons in oil painting, but Beatrix disliked the medium and continued using watercolors. In one of the examples shown here, Japanese netsuke masks nestle among shells and seaweed.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Still life of pomegranates and a vase, November 1881

**Still life of shells, seaweed, and Japanese netsuke masks,
ca. 1885**

Watercolor and graphite

**V&A: LC 10/B/5 and LC 16/A/5, Given by the Linder
Collection**

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Portfolio covered in fabrics from Edmund Potter's printworks,
ca. 1900**

Dye-printed cotton patchwork and card

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1571(xviii)

BUDDING ARTIST

This sketchbook helps document which books Beatrix read and copied. It includes copies from printed illustrations and drawings of wildlife and flowers from nature. She was aware of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by the age of twelve, as evinced by her drawing of the three witches in Birnam Wood. She also liked sewing and used fabrics from her grandfather's calico printworks to make patchwork portfolios in which to keep her artworks.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Sketchbook, showing pages from May–November 1876

Watercolor, ink, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.743



Beatrix Potter (1866–1943), *The Three Witches of Birnam Wood*, 1878. Watercolor over graphite. Cotsen's Children's Library, Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 33207.

EARLY SKETCHBOOKS

Beatrix and her brother, Bertram, filled sketchbooks from a young age. Beatrix's "irresistible desire to copy" began early in life. She used this sketchbook when she was nine to reproduce others' illustrations and landscapes, as well as to draw flowers. The page shown here includes Beatrix's first known imaginative illustration, featuring hares who ice skate and battle with umbrellas in the windy weather.

Bertram Potter (1872–1918)

Sketchbook, ca. 1879–80

Graphite and crayon

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Sketchbook, page dated March 19–21, 1876

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.787 and BP.741

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

Beatrix and Bertram Potter with their governess

Miss Davidson, ca. 1878

Cotsen Children's Library, Special Collections,

Princeton University Library, 100005.178

NEAR TO HOME

NEAR TO HOME

The Round Pond in Kensington Gardens and the zoo in Regent's Park were close enough to home for Beatrix to visit with her governesses Madeline Davidson and Florrie Hammond. The zoo continued to inspire her as she grew older, and she increasingly visited the museums on her doorstep. Between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, Beatrix took exams at the art schools attached to the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria & Albert Museum). She also frequented the Natural History Museum (then a branch of the British Museum) after it opened in 1881.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Terrapin, probably drawn at London Zoo, ca. 1905

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

Frieze, probably from a plaster cast at the South Kensington Museum, June 1882

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: LC 19/A/4, Given by the Linder Collection; and Linder Bequest BP.222

DRAWING THE PAST

In her twenties and thirties, Beatrix expanded her interests to include antiquities. She was fascinated by the finds from prominent archaeological excavations that she saw exhibited in London. New construction work in the city was also unearthing remnants of its Roman past, and Beatrix borrowed artifacts to draw. The shoe rendered in her (by then) realistic miniaturist style came from Pickle Herring Street, a now-demolished area south of the River Thames.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Sole of a nail-studded Roman shoe, March 1895

**Roman cosmetic utensils found in Bucklersbury, London,
ca. 1894**

Watercolor and graphite

The Armitt Trust

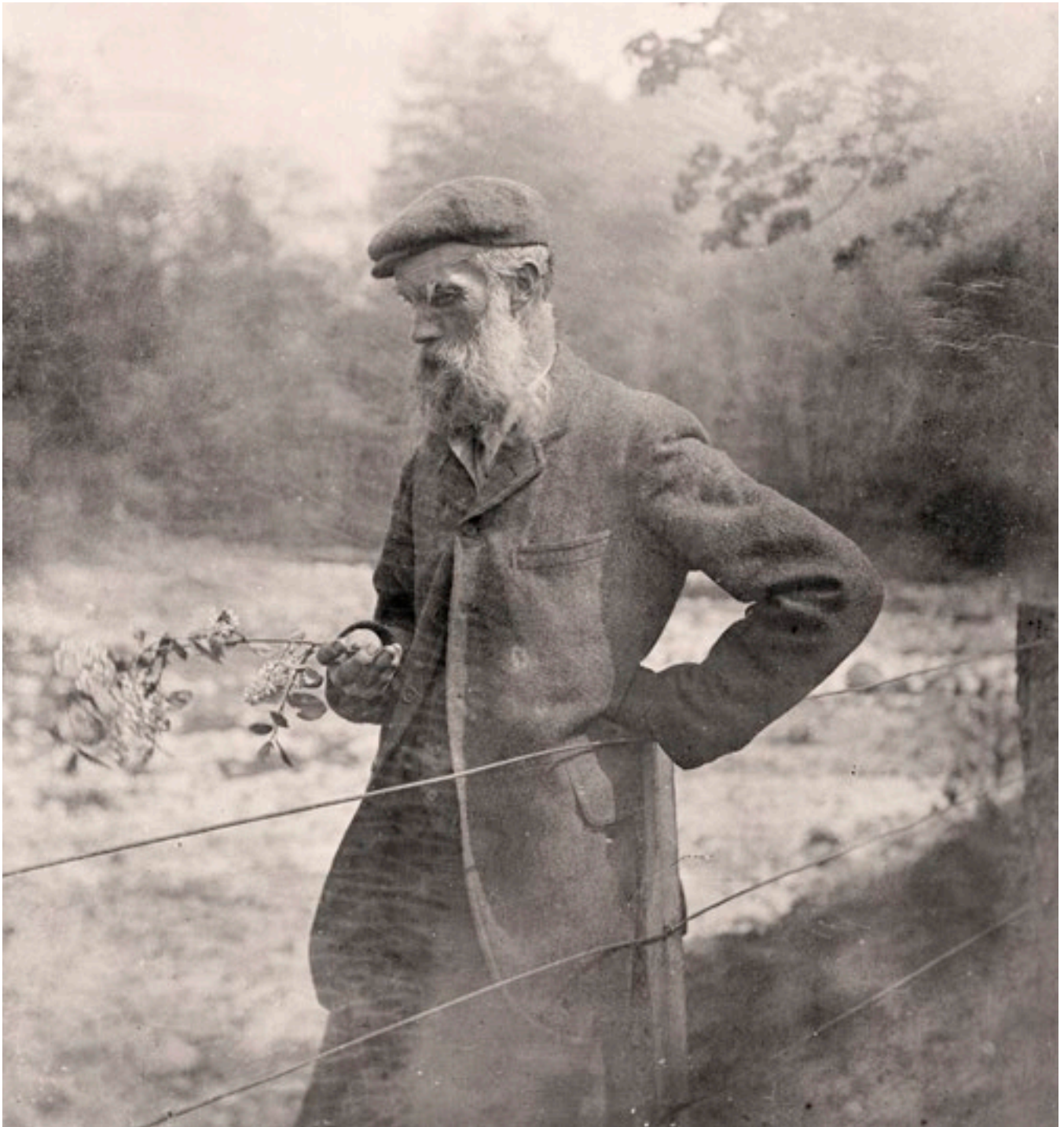
UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

A FELLOW NATURALIST

Charles McIntosh (1839–1922) from Inver in Perthshire, Scotland, was a postal worker and an expert on ferns, mosses, and fungi. Beatrix knew him from her holidays as a young girl. Later, when staying in Dunkeld in 1892, she arranged a proper meeting with him to show him her drawings. Although naturally shy, McIntosh became lively when discussing fungi, talking with “poetical feeling about their exquisite colours.” Like Potter, he prepared slides and drew microscopic details. The scale of this pocket microscope made it handy in the field.

**Brass pocket microscope used by Charles McIntosh,
ca. 1880–1920**

Courtesy of Culture Perth and Kinross Museums & Galleries



Charles McIntosh, May 27, 1897. Photo: Henry Coates (1859–1935). Courtesy of Culture Perth and Kinross Museums & Galleries.

THE SCHOOLROOM

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Corner of schoolroom, November 26, 1885

Reproduction of pen-and-ink drawing

V&A: LC 12/A/1, Given by the Linder Collection. Photo:

**© Victoria & Albert Museum, London, with kind permission
from Frederick Warne & Co.**

BEATRIX AND BERTRAM'S WORLD

MENAGERIE

In the mid-1880s Beatrix and Bertram collected lizards, snakes, and salamanders from the wild or bought them in shops. We know some of their pets from Beatrix's drawings. She also described her animals' exploits in letters to children and would own over ninety pets during her lifetime. Sweet-tempered Mrs. Tiggy, a hedgehog, would later inspire Beatrix's storytelling.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Beatrix's pet lizard Judy, from Ilfracombe, Devon,

February 1884

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

A hedgehog, assumed to be Beatrix's pet Mrs. Tiggy,

ca. 1904–5

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.405 AND BP.495

ANIMAL STUDIES

Beatrix enjoyed observing the movement of animals. Here, she filled a scrap of paper with quick sketches of a mouse as she followed it around. She began with a conventional-looking mouse, but her lines quickly transformed into outlines until it had just a hint of nose and ear, and a dot for the eye.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Studies of mice, ca. 1890–1900

Graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1015(ii)

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Wood mouse, December 1886

Watercolor, white heightening, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: LC 18/A/2, given by the Linder Collection

BATS AND SNAKES

By 1884 Bertram had a pet bat, which he left with Beatrix when he went to boarding school. Beatrix described it as “a charming little creature, quite tame and apparently happy,” but she worried that it was dying. Her teenage brother replied, “If he cannot be kept alive . . . you had better kill him, + stuff him as well as you can.” Beatrix and Bertram were fond of their pets but unsentimental about the realities of life and death. To study the anatomy of their animals, the siblings boiled and kept their skeletons. Bertram’s drawing of a pickled fish and an adder show the type of specimens they collected.

Bertram Potter (1872–1918)

Pickled fish and male adder with a human skull, April 1889

Watercolor

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Studies of a bat and its skeleton, April 8, 1887

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite on card

**V&A: AAD/2006/4/406, Given by Joan Duke; and Linder
Bequest BP.250**

NATURE STUDY

From an early age both Potter children made studies of flowers, several of which survive. Beatrix also began lessons in “a little watercolour flower painting” from the age of twelve. Some carefully written notes found inside her paintbox show that by 1880, nearing her mid-teens, she was learning color mixing and layering. For yellow daisies, she suggested applying the pigments London yellow and gamboge under brown-pink, followed by more gamboge and Indian yellow. By 1905 she was using watercolors for freehand sketching.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Red petunia and yellow daisy, May 1880

Watercolor and graphite

***Eryngium maritimum* (sea holly), *Daucus carota* (wild carrot), and *Ranunculus* (buttercup), ca. 1890–1905**

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.276 and BP.920

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***Ranunculus* (buttercup), ca. 1877**

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.762

INSECT STUDIES

From the mid-1880s, Beatrix used microscopes to make nature studies. She later turned some into lithographs demonstrating insect life cycles for “Miss Martineau,” possibly Caroline, a family friend who lectured in natural science at Morley College, London. Beatrix visited the Natural History Museum to study insect classification. As a woman, she found the male staff there frustrating. She alarmed them if she asked “the simplest question,” and with her natural shyness found, “if they take the line of being shocked it is perfectly awful.”

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Magnified studies of *Carabus nemoralis* (ground beetle),

August 1887

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.257

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***Sphinx ligustri* (privet hawk-moth), February 1887**

Watercolor, white heightening, and graphite

***Sphinx ligustri* (privet hawk-moth), ca. 1896**

Lithograph, ink, and graphite, partially hand-colored in watercolors

V&A: LC 6/B/1, Given by the Linder Collection; and Linder Bequest BP.370

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Trial print of images of fungi, a jug, privet hawk-moth's life cycle, magnified fly's leg, rabbits, and rhebok (possibly),

April 1896

Lithograph, hand-colored in watercolors

The Free Library, Philadelphia

DRAWING HISTORY AND SCIENCE

Holidays in the country gave Beatrix freedom to explore. She would “slither and slide” down hillsides collecting fossils and plant specimens to draw. Her orderly drawings, frequently labeled, resembled illustrations in scientific journals and books, which she also copied. Perhaps she considered a career like that of her friend Gertrude Woodward, who was a scientific illustrator for *Geology Magazine*.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Fossils (*Monograptid, Coral, Trilobite, and Crinoid*), found around Troutbeck, Cumbria, annotated with the findspots, August, September, and November 1895

Watercolor and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Moss, *Hypnum proliferum* (herb smith), 1890s

Watercolor

The Armitt Trust

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***Statice limonium* (sea lavender), September 1899**

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: LC 15/B/5, Given by the Linder Collection

RABBITS

Benjamin Bouncer, one of Beatrix's pets, was a handsome Belgian hare that she often used as a model for her drawings. She wrote that he was partial to hot buttered toast and would come running at the sound of the tea bell. Peter Piper joined the Potter family around 1892. The rabbit was bought on Uxbridge Road for an "exorbitant" four shillings and six pence (about thirty dollars today). He was Beatrix's "quiet friend" and "affectionate companion." She wrote in her diary of his talents for jumping through hoops and playing the tambourine.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Studies of a rabbit's head (Benjamin Bouncer), August 1890

Peter Piper, February 14, 1899

Graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.261 and BP.378



Beatrix with her pet rabbit Benjamin Bouncer at Bedwell Lodge, Hertfordshire, September 1891. Photo: Rupert Potter (1832–1914). Cotsen’s Children’s Library, Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 100005.161

MY RABBIT PETER IS SO LAZY

Written from London in the dead of February, this picture letter shows Beatrix spinning a winter fantasy out of daily urban life, with a little help from her pet rabbit. After wondering whether her correspondent makes snowmen and describing the habits of her bunny, Beatrix fuses the two images together in a beautiful moment of creative alchemy. “Here are some rabbits throwing snowballs,” she wrote to accompany a delightful, expressive drawing whose activity undermines the season’s expected stasis.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, February 4, 1895

Ink [pages 1 and 4 in facsimile]

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC. McKell, 1959; MA 2009.2

My rabbit Peter is so lazy, he lies before the fire in a box, with a little rug. His claws grew too long, quite uncomfortable, so I tried to cut them with scissors but they were so hard that I had to use the big gardens scissors. He sat quite still and allowed me to do his little front paws but when I cut the other hind foot claws he was tickled, & kicked, very naughty. If he were a wild rabbit digging holes they would be worn down & would not need cutting.

DOGS

The Potters kept dogs, including a spaniel named Spot who features in many family photographs. The brown terrier called Sandy, depicted in a letter sent to Beatrix by her father, lived at Dalguise House in Dunkeld, Scotland, where the Potters spent many holidays. In the letter, Rupert wrote that Sandy was full of fun but was greedy and needed to be taught manners.

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

Letter to Beatrix Potter, 1874

**Beatrix Potter aged fifteen with Spot, the family's spaniel,
ca. 1881**

Photograph reproduced from an albumen print

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.793(ii) and BP.1425

**Beatrix and Bertram Potter with Bertram's terrier at
Lingholm, near Derwentwater, ca. October 1897
Photo: Rupert Potter (1832–1914). © National Trust Images
/ Robert Thrift**

A PASSION FOR FUNGI

A PASSION FOR FUNGI

Beatrix began drawing fungi around 1885, and from 1892 she exchanged letters with Charles McIntosh, the amateur mycologist she had met as a girl vacationing in Scotland. She asked him to send samples and mailed him copies of her drawings. Initially she referred to specimens by appearance, like the one she named “spluttered candle.” McIntosh advised her to show cross sections in her work, as seen in the accurate drawing of a slender parasol mushroom. As her knowledge grew, Beatrix became excited when she found rare examples such as the old man of the woods, a species of fungi she drew a day before inventing the *Peter Rabbit* story.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***Helvella crispa* (white saddle, or the “spluttered candle”),
Derwentwater, Lake District, 1888**

Watercolor and graphite

***Macrolepiota mastoidea* (slender parasol), Sawrey, Lake
District, September 1896**

Watercolor and white heightening over graphite

The Armitt Trust

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***Strobilomyces strobilaceus* (old man of the woods), Eastwood,
Dunkeld, September 3, 1893**

Watercolor and graphite

The Armitt Trust

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***Flammulina velutipes* (velvet shank), probably Dunkeld,
made for Charles McIntosh, November 1892**

Watercolor and graphite

Courtesy of Culture Perth and Kinross Museums & Galleries

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***Amanita crocea* (yellow grisette) and *Amanita muscaria*
(scarlet fly cap), Ullock, Cumbria, September 2–3, 1897**

Watercolor, white heightening, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.244

A DREAM OF TOASTED CHEESE

Beatrix's uncle, Sir Henry Roscoe, was a prominent chemist. Beatrix celebrated the publication of his newest textbook with this playful watercolor. It features a Bunsen burner, referencing her uncle's early connection to chemist Robert Bunsen, and a quotation from Roscoe's earlier textbook describing ammonia as smelling like burnt cheese. Roscoe was well connected and introduced Beatrix to experts at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***A Dream of Toasted Cheese*, 1899**

Watercolor and pen and ink

Private collection

CAREER CHALLENGES

From about 1895, Beatrix studied gilled mushrooms, producing an essay and magnified drawings to demonstrate how they multiply. In 1897 she persuaded George Masee, a mycologist at Kew, to show her work to the Linnean Society of natural history. She wrote to Charles McIntosh that the essay was “‘well-received’ . . . but they say it requires more work before it is printed.”

As a woman and amateur researcher, Beatrix faced difficulty in getting her theories taken seriously by the scientists at Kew. Though there is a record of “On the Germination of the Spores of *Agaricineae*” by “Miss Helen B. Potter” being read at the Linnean Society, it is unclear if members ever saw her drawings. The text of the study does not survive today.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Microscopic drawing of *Aleurodiscus amorphus* (orange discus), Dunkeld, Perthshire, December 30–31, 1896

Watercolor and graphite

The Armitt Trust

IN THE COUNTRY

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Sheep in a field, 1876

Watercolor and graphite

The Beatrix Potter Society

ROMANTIC SCOTLAND

In 1871 the family spent the summer at Dalguise House, on the banks of the River Tay in Perthshire, northwest of Edinburgh. Rupert Potter chose Dalguise for its access to fishing and hunting. Beatrix loved her time in Scotland. The scenery stirred her to sketch the landscape, as seen here in her first homemade sketchbook used as young as eight years old and a painting made at the age of ten. In one letter about a holiday in Dumfries, in southern Scotland, she described an eventful train journey when a farmer's collie exited the railcar by jumping through the window.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Sketchbook, 1875

Watercolor and graphite

Illustrated letter to Marjorie Moore, August 23, 1898

Ink and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.740 and BP.878(i)

CAMFIELD

Beatrix's grandparents settled in Camfield Place in Hertfordshire (north of London) after Edmund Potter, by then a politician, retired. The surrounding countryside gave Beatrix space to clear her head. In an 1891 essay she described its colors, from “intensely blue” summer landscapes to the “golden oak” wood or “ruddy glow” of the autumn frost. This drawing of *The Rabbit's Dream* imagines Beatrix's pet rabbit Peter Piper asleep in bed in the bedroom she used at Camfield Place.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***The Rabbit's Dream*, ca. 1895**

Pen and ink and graphite

V&A: LC 20/A/3, Given by the Linder Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**View from the drawing-room window at Camfield Place,
ca. 1884**

Watercolor

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.299

GRANDMOTHER'S CACTUS

This drawing depicts an orchid cactus (*Epiphyllum phyllanthus*), a plant native to Central and South America that also thrives as a houseplant in more temperate climates. Potter's grandmother Jessy had several prized orchid cactuses, and an inscription on the verso of the drawing—"At Camfield"—suggests it was at her grandparents' home that she encountered the plant. A year after painting it, Beatrix gave the drawing to her governess Miss "Florrie" Hammond.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Leaves and flowers of the orchid cactus, 1886

Watercolor and graphite

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Charles Ryskamp in honor of Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Morgan Library and the 50th anniversary of the Association of Fellows; 2000.34

SNAILS AND FOSSILS

While staying with her relatives, the Huttons, in Gloucestershire (near the Welsh border), Beatrix kindled a lasting friendship with Caroline, a cousin who shared a passion for nature. They followed badger tracks and “poked around delightfully” for snails in the forest behind the garden of the Huttons’ home, Harescombe Grange, shown here. Beatrix also found time on this trip for fossil-hunting, as both Caroline’s mother and little sister were avid collectors. Later Potter would describe her week with the Huttons as “a most pleasant dream.”

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Spring, the Nuttery (garden), Harescombe Grange,
Gloucestershire, ca. 1903**

Watercolor and pen and ink

V&A: LC 4/A/1, Given by the Linder Collection

A WELSH GARDEN

Gwaynynog was the North Wales home of the Burtons: Beatrix's aunt, uncle, and cousin. Her aunt did not permit pets (and Beatrix resented having to sneak hers in), but both the house and garden inspired her own tastes. The garden was “not tidy, [but] the prettiest kind of garden, where bright old-fashioned flowers grow amongst currant bushes.” It later became the setting for *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies*.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

The garden at Gwaynynog, Denbighshire, probably

March 1909

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: LC 27/B/3, Given by the Linder Collection

THE SOUTH COAST

While their servants spring-cleaned in March or April, the Potters left their home and traveled for a month along the south or east coast. Some of these places inspired Beatrix's later storytelling—Sidmouth in Devon partly inspired Pig Robinson's town, Stymouth, as did the nearby resorts of Lyme Regis and Teignmouth.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

View out to sea, Sidmouth, Devon, March 1899

Watercolor

V&A: LC 13/B/3, Given by the Linder Collection

PICTURE LETTERS

Beatrix's last governess, Annie Carter, married an engineer in London and adopted the surname Moore. Beatrix sent illustrated letters to their children describing holidays in the country and other adventures, focusing on details that would amuse them. She sent the first of her picture letters to their son, Noel, in March 1892 from Falmouth, a seaside town in Cornwall in the southwest of England. "I have come a very long way in a puff-puff," she writes on the first page, adding a sketch of a chugging train directly into the sentence. In their playful blend of text and image, the picture letters create an immersive experience for their readers, capturing so vividly the landscapes, flora, and fauna Beatrix enjoyed on holiday.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, March 11, 1892

Ink [pages 1 and 4 in facsimile]

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC. McKell, 1959; MA 2009.1

LAKE DISTRICT ANIMALS

In this amusing picture letter, Beatrix sketches a virtual menagerie of Lake District animals for Noel Moore, including cats, dogs, rabbits, hens, fish, donkeys, tortoises, jackdaws, and pigs. The central drawing on the last page shows Beatrix walking her pet rabbit on a leash, “for fear he should run away.” Written from Windermere, near England’s largest lake, the letter captures Beatrix as a happy and curious correspondent.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, September 3, 1895

Ink

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC.

McKell, 1959; MA 2009.6

A DAY AT THE ZOO

The picture letter shown here, written to Noel when he was sick, recounts Beatrix's interactions at the zoo with elephants, ostriches, a bear, and a wolf. "I gave the elephant a lot of buns out of a bag," she writes, "but I did not give any to the ostriches because people are not allowed to feed them, since a naughty boy gave them old gloves & made them ill."

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, March 8, 1895

Ink

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC. McKell, 1959; MA 2009.3

SUCH A PRETTY PLACE

In this picture letter to Noel Moore, Beatrix describes an idyllic natural scene, with their “boat on Esthwaite Lake” among the “tall rushes . . . and beds of water lilies.” As in many of the picture letters, the composition of her drawings dictates the position of the text; here the sky is placed above and the placid waters below, with the text floating in between.

If one sits “quite still in the boat,” Beatrix writes, the sounds of the lake and birds come to the foreground. Later the people of the Lake District figure into the soundscape, with a farmer rattling a tin pail to call the calves to breakfast.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, August 7, 1896

Ink [pages 1 and 4 in facsimile]

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC.

McKell, 1959; MA 2009.8

ALL FIELDS AND LANES

In a picture letter Beatrix sent from Sidmouth on the south coast of England, she describes her family's happy vacation haunt: "We have lots of friends and live in a house just outside town, where it is all fields and lanes." She observes the size of the local thatched cottages, so small in her estimation that "they must have been meant for cats and dogs!" In fact, a local dog named Stumpy features prominently in this letter, and Beatrix invents a story about his life to entertain Noel.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, April 17, 1898

Ink

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC. McKell, 1959; MA 2009.4

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, April 6, 1896

Ink

**The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC.
McKell, 1959; MA 2009.7**

ART IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Writers and artists helped to establish the Lake District as a popular destination for scenic tourism in Britain from the late 1770s. The young artist John Constable took his first and only tour of the region in 1806, just as he was beginning to focus on landscape as his chosen subject matter. Beatrix copied landscapes by Constable on her visits to the South Kensington Museum.

John Constable (1776–1837)

Derwent Lake, Stormy Evening, October 6, 1806

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: 179-1888, Given by Isabel Constable, daughter of the artist

AROUND ESTHWAITE WATER

As the Lake District began to attract tourists, wealthy industrialists built large villas for themselves there. The Potters leased properties like these for their holidays, beginning at Wray Castle and then at Ees Wyke in Near Sawrey. Beatrix's love for the region grew gradually as she explored it, sometimes by pony-drawn carriage. She particularly admired the views around Esthwaite Water, writing, "It really strikes me that some scenery is almost theatrical, or ultra-romantic."

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

Beatrix and Bertram Potter at Wray Castle, August 1882

Albumen print

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1318

DERWENTWATER

The Potter family at varying times leased two holiday homes, Lingholm and Fawe Park, near the shore of Derwentwater in the Lake District, which offered them access to the jetties nearby. The family enjoyed boat trips to the small islands that populate the lake. Beatrix filled sketchbooks with watercolors of Derwentwater and nearby Newlands Valley that would eventually inspire settings for some of her books.

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

**Beatrix with her spaniel, Spot, on Derwentwater,
near Fawe Park, August 1887**

Albumen print

V&A: E.746-2005, Given by Joan Duke

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

The garden at Ees Wyke, ca. 1900

Watercolor and pen and ink

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.238

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Water lilies on Esthwaite Water, ca. 1906

Watercolor and pen and ink and wash

V&A: LC 3/A/2, Given by the Linder Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Langdale Pikes from Windermere, 1904–13

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.96

FANTASIES

In the 1890s Beatrix began illustrating already popular fairy tales and nursery rhymes, but she also created her own. Despite claiming, “I can’t invent, I can only copy,” she imagined fantasy worlds behind wood-paneled walls and transformed her animal characters by giving them human mannerisms, like her rabbit Benjamin putting on his coat. Realism played a part, too—the three mice spinning in her illustrated rhyme sit on chairs identical to one owned by her grandmother Jessy.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

“The Departure,” from the series *The Rabbits’ Christmas Party*, given to Beatrix’s aunt Lucy, Lady Roscoe, ca. 1892

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

“Making coats for gentlemen,” from the series *Three Little Mice Sat Down to Spin*, ca. 1892

Watercolor, pen and ink, white heightening, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1471(d) and BP.634(9)

POTTER'S PAINTBOX

Beatrix used this paintbox as a teenager. Its secret compartment once held papers, including notes she made when she was fourteen on how to paint flowers using watercolors. The right compartment would have held a glass water bowl for use with the solid pigment cakes, which were stored in the smaller compartments near the top. The names of colors Beatrix used—“vermillion” and “brown pink”—are printed on the box, and traces of her painting can still be seen on the wood.

James Newman, London

Watercolor paintbox, ca. 1880

Probably mahogany and brass

V&A, lent by Phillip Jasper Herbert

BUDDING ILLUSTRATOR AND ENTREPRENEUR

ENTREPRENEUR

Beatrix's brother, Bertram, encouraged her to seek a publisher for her homemade Christmas cards. Accompanied by their Uncle Harry, Beatrix visited Charles William Faulkner of Hildesheimer & Faulkner Publishers and wrote in her journal, "Not one word did he say in praise of the cards, but he showed a mysterious desire for more." Faulkner commissioned her to create a set. She modeled her first pieces on Benjamin Bouncer but soon expanded the range to other animals and three-dimensional designs.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Nesting mouse, unused design for a greetings card,

February 1890

Watercolor and pen and ink

Greetings card of a rabbit delivering mail

Lithograph on gilt-edged card

London: Hildesheimer & Faulkner, 1890

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.442 and BP.569(a)

PAPER AMUSEMENTS

Beatrix sometimes augmented her playful pictures with movable flaps. As with her other illustrations from this time, she modeled this grocer on her pet rabbit Benjamin Bouncer. A lift-up flap reveals a mischievous younger rabbit hidden in a barrel. She made this piece for her cousin's son. As a genre, the "flap-book" has a long history that intersects with other "pop-up" features of paper engineering.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Benjamin Bunny @ Son Greengrocers, 1891

Watercolor, pen and ink, and collage, mounted on linen with silk tassel hanging loop

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.553

THE ORIGINAL PETER RABBIT LETTER

One day in September 1893, watching rabbits in the garden of Eastwood, a house in Dunkeld, Scotland, Beatrix began a story letter featuring her pet rabbit Peter Piper. She sent it to Noel Moore, the son of her former governess Annie. Eight years later, Annie suggested Beatrix turn it into a book and lent her the letter to copy. Beatrix attributed the success of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* to its origin as a real letter: “it was written to a child—not made to order.”

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Noel Moore, September 4, 1893

Ink

Pearson PLC

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Variant artwork for *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, 1907, used in editions between 1907 and 1911

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.468

PUBLISHING PETER

Using an unexpected gift of money to finance the project, Beatrix turned a story she wrote in a letter about her rabbit Peter into a book. It proved popular with friends, so she had four hundred fifty copies printed. She could afford just one color image but was happy to avoid overdoing “rabbit-brown and green.” Beatrix later persuaded Frederick Warne & Co. to publish the story, but they wanted the illustrations in color. Their first edition in October 1902 consisted of eight thousand copies, but by year’s end they needed twenty-eight thousand to meet public demand.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Preparatory sketches for the privately printed edition of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, 1900–1901

Graphite, pen and ink, and white heightening

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.583(5), (13), and (11)

Preparatory sketch of Peter’s coat for the privately printed edition of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, 1900–1901

Pen and ink and white heightening

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***The Tale of Peter Rabbit* [privately printed edition,
used as a working copy]**

**[London]: printed by Strangeways, Art Reproduction
Company and Hentschel, December 1901**

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.585

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Finished artwork used on the cover for the deluxe edition of
The Tale of Peter Rabbit, ca. 1904**

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The Frederick Warne Archive

PIRATING PETER RABBIT

Frederick Warne & Co. was caught off guard when an unauthorized edition of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* appeared in 1904. The publisher had forgotten to register copyright in the US. Although the cover looks different, the interior pages closely follow the original. Dozens more versions appeared, showing how quickly Peter Rabbit captured imaginations. The first British edition of 1902, showing Peter's signature blue coat, established the memorable small format of Potter's books.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

The Tale of Peter Rabbit

London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1902

The Tale of Peter Rabbit [unauthorized edition]

Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1904

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.9 and BP.26

O'Hanlon & Co.

**Chintz featuring Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddle-Duck,
Mr. Jeremy Fisher, and Squirrel Nutkin, 1923**

Printed cotton fabric

the Frederick Warne Archive

BEATRIX POTTER MERCHANDISE

Beatrix had a head for business and was brimming with ideas for merchandise to capitalize on the success of her storybooks. She ensured she was always involved in the design and development of the products, which included miniature figurines and a Jemima Puddle-Duck doll. Around the time *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* was published, Beatrix devised a board game based on the book, but it was never made due to its complexity. In 1919 Mary Warne, the wife of Potter's publisher Fruing Warne, developed a commercially successful version of the game.

Franz Bergmann (1861–1936)

Miniature figurines of Jemima Puddle-Duck and Benjamin Bunny, 1913–33

Cold-painted sand-cast bronze

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Dunsmore Tiles (act. 1926–64)

Running Rabbit tile, ca. 1930

Hand-painted and glazed ceramic

the Frederick Warne Archive

Mary Warne (b. 1876)

Peter Rabbit's Race Game, ca. 1930s

Lithograph on paper and cloth-backed card; lead

[London]: Frederick Warne & Co.

V&A

J. K. Farnell & Co. Ltd. (1840–1996)

Jemima Puddle-Duck doll, ca. 1925

Mohair, cotton, felt, and glass

The Frederick Warne Archive

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***The Tailor of Gloucester* [first deluxe edition]**

London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1903

***The Tale of Two Bad Mice* [first deluxe edition]**

London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1904

***The Tailor of Gloucester* [first privately printed edition]**

**London: printed by Strangeways and Sons and Hentschel,
December 1902**

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.55, BP.77, and BP.39

LITTLE BOOKS

Beatrix designed a few larger books, but the small rectangular format of her volumes became an enduring feature of her brand. This picture letter written to Noel Moore's sister Marjorie illustrates Beatrix's search for the right publisher: "The publisher is a gentleman who prints books, and he wants a bigger book than he has got enough money to pay for! and Miss Potter has arguments with him." She wanted "little books" that were affordable to "little rabbits," who she thought would never buy bigger, expensive ones. Occasionally she devised special patterned bindings or floral covers using fabrics from her grandfather's old calico firm, which appeared on early luxury editions.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies* [first edition]**

London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1909

***The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher* [Beatrix's copy]**

London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1906

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.118 and BP.91

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Marjorie Moore, March 13, 1900

Ink

**The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC.
McKell, 1959; MA 2009.12**

PANORAMIC BOOKS

For children five and under, Beatrix published some of her tales in a panoramic design. Featuring an accordion-like structure, the book could be folded up into its binding, which resembled a wallet tied with ribbon. Some of the tales Beatrix made for this format included a story about a bad rabbit and one about a predatory kitten-in-training, Miss Moppet. These titles were issued as conventionally bound books from 1916, when shopkeepers said they struggled with the format of the long, folded panoramas.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***The Story of Miss Moppet* [first panoramic edition]**

London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1906

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.165

DISTINCTIVE ENDPAPERS

Beatrix believed that endpapers should be simple so one could “rest the eye” between the cover and story, but in 1903 Frederick Warne & Co. decided that they wanted pictorial ones. Beatrix’s designs doubled as advertisement and branding—they changed from book to book as new stories and characters appeared. The second version, shown here, introduced the tailor mice and Squirrel Nutkin.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Early endpaper design, second version, first used in
December 1903**

**Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite on paper,
mounted on card**

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.460

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Variant cover illustration for *The Tale of Tom Kitten*,
ca. 1906–7**

Watercolor and pen and ink

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.510

PLACE AS INSPIRATION

THE TALE OF SQUIRREL NUTKIN

THE TALE OF SQUIRREL NUTKIN

Squirrel Nutkin and his friends live on the edge of a lake. In the middle is an island where they gather nuts, but first they must ask permission from the island's noble owl, Old Brown. Every day for a week, Squirrel Nutkin teases the owl with riddles and tricks. On the sixth day, Old Brown grabs Nutkin by the tail ready to skin him. Nutkin wriggles away and escapes, but only just—Old Brown keeps his tail.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, 1903

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

View across to St. Herbert's Island, Derwentwater, ca. 1903

Pen and ink and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1029

ST. HERBERT'S ISLAND, DERWENTWATER

During nut-gathering season, red squirrels would somehow appear on St. Herbert's Island, Derwentwater, and locals often wondered how they arrived there. Beatrix dreamt up an answer in her story about Squirrel Nutkin, which she first wrote as a letter to Norah Moore, Noel's sister. Beatrix described her squirrel characters using their tails as sails, just as she had read about in a nature journal.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Norah Moore, September 25, 1901

Ink and graphite on paper, stitched, card and paper binding, cotton thread tie

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.880

MINIATURE LETTERS

Beatrix sometimes carried on her stories beyond her published books by creating miniature letters in the voice of her characters. Written on a smaller scale in Potter's distinctive script, these letters fold up into tiny envelopes and are directed to fantastical addresses such as "Doll's House," "Mouse Hole," "Under Fir-Tree," and "Barn Door." For some children, she even sent this diminutive correspondence inside of miniature red tin mailboxes.

Here, Nutkin and his brother, Twinkleberry, beg "the Right Honourable Mr. Brown, MP," for his tail back. They manage to annoy the distinguished owl, who complains that the tail almost choked him.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Letters between Squirrel Nutkin, Twinkleberry Squirrel, and Rt Hon. O. Brown Esq. MP, undated [ca. 1905–12]

Ink

V&A: AAD/1996/12/2/v-viii, Given by Lucie Carr

THE TAILOR OF GLOUCESTER

THE TAILOR OF GLOUCESTER

A tailor in Gloucester is hard at work making a special coat. It has hand-stitched flowers and is composed of fancy fabrics like satin and taffeta. The tailor stitches and stitches, snipping here and there. Exhausted, he falls asleep. By the time he wakes up, someone has finished the coat—but who? The stitches are so tiny, they could have been made by mice. As it happens, some well-dressed mice who are very good at sewing live behind the walls.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Tailor of Gloucester*, 1902

Watercolor, pen and ink, and gouache

Tate: Presented by Capt. K. W. G. Duke RN 1946



The Tailor of Gloucester (1903), page 77. The Morgan Library & Museum; PML 87739. Photo: Janny Chiu, courtesy of Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Tailor of Gloucester*, 1902

Watercolor, pen and ink, and gouache

Tate: Presented by Capt. K. W. G. Duke Rn 1946

EMBROIDERED FANTASIES

In 1903 Beatrix wrote to her publisher Norman Warne that she was “delighted to find some most beautiful 18th-century clothes” at the South Kensington Museum. She took sketches of them, including the one here. The waistcoat that the tailor mice sew is a faithful copy of the garment at the museum, although the version in the tale features cherry-colored buttonholes. Inspired by a story about a real tailor, Mr. Prichard, whose work was mysteriously finished for him, *The Tailor of Gloucester* was Beatrix’s favorite among her tales.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Sketch of an eighteenth-century coat, 1902

Graphite

V&A: LC 9/A/3, Given by the Linder Collection



Detail from a court waistcoat, 1780–89. V&A: 652A-1898.
Photo: © Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

HILL TOP AND A NEW LIFE IN THE LAKES

BEATRIX HEELIS

Beatrix met William Heelis, a local lawyer, when she bought Castle Farm, which neighbored Hill Top. William was quiet but his enthusiasm for the surrounding landscape matched Beatrix's. They married in 1913 despite resistance from her parents and moved to Castle Cottage. Mrs. Heelis, as she now called herself, began to use Beatrix Potter only as a pen name.

Clarence Edmund Fry & Son

Wedding photograph of Beatrix and William Heelis,

October 15, 1913

Sepia-toned photograph

V&A: AAD/2006/4/462, Given by Joan Duke

Possibly Ball's Pottery or Scott's Pottery, Sunderland
Beatrix's lustreware jug, 1830–60
Transfer-printed earthenware
The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

HILL TOP AND ITS UNWELCOME GUESTS

At Hill Top, Beatrix fought a long battle with unwanted house guests: rats. They lived behind the wall paneling and inspired *The Roly-Poly Pudding*, her tale about the rats Samuel Whiskers and Anna Maria. Beatrix wrote to her friend Millie Warne: “It really is delightful if the rats could be stopped out! . . . I never saw such a place for hide & seek.” Here, Beatrix drew herself for the first time into one of her books—watching the rats escape from the end of the lane.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Roly-Poly Pudding* (later retitled *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers*), 1907

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

THE TALE OF SAMUEL WHISKERS

On baking day, mother cat Tabitha Twitchit shuts her naughty kittens in the cupboard so they don't cause any mischief. Tom Kitten doesn't want to be locked away and climbs up the chimney—but he is caught by Samuel Whiskers and Anna Maria, two big rats who live in the wall. They try to make a pudding out of poor Tom Kitten, but luckily for Tom, John Joiner the dog rescues him, scaring the rats away.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

***The Roly-Poly Pudding* (later retitled *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers*)**

**Autograph manuscript made for Winifred Warne,
inscribed Christmas 1906**

Ink, pen and ink, and watercolor

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.596

HILL TOP TALES

Four of Beatrix Potter's tales are set in and around Hill Top farm: *The Tale of Tom Kitten* (1907), *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck* (1908), *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers, or The Roly-Poly Pudding* (1908), and *The Tale of Ginger and Pickles* (1909). Original objects related to *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck* and *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers* are on display nearby, and modern editions of all four titles are available in the window seat for reading. The window seat at Hill Top made an appearance in *The Tale of Tom Kitten* and inspired the seating installed in this gallery.



The Tale of Tom Kitten (1907), page 20. The Morgan Library & Museum; PML 87744. Photo: Carmen González Fraile. © Frederick Warne & Co.

THE TALE OF JEMIMA PUDDLE-DUCK

The farmer's wife keeps stealing Jemima Puddle-Duck's eggs. Desperate for a safe nest, Jemima decides to escape the farmyard. She flaps to a nearby wood where she meets a friendly, handsome gentleman with ginger fur and a bushy tail. He offers her a snug shed full of soft white feathers remarkably like hers. But all is not quite as it seems. Jemima almost becomes roast duck and must be rescued by Kep, the farm's collie.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck*, 1908

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

AROUND SAWREY

Beatrix's Lake District farm, Hill Top, and her favorite view behind it inspired the setting for Jemima Puddle-Duck's take-off at the start of her adventure. Later in life, Beatrix joked that the character was even semiautobiographical: "That is what I used to look like . . . I rushed about quacking industriously." Several landscapes of the area around Esthwaite from this sketchbook made their way into the book. The name Jemima was probably inspired by naturalist Jemima Blackburn, whose book on birds had been Beatrix's favorite as a child.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Sketchbook, in use mostly ca. 1907

Watercolor and graphite with annotations in pen

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.778

**Dummy manuscript for *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck*,
ca. 1908**

Pen, graphite, and collage

The Frederick Warne Archive

DAISY WALLPAPER

To decorate her Hill Top home, Beatrix selected one of the earliest wallpapers designed by William Morris (1834–1896), an influential practitioner of the Arts and Crafts movement. *Daisy* (1864) was Morris's second wallpaper design, after *Trellis* (1862), and both works engaged with botanical subjects. The wallpaper suited Beatrix's interests and complemented her taste in furniture, as shown in this photograph.

The view from the Oak Bedroom to the Landing

Photo: © National Trust Images / James Dobson

Unknown maker

Needlework sampler owned by Beatrix Potter, n.d.

Wool and brown silk thread

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Drawing of Hill Top, Near Sawrey (before renovations),
ca. 1905**

Ink and graphite

V&A: LC 15/A/1, Given by the Linder Collection

DEFENDER OF THE LAKES

Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley was the vicar at Wray and became friends with the Potters during their stay there. Rawnsley campaigned against proposed railway expansion, earning the title “Defender of the Lakes.” He cofounded the National Trust in 1895 and encouraged Beatrix in her steadfast support of its mission, as well as in the preservation of the Herdwick sheep breed.

Rupert Potter (1832–1914)

Beatrix with Rupert Potter (*center*) and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley (*right*) at Lingholm, Derwentwater, inscribed September 11, 1906

Albumen print

V&A: AAD/2006/4/515, Given by Joan Duke

SHEEP DOGS

Beatrix wrote *The Fairy Caravan* as an homage to the traditions, people, and places of Near Sawrey. She presented this copy of the book to the first farm manager of Hill Top, John Mackareth. We know the names of the dogs shown here from Beatrix's copy of the book, into which she wrote "Roy," "Matt," and "Bobs." Beatrix painted portraits of another beloved sheepdog, Kep, who was immortalized as Jemima Puddle-Duck's hero when he rescued her from the "sandy whiskered gentleman."

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

The Fairy Caravan

Philadelphia: David McKay [with part privately printed in Ambleside]

Inscribed by Beatrix to John Mackareth "in remembrance of Hill Top and the Sheep," October 26, 1929

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.183

Charles G. Y. King (1854–1937)

Beatrix and Kep at Hill Top, 1913

Gelatin silver print

V&A: AAD/2006/4/555; Given by Joan Duke

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Kep, March 5, 1909

Watercolor and graphite, collaged card mount

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.297

HILL TOP FURNITURE

Beatrix shared her interest in antique furniture with her American friend Bertha Mahony Miller, for whom she sketched some of her pieces in the letter reproduced here. She described a piece illustrated in this letter as “a very beautiful chest, rich colour & good carving but not local. I bought it from an old woman who lived in Thimble Hall.”

Miller founded and edited *Horn Book Magazine*—a children’s literature review—and opened one of the first bookstores dedicated to children’s literature in the United States.

Beatrix Heelis (née Potter) (1866–1943)

Letter to Bertha Mahony Miller, October 11, 1940

Reproduction of the original letter

Photo: © National Trust Images

The Oak Bedroom

Photo: © National Trust Images / James Dobson

DECORATING HILL TOP

Beatrix wanted Hill Top to look like a traditional farmhouse and filled it with an eclectic mix of ceramics, childhood treasures, and unusual trinkets, as well as a blend of locally bought items. She inherited family heirlooms and appreciated traditional carved furniture, which she bought from farm sales in the area. Beatrix inherited the bed warming pan from her grandmother Jessy.

Unknown maker

Bed warming pan, n.d.

Wood and brass

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Hill Top kitchen before alterations, ca. 1908

Gelatin silver print

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1296

DRESSING FOR THE FARM

Beatrix always wore wooden-soled clogs around the farm and village. She even poked fun at her fondness for them in the book *The Fairy Caravan* (1929), when Fan the collie dog asks, “Does Mistress Heelis really ever take her clogs off? I thought she went to bed in them?”

Beatrix used this walking stick while climbing the fells and visiting her farms. The built-in magnifying glass allowed her to see up close the interesting wildlife she spotted. The names “Chuw” and “Susi,” carved roughly into the stick, refer to her pet Pekingese dogs.

Charlie Brown, Hawkshead

Clogs worn by Beatrix Potter, ca. 1920

Wood, leather, and iron nails

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Unknown maker

Walking stick used by Beatrix Potter, ca. 1930

Wood and glass

The Beatrix Potter Society

**Beatrix Heelis (née Potter) at Castle Cottage, Sawrey,
ca. 1940.**

**Cotsen Children's Library, Special Collections, Princeton
University Library, 100005.144. Reproduced by Permission of
Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd.**

THE TALE OF TWO BAD MICE

THE TALE OF TWO BAD MICE

Two hungry mice, Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca, explore a dollhouse. They find plenty of food, but it's toy food and much too hard to eat. The mice angrily smash plates, ransack the house, and take some of the furniture. When the dolls return to their ruined home, they want to call the authorities. But it all works out in the end—Tom Thumb repays the dolls, and Hunca Munca apologetically cleans up the mess.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*,

February–June 1904

Watercolor and pen and ink

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Norman Warne (1868–1905)

Winifred Warne's dollhouse, April 1904

Gelatin silver prints

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1404 and BP.1405

NORMAN AND THE DOLL'S HOUSE

Beatrix's idea for a tale about mice looting a dollhouse reminded Norman Warne, her publisher, of one he built for his niece. He sent Beatrix photographs of it, and she wrote that the house was the perfect sort "where one cannot sit down without upsetting something." Norman sent Beatrix toy furniture and made a glass-fronted box for her pet mice to play in. "Hunca Munca is very ready to play the game," she wrote, after the mouse carried away a doll as big as itself. To illustrate *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*, Beatrix accurately depicted the dollhouse and its miniatures.

Unknown maker

**Dollhouse toys, sold by Hamleys toy store, London,
ca. 1903–4**

Resin, tin, and steel

**The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection
Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)**

Letter to Norman Warne, February 12, 1904

Ink

The Frederick Warne Archive

BEATRIX AND NORMAN

As editor and publisher of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, Norman Warne had a close working relationship with Beatrix Potter. The two corresponded regularly and collaborated on many subsequent books. They eventually grew closer and became engaged in the summer of 1905, much to Beatrix's mother's disappointment. Tragically, Norman was diagnosed with lymphatic leukemia and died in late August, only a month after his engagement to Beatrix. After his death, she wrote Norman's sister, Millie, that "he did not live long but he fulfilled a useful happy life."



Norman Warne, ca. 1890–1905. Photographer unknown.
Courtesy of a private collector.

THE TALE OF BENJAMIN BUNNY

THE TALE OF BENJAMIN BUNNY

A rabbit called Peter has lost his coat in Mr. McGregor's garden. His bolder cousin, Benjamin, persuades him to go and rescue it. They jump—or fall—off the pear tree into the garden. They see some tempting radishes but soon encounter a hungry cat. Peter hides under a basket for safety. The cat sits on it, forcing Peter to stay there for a very long time. In the end, Benjamin's father rescues the adventurous bunnies by pouncing on the cat.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Unfinished frontispiece design for *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny*, ca. 1903

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.491(a)

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny*,

November 1903–March 1904

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

THE GARDEN AT FAWE PARK

In 1903 the Potters stayed at Fawe Park villa on the edge of Derwentwater in the Lake District. With the villa's plank walkway, vegetable patches, planters, baskets, and plant pots, it satisfied Beatrix's love of messy gardens. She imagined it as Mr. McGregor's garden for Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny's adventure, visualizing the clutter at animal level to discover all their possible hiding places. Her handkerchief also featured in the story as Peter's makeshift clothing. Mr. McGregor's garden appears in several of Beatrix's tales.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Fawe Park garden, 1903

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

Background artwork for *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny*, 1903

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: LC 24/A/3–4; Given by the Linder Collection

Unknown maker

Handkerchief belonging to Beatrix Potter, ca. 1903–4

Printed cotton

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection



The Tale of Benjamin Bunny (1904), page 35. The Morgan Library & Museum; PML 87742. Photo: Janny Chiu, 2023. © Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 1904, 2002.

THE TALE OF MRS. TIGGY-WINKLE

THE TALE OF MRS. TIGGY-WINKLE

A little girl, Lucie, has lost her pinafore (an apron-like garment) and handkerchiefs. Setting out to find them, she meets a person named Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, who lives in the mountainside and washes the local animals' clothes. As it so happens, she's even washed Lucie's lost clothes. Together, they return all the clean laundry to its owners. Then, as Lucie says goodbye to her new friend, all she sees is a little prickled creature running away. Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle was a hedgehog all along.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished artwork for *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle*,

November 1904–July 1905

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

CAT BELLS

In the Lake District there is a fell (a barren hill or mountain) known as Cat Bells. A tiny stream bubbling out of Cat Bells, as well as a little door into one of the mineral mines inside the mountain, led Beatrix to imagine a home belonging to a tiny, prickled laundress, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle. Although sketched from her pet hedgehog, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle was partially inspired by Kitty Macdonald, a Scottish woman who washed clothes for a living. Beatrix had met Macdonald while visiting Scotland as a young girl. The real Lucie was Lucie Carr, the daughter of the vicar at Newlands in the valley below the fell.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Mountains and a valley, probably Cat Bells, ca. 1905

Watercolor and graphite

Entrance to a mine at Cat Bells, ca. 1904

Pen and ink and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1129(vi) and BP.1025

THE TALE OF JEREMY FISHER

THE TALE OF MR. JEREMY FISHER

Mr. Jeremy Fisher is a gentleman frog. He wants to impress his friends at dinner. He leaps out of his house onto a lily pad and paddles into the lake, hoping to catch a feast of tasty fish. Instead, he catches a very spiky fish and promptly drops it. Then a gigantic trout comes up and almost snaps him up whole. Soggy and sheepish, Mr. Jeremy Fisher slops home and makes his friends roasted grasshopper with ladybird sauce instead.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Preparatory artwork for *The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher*,
ca. 1906**

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.508(a)

Finished artwork for *The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher*, ca. 1906

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

CALDECOTT-INSPIRED

In 1893, a day after writing a story letter to Noel Moore in which she created the character Peter Rabbit, Beatrix sent one to his brother, Eric, about a fishing frog. Her illustrations were influenced by a Randolph Caldecott picture book. She sent copies of her drawings to publisher Ernest Nister, who printed them alongside a verse by Clifton Bingham with the Caldecott-inspired title “A Frog He Would A-Fishing Go.” In 1906 Beatrix turned the story into *The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher*, creating new illustrations set in the Lake District.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

A frog leaping into a boat, ca. 1894

Pen and ink and graphite

Published in *Nister’s Holiday Annual for 1896*

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.507(b/i)

Randolph Caldecott (1846–1886)

Sketch for *A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go*, 1883

Pen and ink, white heightening, and graphite

Manchester Art Gallery

THE TALE OF LITTLE PIG ROBINSON

NONSENSE AND ADVENTURE

The Tale of Little Pig Robinson was the last of Beatrix's storybooks, published in 1930, but the idea had come to her much earlier. While on holiday in Cornwall in 1894, she saw a live pig on board a ship intended for the crew's dinner. Beatrix imagined how it might escape, remembering the titular characters in Edward Lear's nonsense verse "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat" (1870), who travel to the land of the bong tree. Her book's title nods to *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel about a castaway on a desert island. By 1930 Beatrix was fully immersed in farming and reflected this world in the opening descriptions of Little Pig Robinson's life at a farm called Piggery Porcombe.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Finished watercolor artwork for *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson*, 1930

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

Preparatory line artwork for *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson*, 1930

Pen and ink and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1128(ii)

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

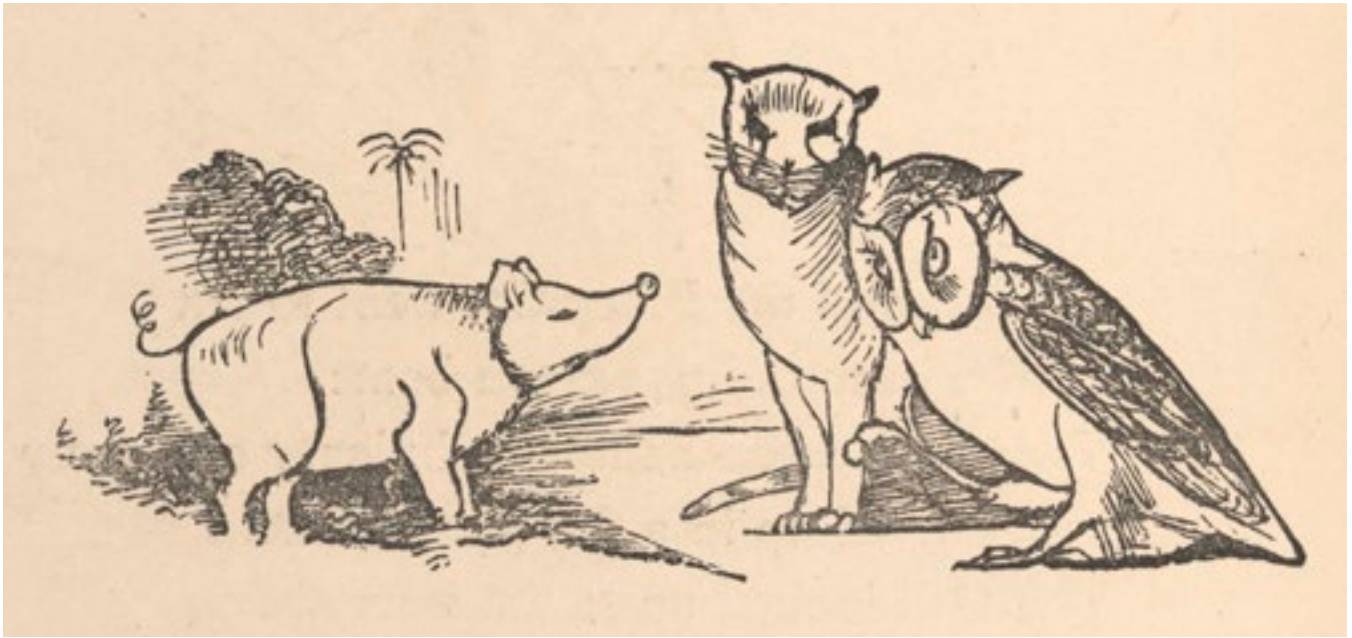
In these letters to Noel Moore, Beatrix illustrates part of Edward Lear's nonsense poem with delightful drawings alongside the carefully copied text. (Another letter, held at Princeton University, contains the beginning of the poem.) Referencing the owl eating with a spoon, she writes, "It is funny to see a bird with hands, but how could he play the guitar without them?" Later in the second letter, Beatrix recounts having to bring her rabbit hutch inside on a stormy night. The combination of current events and illustrated narrative is a hallmark feature of Potter's picture letters.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Illustrated letters to Noel Moore, February 27 and
March 4, 1897**

Ink

**The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Colonel David McC.
McKell, 1959; MA 2009.9 and 2009.10**



Edward Lear (1812–1888), Illustration of “The Owl and the Pussy-Cat” from *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany and Alphabets* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1871). The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Justin G. Schiller, 1981; PML 85480.

APPLEY DAPPLY'S NURSERY RHYMES

APPLEY DAPPLY'S NURSERY RHYMES

Beatrix first drew the little mouse Appley Dapply in 1891. Over the next ten years, she invented new characters and composed verses inspired by traditional nursery rhymes. In 1905 she sent Norman Warne a manuscript containing nineteen poems. Although he selected his favorites, the project was shelved. By 1917 Beatrix was no longer invested in book publishing but agreed to revive her earlier idea to help her old publisher through a difficult time. She made a small selection of verses and original illustrations, adding new drawings she had reworked.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Appley Dapply at a cupboard and running with a plate of tarts, 1891

Watercolor

Old Mister Prickly Pin, ca. 1905

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite on card

V&A: LC 29/A/1–2, Given by the Linder Collection; and Linder Bequest BP.517

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**The Amiable Guinea-Pig, variant artwork for *Appley Dapply's
Nursery Rhymes*, 1917**

Watercolor and pen and ink

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.622

AN OLD SNAIL WITH A NEST

Beatrix saw a snail digging a nest and watched its eggs hatch.
This drawing illustrates a limerick:

*There was an old snail with a nest—
Who very great terror expressed,
Lest the wood-lice all round
In the cracks under-ground
Should eat up her eggs in that nest!
Her days and her nights were oppressed,
But soon all her fears were at rest;
For eleven young snails
With extremely short tails,
Hatched out of the eggs in that nest.*

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

“There was an old snail with a nest,” June 26–July 28, 1898

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite on card

Ross Family Collection

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

**Old Mister Prickly Pin (later renamed Mr. Pricklepin),
pages from the draft *Book of Rhymes* manuscript, 1904–5**

Watercolor and graphite

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

FROM ARTIST TO FARMER

BEATRIX AND THE GIRL GUIDES

In 1928 Beatrix first welcomed a group of Girl Guides, the British equivalent of the Girl Scouts, to camp on her land. They continued to visit for over a decade, each time filling out a logbook documenting their activities. Beatrix sometimes joined them at their camp for tea and story or poetry recitals. “I wish they had been invented when I was young,” she later wrote, for “it is a grand thing to enjoy play and enjoy work, which is what the Scouts & Guides learn to do.”

Chorlton-cum-Hardy Guides and Leaders

Guides' logbook, May 17–25, 1929

Ink, graphite, and photographs

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

NORTH COUNTRY FARMER

Being a farmer could be difficult, but Beatrix relished it and found humor in her daily activities, which she illustrated in letters. She was so settled into her new life that she was irritated to be mistaken in newspapers for Beatrice Potter Webb, wife of the politician Sidney Webb, and suggested publishing a portrait of herself with her pet pig. Beatrix rarely got involved with politics but was driven to write an anonymous pamphlet, signed “A North Country Farmer,” challenging the Liberal government’s suggestion that horses could be conscripted for war.

Beatrix Heelis (née Potter) (1866–1943)

Illustrated letter to Nancy Nicholson (Beatrix’s niece by marriage), September 9, 1917

Ink

V&A: AAD/1997/22/8, Given by Nancy Nicholson

Letter to publisher Fruing Warne, January 22, 1924

Ink

the Frederick Warne Archive

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

The Shortage of Horses

Letterpress

London: Edmund Evans, 1910

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.736

SUPPORTING PUBLIC HEALTH

Following the 1918 flu pandemic, Beatrix was concerned about the impact illness could have on her farm tenants. She campaigned for a district nurse to make medical care more accessible. Years later, in this wartime letter to Katherine Brooke, secretary of the district nursing committee, she lobbied for increased petrol rations for the nurse. Beatrix provided a car so that the nurse could reach the remote community, as well as a cottage for lodging.

Beatrix Heelis (née Potter) (1866–1943)

Letter to Katherine Brooke, November 1, 1943

Ink

The Beatrix Potter Society

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Near Sawrey from Tower Bank Arms, March 7, 1909

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1157

PRESERVING THE LANDSCAPE SHE LOVED

**Beatrix with Tom Storey and prize-winning sheep Water Lily
at the Eskdale Show, September 26, 1930**

Published by the British Photo Press

Photo: © National Trust Images

HERDWICKS

Herdwick sheep have been associated with the Lake District for over a millennium. Bred to withstand bitter winters and survive on the fells, Herdwicks rarely return to their farms. Beatrix saw that this ancient breed had been in decline for years and, concerned that it might be lost forever, built up her flocks across her farms—identifying her sheep with an “H” for “Heelis.” Together with the shepherd Tom Storey, Beatrix proudly and regularly won prizes for her Herdwicks.



Tom Storey using an “H” smit marker on a sheep, October 7, 1946. Photo: George Rodger (1908–1995). The National Trust, gift of Hilary Ainsworth. © National Trust Images / Robert Thrift.

Loweswater and Brackenthwaite Show certificate, 1938

Letterpress

Unknown maker

**“H” (Heelis) smit marker used to mark sheep with dye,
ca. 1930–40**

Iron with turned wooden handle

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

TROUTBECK PARK

In 1923 Beatrix purchased Troutbeck Park Farm to prevent it from being bought by developers. This map, previously kept on the wall in the farmhouse, shows the complexity of a fell-farm landscape, set into the mountainside. (Fell farming primarily involves the grazing of livestock, such as sheep, at high elevations.) Beatrix invited local shepherd Tom Storey to move in to restore the farm's ailing flock of Herdwicks. She left Troutbeck Park to the National Trust to preserve traditional fell-farming practices.

Unknown artist

South-Prospect of Troutbeck Parke, map of a farm,
ca. mid-1700s

Watercolor, graphite, and ink

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

MONK CONISTON

Monk Coniston is an estate of around 3,700 acres, made up of lakeshore parkland, farm, and fell, as well as designed landscapes known as Tarn Hows (a tarn is a mountain lake or pond).

Beatrix's great-grandfather Abraham Crompton once owned Tilberthwaite Farm on the estate. Anxious that the land would be lost to developers, Beatrix bought it in 1930. Although she sold half to the National Trust (and bequeathed the remaining half), she managed Monk Coniston until her death.

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Monk Coniston Moor, drawn "7.00 morn,"

November 16, 1909

Watercolor and graphite

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.1057

PROFITS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The profits from Beatrix's books and merchandise were crucial in funding her mission to protect the Lake District from development. With the help of her American friend Bertha Mahony Miller, she set up a fund-raising appeal in the United States, offering original drawings of characters from *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* for five dollars each (about ninety dollars today). The money raised enabled the National Trust to purchase Cockshott Point on Windermere to save it from "disfigurement by . . . town extension."

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943)

Mrs. Rabbit, September 1927

Watercolor and pen and ink

V&A: Linder Bequest BP.548

WORKING WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST

Beatrix managed the vast Monk Coniston estate with Bruce Thompson, the National Trust's agent. She sent many letters to him, like this one, offering advice or voicing her frustrations with some of the National Trust's decisions. Despite their disagreements, Bruce wrote of Beatrix on her death, "No other woman was so knowledgeable about the local breed and method of farming."

Beatrix Heelis (née Potter) (1866–1943)

Letter to Bruce Thompson, January 17, 1938

Ink

The National Trust: Hill Top and Beatrix Potter Collection

ONE OF HER LAST LETTERS

At Beatrix's invitation, shepherd Joseph Moscrop helped with the birthing of lambs for eighteen years. Just a week before she died, Beatrix wrote her last goodbye to this valued friend: "Very far through, but still some kick in me. Am not going right way at present. I write a line to shake you by the hand, our friendship has been entirely pleasant. I am very ill with bronchitis." She died on December 22, 1943.

Beatrix Heelis (née Potter) (1866–1943)

Letter to Joseph Moscrop, December 13, 1943

Graphite

The Beatrix Potter Society