

The Legacy of Beatrix Potter

by *Teresa Bruner Cox*

Beatrix Potter is well known to people of all ages the world over for her beautifully illustrated children's stories such as the Peter Rabbit books. What many people do not know is that the majority of the scenes from these stories were modeled on real life places in rural England, where the Potter family spent long spring and summer holidays during Beatrix' childhood. Particularly after 1905, the settings from her books — farmyards, rustic homes, and country villages — reflect the increasing amount of time she was spending in the Lake District of northwestern England. It was here that as a young woman beginning her career, she invested the profits from her early books in some farmland and then in a home for herself. The new life which she made for herself in Near Sawrey in the Lakes allowed her to gradually break free from her domineering parents and devote more time to producing the books which gained her fame.

Beatrix Potter's fondness for the Lake District is vividly expressed in her watercolors and sketches of the rustic farm and garden of her home "Hill Top," and the country lanes of the surrounding village of Near Sawrey which illustrate most of her childrens' stories. Even the interior of her home and its actual furnishings were used as backdrops for the adventures of her animal characters, and these characters themselves were often modeled after real pets or farm animals which she had raised. But Potter's love of the Lake District countryside extended beyond just an impulse to capture its beauty in her paintings, and share it with others through her books. Her involvement in the movement to preserve the magnificent landscape of the Lake District and its rural way of life grew as she spent more and more time there, until it became a very deep personal commitment to which she dedicated much energy and a great deal of her income in her middle and later years. She eventually married a local man and settled in the Lake District permanently. After that, her interest in publishing declined and her life centered around farming, breeding sheep, and acquiring major landholdings in the Lake District which were given to the National Trust on her death.

The efforts of Beatrix Potter and other members of the fledgling National Trust can

be appreciated by anyone who has the opportunity to visit the Lakes today, as their work led to the foundation of the Lake District National Park which has been responsible for protecting the area for present and future generations. In this paper, I would like to introduce the less well known figure of Beatrix Potter, gentlewoman farmer and conservationist — the real Beatrix Potter, and the real life behind the stories. In particular, I would like to show how her experiences in the Lake District became the source of many of her stories and her art.

Early Life

Helen Beatrix Potter was born in London in 1866, the oldest child of a comfortably well-off middle class family. Her paternal grandfather had made a fortune in textile manufacturing in Lancashire, and had later become a Member of Parliament. Beatrix' father Rupert Potter had studied law, but he seldom practiced his profession, preferring to occupy himself with socializing, political interests, photography, and collecting and appreciating art. Beatrix' mother Helen Leech Potter also inherited a considerable amount of money from her own father, who had been a cotton merchant.

Beatrix had a very close relationship with her younger brother Bertram, and they spent much time together when they were young. Like most children of their time and social class, they were trained at an early age in the art of drawing, and they spent many childhood hours together observing and sketching nature at their grandparents' country estate in Hertfordshire, and on summer holidays in Perthshire in Scotland. It was no doubt from these experiences that Beatrix developed a strong love of the countryside and its wild animals and plants from an early age, and also a keen ability to observe. Both she and her brother kept many pets, including frogs, snakes, tortoises, mice, bats, salamanders, and lizards, which they observed and sketched. In *The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse* (1910), we meet a lot of creepy-crawley creatures drawn in intricate and realistic detail, including a butterfly, a spider, a bee, and other insects. These illustrations were based on painstaking drawings done as a child from specimens in London museums such as the Victoria and Albert near her parents' home. As a young woman, she also had pet mice, rats, rabbits, and a hedgehog which went with her on holiday trips; these pets served as models for the storybook mice, for Peter Rabbit and his kin, and for Mrs. Tiggy-winkle the washerwoman-hedgehog.

When the pets died, they were sometimes stuffed or dissected by young Beatrix and

Bertram, so both became very knowledgeable of anatomy, and this no doubt added to the realism and accuracy of their drawing. However, neither Beatrix or her brother seems to have shown much respect for the preservation of nature as such when they were young; their methods of observation were often intrusive or even destructive, for the sake of art or science. It was only in later life that Beatrix as a farmer became aware of the need to protect the rapidly changing English countryside, and particularly the fragile environment of the Lakes and surrounding farms and fells, from the ravages of development and tourism. Interestingly, although raised in the city, both she and her brother eventually became farmers.

Beatrix was largely self-taught as an artist, which may account for much of the freshness and originality in her work, but her interest in drawing and painting was apparently encouraged by both her parents and her governesses, and from the age of twelve to seventeen she had special lessons from a drawing teacher. Her father had many artistic friends, including the famous painter John Millais, who is said to have given young Beatrix advice on her painting (Taylor, Whalley, Hobbes, and Battrick, p. 13). Frequent art gallery visits with her father helped her to develop a strong critical sense as well.

When she was a teenager, Beatrix kept a journal written in secret code, which may have helped her to develop skill as a writer. Leslie Linder, the transcriber of her journal, says that it shows that Beatrix had many years of careful preparation for her later career as a storyteller (Linder, 1966, p.xxi). The writing of such a coded journal also may have indicated her wish for privacy and more independence from her parents. Although she describes her early life as not unhappy (MacDonald, p.22), it would seem that Beatrix had a rather solitary and isolated childhood, particularly after Bertram went away to school when she was eleven years old. She spent a lot of time with her father, visiting art galleries and posing for his photographs, but apparently she was never very close to her mother. Her parents discouraged her from developing friends or from going visiting, and she often had only the companionship of a governess or tutor. She was educated entirely in her parents' home. One biographer claims that until the age of thirty, she seldom spent much time outside the third floor (the "nursery") of her family's Kensington home, not even taking meals together with her parents (MacDonald, p.1).

Even when Beatrix grew up, her parents continued to be very possessive and to demand her presence and attention, to the extent that they strongly opposed her plans for marriage on two occasions on the grounds that her proper place was to stay home and take care of them. But as early as 1883, she writes in her journal of a need to "do something" on

her own, apart from her existence as an extension of her parents (MacDonald, p.7).

We can imagine that time might occasionally have hung heavily on her hands and that writing, sketching, and painting provided a welcome diversion for young Beatrix and helped to fill many solitary hours. She spent much time sketching her pets, recording details of the houses and countryside where the family spent its holidays, drawing exacting studies of insects and animals from specimens in natural history museums, and studying fungi.

Beatrix' closest teenage friend was a young woman named Annie Carter, who worked as Beatrix' companion and tutor from 1883-1885. The two girls were not very far apart in age, and Miss Carter remained a life long friend even after she married. The new Mrs. Moore moved away to Bayswater, and later to Wandsworth Common, where she raised a family of six children. Thereafter, Beatrix was a frequent visitor at the Moore's, and it was to Annie Moore's children that Beatrix wrote the first Peter Rabbit story in the form of an illustrated letter in 1893. Others of her stories had their origins in similar picture letters, including *The Tale of Jeremy Fisher* (written in 1893 for Eric Moore), *Little Pig Robinson* (1894, also for Eric), and *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* (to Noel Moore in 1897).

Visits to the Lakes

Until 1882, the Potter family's holidays were generally spent in Scotland. But that summer, they were unable to get their usual residence at Dalguise House, and so they decided to go the Lake District of northern England instead. This visit was the first in a series of family trips which probably affected the future of Beatrix' life. Over the next few years, she spent more and more time in the Lake District until she finally bought property of her own with the earnings from her first few books. She was still living in the Lake District when she died sixty-one years later.

The Potters' first summer in the Lake District was spent at Wray Castle, on the west side of Lake Windermere. One of their frequent guests there was Hardwicke Rawnsley, the vicar of nearby Wray village, who was a leader of a growing movement to preserve the Lake District's natural scenery from industrial development and the effects of excessive tourism and incursion by the railways. Their meeting occurred just as Rawnsley was organizing the Lake District Defence Society, which later became the National Trust for the United Kingdom. Rawnsley's strong ideas about the importance of conservation and preservation of nature and open land in the Lakes impressed Beatrix considerably. She

was sixteen at the time.

The Potter family spent the next five summers at a house called Lingholm, which was located on the shore of Derwentwater, a lake north of Windermere and near the town of Keswick. There was a fine view of St. Herbert's island in the lake, and the woods were filled with red squirrels which no doubt served as the models for the illustrations in the 1903 *Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*. Many of the original scenes which were the bases for her illustrations in this book are still clearly recognizable by visitors to Derwentwater today, and are also recorded in photos taken by her father at the time.

Of her first visit to Sawrey in 1896, Beatrix wrote in her journal, "It is as nearly a perfect little place as I ever lived in, and such nice old-fashioned people in the village." (MacDonald, p. 10) She stayed that summer at a house called Lakefield (renamed Eeswyke in 1900), which had a beautiful view across Esthwaite Water towards Coniston and the hills beyond. It was at Eeswyke that Potter did many of her famous pictures of fungi. In 1897 she even wrote a scholarly paper detailing a new method for propagating spores.

Both the natural beauty of the countryside and the rustic charm of Sawrey village and its inhabitants appealed to Beatrix. Perhaps this appreciation reflected a longing for the simpler life of an earlier age, for in fact, life in the Lake District had changed little from what it had been like in the rest of England a century before, prior to the inroads of the industrial revolution and the railways. Later, the Lake District also provided Beatrix with an opportunity to escape from the control of her parents after she bought her own home and farm in Near Sawrey.

After three consecutive summers in Scotland, the Potter family returned to the Lake District again for their holidays, and stayed in various houses situated along the waterside, including Hoelhird, on Windermere, and again at Eeswyke on Esthwaite, and at Lingholm on Derwentwater. Her journal at this time reflects her growing love of the Lakes and the surrounding countryside, referring to ". . . the ideal beauty of Coniston . . ." and ". . . the wonderful view over Troutbeck Tongue. There is a largeness and silence going up into the hills." (Taylor et al, p.21)

Building a Career

Beatrice first sold some of her art at the age of 24, to a greeting card company for £6, money which she and her brother needed to purchase a microscope lens. More sales of

sketches and illustrations followed. One publisher, Frederick Warne, also suggested that they might publish her drawings in book form if she had an idea for a story line.

In 1892 the Potters spent the summer in Birnam, Scotland, near their former summer residence. There Beatrix spent much time sketching the countryside, and studying the varieties of local fungi in detail and doing watercolors. She also had her pet rabbit, Benjamin, which had accompanied her from their London home. Some of the pictures from this summer were sent to Annie Moore to entertain her small children.

The next two summers were also spent in Scotland in a house called Dunkeld. There, in 1893, Beatrix wrote that memorable letter to young Noel Moore, who was five years old at the time and suffering from scarlet fever. This letter was to change the course of her life, because it contained, in words and sketches, the core of the first Peter Rabbit story which was finally published as a book eight years later. Beatrix often visited the Moores when she was in London, and was very fond of the children, to whom she sometimes wrote illustrated letters. This particular letter started out, "My dear Noel, I don't know what to write to you, so I shall tell you a story about four little rabbits whose names were Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail and Peter." (Taylor et al, p.18) Peter Piper was the name of Beatrix' current pet rabbit.

When in the Lakes, Beatrix and her family continued their friendship with the conservation leader Hardwicke Rawnsley, whom they had met on their first visit to the district. When "The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty" was founded in 1895, Rawnsley became its first Honorary Secretary, and Beatrix' father Rupert Potter became one of the first life members of the National Trust.

Rawnsley had written guidebooks and poetry about the Lake District, and he was instrumental in helping Beatrix publish her first book. He had also written some childrens' verse books, so he was able to give Beatrix valuable advice when she decided to turn her Peter Rabbit letter into a childrens' book. At first they were unable to find a company to publish it, so Beatrix printed 250 copies at her own expense in December 1901. In late 1902, a revised version of Peter Rabbit was published by Frederick Warne; the verse narration of the story was changed to prose, and the black and white drawings had become the famous watercolor illustrations which have delighted readers for many years since. Beatrix then privately published a second book, *The Tailor of Gloucester*, but Frederick Warne became interested in this story as well. With major revisions, Warne published it in late 1903 along with a third Potter book, *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, which like *Peter Rabbit* and *The Tailor of Gloucester*, had originally been written for one of the young Moore

children, Norah. *Squirrel Nutkin* is set on a island in Derwentwater and, as has been mentioned, it features many recognizable views of the area. From this time, real life scenes from the Lake District appear more and more often as backgrounds for the animal characters in her book illustrations.

By this time, *Peter Rabbit* had sold over 50,000 copies in the Warne edition, and Beatrix spent her royalties to buy a field in the village of New Sawrey in the Lakes, very near the house called Lakefield (now Eeswyke) where her family sometimes spent their holidays. In August, 1905, she invested further earnings in an active farm in Near Sawrey called Hill Top. Her family's coachman and his wife and children had usually lodged at Hill Top Farm when the Potters were visiting there. The sale was not actually finalized until November, 1905. She kept on the tenant John Cannon to run Hill Top for her, since she still had to spend most of her time in London, running the household for her aging parents.

During this period, she had become very friendly with her publisher, Norman Warne, one of Frederick Warne's three sons, and also with his sister Millie. *The Tale of Two Bad Mice* (1904) features a doll house patterned after one built by Norman Warne as a gift for his niece. *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* appeared the same year and sold well, and Beatrix began work on two more stories, *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle* and *The Pie and the Patty-Pan*. There was also an increasing demand from shops for Peter Rabbit accessories — dolls, games, and even wallpaper. Beatrix found much support in her work from Norman Warne — her parents regarded the books as a dubious hobby which she ought to fit in to her spare time, and perhaps they weren't too pleased about her growing private income, or even the propriety of a woman making money in business.

Her professional relationship and friendship with Norman began to deepen, and in July 1905 he asked her to marry him. Unfortunately, Mr. and Mrs. Potter strongly opposed their marriage, officially on the grounds that the Warne family were "tradespeople" and therefore socially below the Potters (the recent connections of both the Potter and Leech families to the textile trade were apparently conveniently ignored by Mr. and Mrs. Potter). Their real motives in opposing the marriage of their 39-year-old daughter were probably more selfish, as they depended on her to take care of them. They finally agreed to the engagement on the condition that it be kept secret, and that the actual marriage be postponed.

Tragically, Norman Warne, a seemingly vital man of only 37, died suddenly of pernicious anemia (or, according to biographer MacDonald, leukemia) on August 25, 1905. The grief-stricken Beatrix spent the next few weeks with Norman's sister, and then went to the Lake District to stay at Hill Top. Here she shared the house with the family of her farm

manger, Mr. Cannon, and tried to distract her mind with the business of running and improving the farm. She also spent her time there sketching detailed studies of frogs for *The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher*, which came out in July 1906, and drawing background scenes for the story from the local surroundings, particularly around Esthwaite Water. From then on, she began to spend more and more time in the Lakes, usually still with her parents. She had the small farmhouse at Hill Top remodeled and expanded so there would be more room and privacy for her as well as the Cannon family. Her often fragile health improved, and she reported that she was sleeping soundly and enjoying a good appetite, perhaps due to the fresh country air.

The following years from 1905 to her marriage to William Heelis in 1913 were her most productive in terms of publishing: fourteen story books and two painting books were produced. Her growing personal independence in her new life at Hill Top seemed to release her creative energy. The books of these years reflect her interest in farming and the Lake District countryside, and the sometimes quaint and old-fashioned customs and lifestyle of the local people.

Potter had been adding to her land holdings when new property became available. In May of 1909, she bought Castle Farm, across the road from Hill Top and with adjoining fields. This purchase made her a major property owner in the Sawrey area. She had meanwhile become interested in sheep breeding, and decided to try to reintroduce more of the sturdy native Herdwick sheep back into the area. By this time she had royalty income from seventeen books plus sales of related toys, accessories, and children's clothing with motifs from her stories. Through her real estate purchases, she had met William Heelis, a solicitor in the nearby town of Hawkshead. In 1912, he proposed marriage, but again Beatrix' parents were opposed in spite of the fact that she was forty-six years old and likely to spend the rest of her life alone if they forced her to give up this chance. But they were old and wanted her exclusive care and attention; her eighty-year-old father was particularly unwell.

During the period of her parents opposition to the marriage, Beatrix herself became quite ill and her heart was damaged. Finally her parents agreed to the wedding, and Beatrix and William were married in London on October 14, 1913. From this time onward, Beatrix became more and more involved in the duties of running her farms and properties, participating in local activities and charities, and in the movement for preservation of the Lake District.

Beatrix and William decided live in the expanded house at Castle Farm, Sawrey,

because the house at nearby Hill Top was not large enough. But she kept the house at Hill Top as it had been when she lived there, and kept her drawings and many of her prized possessions there, including favorite china and furniture. Hill Top functioned as a studio, a storage area for pictures, and a place where she could meet the growing number of visitors who came to meet her in the years that followed.

Beatrix' life was now firmly centered in the Lakes, but for a time she was still obligated to make frequent visits to London to look after her parents. After her father died in May 1914, she brought her mother up to the Lake District, and in 1919, she bought her a home at Lindeth How in Windermere so that she could live in the Lakes all year round.

Although Beatrix continued to paint and she did publish a few other books after her marriage, many of these were based on previous unfinished projects. The focus of her life had shifted from publishing to the life of a gentlewoman farmer. For the last thirty years of her life, her main interests were farming, sheep breeding, and land preservation. She considered herself an amateur writer and artist, as opposed to her real vocation as a farmer. But her books remained important as a way to finance her growing interest in acquiring Lake District property and keeping large holdings from being split up and developed. When she died at the age of seventy-seven she left over four thousand acres of land and fifteen farms to the people of the United Kingdom through the National Trust.

Lake District Influences on Potters' Stories and Illustrations

Once Beatrix Potter began spending time in the Lake District, her books increasingly made use of Lakeland settings and people, and the content of the stories reflected her growing love for the land, her interest in farming and the lives of farmers and village people, and her pride of ownership in the home she bought for herself at Hill Top Farm.

The Derwentwater setting of *Squirrel Nutkin* (published 1903) has already been mentioned. *The Tale of Jeremy Fisher*, published in 1906, had first been created in a 1893 letter to little Eric Moore, but Beatrix began to work seriously on it as a book after the death of Norman Warne and her purchase of Hill Top, changing the setting from Scotland to the Lake District. The beautifully detailed illustrations of Lake District ponds are, in the opinion of many, her most beautiful paintings, and show her growing appreciation for undisturbed nature. The tranquility of the scenes she sketched and painted for *Jeremy Fisher* may also have helped to soothe her grief-stricken mind. In a letter to Norman Warne's brother, her new editor, during this time she wrote, "I feel as if my work and your kind-

ness will be my greatest comfort.” (*The Complete Tales of Beatrice Potter*, p.120) (Note: All direct citations in this paper of Potter’s books and their illustrations will refer to this 1989 compilation of her work, cited hereafter as “CT”.)

Most of Potter’s books from 1905 to 1913 are set specifically in Sawrey. The blend of fantasy in the stories and very realistic details in the drawings of the animals, her own country house and its contents, her farm, Near Sawrey village, scenes from nearby Hawkshead, and scenic vistas of the countryside and Esthwaite water, give both believability and fresh charm to her books of this period. Critics believe that acquiring her own home at Hill Top after so many years of parental tyranny released Potter’s energies, triggering her most creative years. They see the growing complexity of her story plots and the greater variety of animals in the stories as evidence of her own increasing self-confidence (MacDonald, p.87). She also became more assertive in her dealings with her publishers Frederick Warne and Co. from this period. The loving care lavished on the illustrations of the so-called Sawrey books from this “golden age” is evidence of her strong attachment to the local subject matter, including the land, the people, the village and farms, and the animals.

Soon after acquiring Hill Top Farm, Potter purchased new stock including cows, ducks, chickens, sheep, and her first sheepdog Kep, as well as some cats to challenge the prolific rat population. Potter had always been very fond of animals and she had special pets among the farm animals at Hill Top, just as she had always had pets as a child and as a young woman. Real pets and farm animals from Hill Top and Sawrey appear in her stories as Jemima Puddle-Duck, her rescuer Kep in the same story, Mrs. Tiggy-winkle the hedgehog, the neighbor’s Pomeranian dog Duchess in *The Pie and the Patty-Pan*, and Ribby and Tabitha, who were favorite farmyard cats.

Local people also appear in various guises, either directly in the illustrations, or as models for the animal characters: Mrs. Cannon, the farm manager’s wife, and her children appear in the opening scenes of *Jemima Puddle-Duck*; the carpenter dog John Joiner in *The Roly-Poly Pudding* was based on John Taylor, the local Sawrey handyman, and he is also mentioned in *Ginger and Pickles*. Farmer Potatoes in *The Roly-Poly Pudding* was based on a neighbor, John Postlethwaite. Beatrix Potter herself appears in some of the illustrations of the farm and Sawrey village.

Although started before she bought Hill Top, *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-winkle* (1905), like *The Tale of Jeremy Fisher* and *The Roly-Poly Pudding*, was rewritten before publication so that the characters and scenery would fit into a Lake District setting. Sketches for *The*

Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-winkle were first started on a Lake District holiday in 1901, so Hill Top Farm itself does not appear, but Newlands is a real place in the Lakes and Lucie was the daughter of the vicar in that town. The lovable, humanized character of the hedgehog-washerwoman Mrs. Tiggy-winkle is based on a Scottish laundress Potter knew. But Mrs. Tiggy's pride in her housekeeping and the lovingly drawn details of her neat country cottage, with its simple stone floors and open fireside, probably reflect Potter's growing respect for the virtues of country people and rustic village life, the life Beatrix Potter chose to become part of. Her appreciation for the Lake District countryside is also expressed in the lovely views of the mountains, the paths and stone walls, and cottages built of natural materials which appear in *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-winkle*.

The Tale of Pie and the Patty-Pan, published in 1905, was also started before Potter was actually living in Sawrey, but the story is clearly set in the area. She started sketching Sawrey village streets, homes, and gardens for the book as early as 1902, and both the illustrations and the story itself reflect her affection for the local village people and their sometimes quaint social customs and overly formal manners. For example, when Ribby invites Duchess to a party and the latter accepts, they communicate by mail even though they are near neighbors. And although Duchess fears that the pie she is offered will be something she dislikes (mouse), she tactfully avoids mentioning her concern and instead writes, "I hope it will be fine." (CT, p.103). Although there are no characters in this story clearly based on real human individuals, the general lack of sophistication of the local people is mirrored in the credulity of both Ribby and Duchess, who apparently accept an impossibility — that Duchess could become ill by eating the patty-pan without noticing it. Potter obviously regards both the elaborate village code of behavior and the simplicity of the people with affectionate humor.

As mentioned above, Duchess the Pomeranian from this story was a Sawrey neighbor's dog, and Ribby was modeled after a cat at recently purchased Hill Top Farm. Some scenes in the illustrations such as a doorway are recognizable as being from Hawkshead, a village just beyond Sawrey; Tabitha Twitchit's shop (CT, p.108) is in fact now the site of the National Trust Information Office there. But most are sights we can immediately locate today in Near Sawrey, such as the frontispiece scene of Ribby standing in a pasture, with a wall and large white farmhouse and hills behind her. Ribby's house is actually Lakefield Cottage in Near Sawrey, where the Potters often stayed. The garden walk, with its brilliant flowers, where Duchess reads her letter, is now the Buckle Yeat Guesthouse (see Photo 4), which still has a luxuriant and colorful garden. It is just next

door to the Tower Bank Arms (Photo 3), which itself appears in *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck*.

Even more significant is the attention of the artist to the details of Ribby's house, such as the hearth and the oven so critical to the plot (CT, p.110), and the coronation teapot with which Duchess is served (CT, p.114). Along with *The Roly-Poly Pudding* and *The Tale of Tom Kitten*, this book was originally published in a larger size than the Peter Rabbit books, a format more suitable for the beautifully detailed illustrations. The colors of this book are also much brighter than the muted colors of nature in the previous books, perhaps reflecting Potter's joy in her new surroundings and personal life (it was written before Norman Warne's death). Potter calls *The Pie and the Patty-Pan* her second favorite book, after *The Tailor of Gloucester*.

Once Potter settled into Hill Top, more details of her house and its contents began to appear in the cat stories. *The Tale of Tom Kitten* (1907) was begun after Potter had owned Hill Top Farm for a year and it is officially classed as her first Sawrey book. She had expanded and renovated the house at Hill Top with loving care, and was planning a new garden. As in the next kitten book, *The Roly-Poly Pudding*, the illustrations in *Tom Kitten* clearly reflect her delight in her new property and feature details still recognizable inside the Hill Top house today, including the stairway and landing (CT, p. 149), and the bedrooms (CT, p. 157 and p. 158). The fronticepiece view of Tabitha and Tom coming up the garden path, with the Hill Top house and its distinctive peak-roofed doorway in the background (CT, p. 148; see also Photo 1) has changed little today, and similarly recognizable if you visit there are the garden gate itself (CT, p.154), the view of Sawrey from the stone garden wall (CT, p.153; Photo 6), and the view of the garden path (CT, p.157) where Tabitha catches and spansks Tom. The highroad of Near Sawrey, where the kittens meet the Puddle-Ducks walking along (CT, p.154), is recognizable from the background building as the spot in front of what is now the Buckle Yeat Guesthouse (Photo 4), previously used in *The Pie and the Patty-Pan* illustration of Duchess in her garden. The farmyard of Hill Top is recreated as the setting for the Puddle-Duck family (CT, p.156; see also Photo 2).

Tabitha herself was modeled on a real cat at Hill Top Farm who was a good rat-catcher; critics say that Tabitha's personality seems to be a hybrid of Beatrix Potter and her mother, who was often overly concerned with propriety and social appearances. Like *The Pie and the Patty-Pan*, *The Tale of Tom Kitten* is concerned with manners and also with children's reactions to adult ideas about proper behavior. The author shows both her

respect for good manners when not taken to extreme (Tabitha's lying about why the kittens have been sent to bed is not acceptable), and her conflicting appreciation for the humorous pranks and mischief of her pets and farm animals. This story also introduces Potter's first real villain, Mr. Drake Puddle-Duck, who seems to speak politely, but steals the kittens' clothes for his own family, in spite of the fact that they look ridiculous and do not fit.

The beautifully drawn pictures of the interior of Tabitha's neat house also show Potter's pride in her own new home, in tidy housekeeping, and in the interior decorations she herself had chosen for Hill Top, including the flowered washbowl and caned chair in the scene where Tabitha is cleaning the kittens (CT, p.150). Like *The Pie and the Patty-Pan*, and *The Roly-Poly Pudding* after it, *Tom Kitten* was published in a larger format than the earlier books in order to better show the detailing of the illustrations.

The Roly-Poly Pudding, published in 1908 and later renamed *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers*, was in fact written in 1906 when Potter was getting to know her new Hill Top house in intimate detail. The story of Tom Kitten being attacked by a pair of greedy, light-fingered rats is a humorous reference to a very real problem at Hill Top, where hungry rats seemed to have the run of the ancient house and its many nooks, crannies and "secret passageways." Hill Top Cottage had been built in the seventeenth century and the walls were four feet thick in places; the fact that the house had not been well maintained in recent years no doubt contributed to the rat problem. At first Potter was apparently not too troubled by the rats' presence at Hill Top, having been familiar with rats as a child and having had several rats as beloved pets; the book is in fact dedicated to her pet rat Sammy. But gradually even she became amazed at the rats' numbers and the amounts they consumed; in a letter to a friend she refers to their multitudinous hiding places in the cupboards and closets of the farmhouse. In *The Roly-Poly Pudding*, she describes Tabitha's home as "an old old house full of cupboards and passages. Some of the walls were four feet thick and there used to be queer noises inside them . . . Things disappeared at night, especially cheese and bacon." (CT, p.175) Potter's reference at the end of the story to the rats pilfering of "a little wheelbarrow, which looked very like mine" (CT, p.192) testifies to her increasing amazement at the voraciousness of the real Hill Top rats: "I'm sure I never gave them leave to borrow my wheel-barrow!" (CT, p.193) Potter herself is shown at the end of the lane in the accompanying illustration.

The village in this story is Sawrey itself, populated with animals instead of people. The pictures show Potter's own home in loving detail, including the doorway of Hill Top

Cottage (CT, p.178); the hearth which Tom Kitten climbs into at one point (CT, p.174 and 183), and its decorative bellows and warming pan (CT, p.192) which are mentioned in her letters of the period; her dresser with its collection of china plates, here seen from a rat's perspective (CT, p.180); the new grandfather clock Potter had purchased for the landing (CT, p.176); and Samuel Whiskers with the rolling pin on the upstairs landing, framed by her newly-curtained windows in the background (CT, p.188). It is clear from the care taken with these pictures that Potter is feeling a great deal of pride in having her own home and choosing her own furnishings, after so many years under her parents' control.

An especially pleasing illustration in this book is the beautifully and accurately painted view of the fields around Hill Top, seen from the vantage point of the chimney top (CT, p.184). This shows how thoroughly Potter had explored her new home and its surroundings!

There are two interesting points in the development of her use of animal characters in this story. One is the appearance of Samuel Whiskers as the second in an increasingly nasty series of animal villains. And, reflecting her growing interest in farming, there is the idea of animals not just as pets but as workers who have to earn their keep. The dog John Joiner is a carpenter; and Tom's kitten sisters "go out rat-catching in the village and they find plenty of employment. They charge so much a dozen, and earn their living very comfortably." (CT, p.195) This aspect of animals' lives reappears more frequently in later stories in the characters of Jemima Puddle-Duck; Kep the sheepdog and his friends the fox hounds; and Ginger and Pickles, a cat and dog who run a store.

The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck (1908) continues to reflect Potter's growing love of and involvement with Hill Top farm and the life she was making for herself there. As has already been mentioned, the Cannon family appear in the illustrations (CT, p.161 and p.162), and the book was dedicated to the Cannon children, Betsy and Ralph. Kep was a real sheep dog on Hill Top Farm, and Jemima's eccentric ways were based on those of a real duck who was constantly wandering off to lay her eggs in out of the way places in an effort to keep them from Mrs. Cannon. In addition to the farmyard scenes set at Hill Top, and the scene of the rhubarb patch and garden gate with Hill Top Cottage in the background (CT, p.162; see also Photo 5), there are many beautiful views of the surrounding countryside including Esthwaite Water and the distant Langdale Pikes (CT, p.162; see also Photo 8) which visitors can still enjoy today, since the area around Sawrey has changed little. The Tower Bank Arms, a local pub still popular with visitors, also appears as the backdrop for the scene where Kep meets the fox-hounds who help him rescue the naive

duck from the “foxy-whiskered gentleman” (CT, p.168; and Photo 3). The themes of life and death, self-preservation, and the value of shrewdness reflect Potter’s involvement in farm life, and with Sawrey’s wild and domesticated animals.

The Tale of Ginger and Pickles (1909) shows Potter’s growing managerial involvement with Hill Top Farm. As she becomes preoccupied in real life with the practicalities of running a business, making a profit, keeping her accounts, and having smooth business dealings with her neighbors, these concerns are reflected in the story of a dog and a cat who run a shop where everything is sold on credit but none of the customers ever pays his bill. In the end, Ginger and Pickles have to close the shop when they receive a bill for “the rates and taxes” (CT, p.218), another real-life concern of Sawrey people. The drawings of Ginger and Pickles’ store are based on what was until recently an actual shop in Sawrey “which sold nearly everything.” (CT, p.211) Located across the road from Hill Top and the Tower Bank Arms, the shop is now a private home (see map of Sawrey, Figure 1). The shop is the focal point for the social life of the animals in the story just as a shop in a real village provides a central meeting and gossiping place for the local people.

The recognizable views of the village apparently amused the local Sawrey people when the book was published, and since all the main characters were animals and did not resemble specific villagers, no one took offense. The story was dedicated to John Taylor, husband of the owner of the real local shop, who had a reputation for liking to sleep a lot. He is referred to in the story as the “Mr. John Dormouse” who stayed in bed when he was complained to (CT, p.221).

The color plates for this story are brighter than usual for Potter, perhaps because the animals are living in a human world of man-made colors and going about human, not animal, occupations.

Neither Potter’s beloved Hill Top nor Sawrey village appear in *The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse*, which depicts a number of unwelcome insects which invade Mrs. Tittlemouse’s tidy home. As mentioned earlier, the insect drawings were based on precise studies Potter had made at a younger age during her frequent museum visits. But the preoccupation of Mrs. Tittlemouse with keeping a clean house probably reflects Potter’s own concerns at that point in her new life as a home owner and housekeeper. The efforts of Mrs. Tittlemouse to eject the insects may also be interpreted as a wish to control one’s environment, something Beatrix Potter was finally being allowed to do after many long years in her parents’ household.

In *The Tale of Mr. Tod* (1912), Potter introduced two even more villainous characters

than those which had appeared earlier in *The Roly-Poly Pudding* and *The Tale of Jemima Puddle Duck*, on the grounds that she was tired of doing “goody goody books”: “I’ve made many books about well-behaved people. Now, for a change, I’m going to make a story about two disagreeable people, called Tommy Brock and Mr. Tod.” (CT, p.253) These names are the country slang expressions for a badger and fox, respectively, and they are definitely not nice characters.

The scarcity of color pictures and the larger proportion of black and white sketches in this book reflects the increasing priority given to farm work over painting at this time in Potter’s life. She was also still caring for her aging parents.

The story is located in Sawrey, including the pasture of Castle Farm, a neighboring property to Hill Top which Beatrix had bought in May 1909, and where Mr. Tod’s winter home is located “amongst the rocks at the top of Bull Banks, under Oatmeal Crag.” (CT, p.253) There are also views of Esthwaite Water and the countryside around Sawrey. (See Photo 7 and 8.)

The Tale of Pigling Bland (1913) is considered to be the last book of her most productive and creative period in Sawrey. She was married to William Heelis in the same year that this book was published, and her interest in painting and producing books diminished thereafter. There is a fine picture in the story of Castle Cottage (CT, p.285), where she and her husband lived after their marriage. *Pigling Bland*, like *Mr. Tod*, contains many black and white sketches, and the color pictures are less detailed than in previous books, showing how busy Potter was becoming with other matters.

This porcine love story was based on the 1909 sale of two pigs from Hill Top Farm, with the pigs cast as heroes and the farmers as villains. Mrs. Pettitoes’ children are disposed of by the farmers because they are eating too much, even invading the carrot patch. Potter had been impressed with the voracious appetites of Hill Top’s piglets, who weren’t satisfied with five meals a day (MacDonald, p.121), and in the story she describes Mrs. Pettitoes’ children as having “very fine appetites . . . they eat and indeed they *do* eat!” (CT, p.283) Pigling Bland and his brother Alexander are told to make their way to market at Lancaster, the nearest big city to Sawrey, and on their journey we are treated to excellent views of the local countryside. This book also features pictures of the signposts at Sawrey crossroads (CT, p.291 and p.308).

But Alexander and Pigling Bland are separated. Pigling Bland becomes lost and falls into the clutches of dishonest Peter Thomas Piperson, who keeps him because “it was too late in the season for curing bacon.” (CT, p.296) At Piperson’s, Pigling Bland meets Pig-

wig, “a perfectly lovely little black Berkshire pig” (CT, p.299) based on Potter’s pet of the same name. The hungry Pig-wig has been stolen by Piperson. The two pigs run away together, and after a narrow brush with a tradesman in a cart, they escape over the bridge “hand in hand” to a promising life across the county border, “over the hills and far away” (CT, p.308) into Langdale. For both little pigs, the ideal future would be to “have a little garden and grow potatoes,” (CT, p.291) just as their author preferred the life of a country farmer to her previous existence in London.

Some critics see the story of the pig-couple as a reference of Potter and her own fiance. The real couple had often walked together on the same local paths where Potter places Pigling Bland and Pig-wig (CT, p.304 and p.308). But Potter herself denied the comparison. (Beatrix had faced strong parental opposition to her proposed marriage to William Heelis, but like the two pigs in the story, there was a happy ending.)

After her wedding in 1913, Beatrix Potter considered marriage and the management of her farms to be her real career, and painting and publishing assumed a lesser role in her life. She often resurrected old projects and old sketches and paintings for her later books, particularly as her eyesight deteriorated with age; and she illustrated the stories with pen and ink sketches instead of the watercolors for which she was famous. As a result, some of her later works lack the freshness and cohesiveness of the stories published earlier in her life, the captions from the text do not always fit with the pictures, and a hodge podge of pictures in different styles and with different degrees of detailing may appear in a single book. However, because of her established reputation and commercial success, her publishers were less fussy about the quality of the new works as long as they had something to publish. *Appley Dapply’s Nursery Rhymes* (1917) contains illustrations and rhymes which had been done at earlier times. In 1919, during the production of *Cecily Parsley’s Nursey Rhymes* (published in 1922) she complained to her publishers, “You don’t suppose I shall be able to continue these d—d little books when I am dead and buried! I am utterly tired of doing them, and my eyes are wearing out.” (Taylor et al, p.65) But stories such as *The Fairy Caravan* (1929) continued to feature Hill Top Farm animals, and the village of Sawrey and its surroundings.

The most notable work from this later period is *The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse* (1918). The story is a defense of country life as opposed to the city, “where there was no quiet” (CT, p.320) and “the food disagreed . . .” (CT, p.324). At the end of the story, Potter states her own preference clearly: “One place suits one person, another place suits another person. For my part, I prefer to live in the country like Timmy Willie.” (CT,

p.330)

The garden home of Timmy Willie is located in Sawrey, and Johnny Townmouse lives in nearby Hawkshead, where Potter's husband had his offices. One character in this story was based on a Dr. Parson, who played golf with her husband, and the cook is another local, Mrs. Rogerson. Beatrix' own horse "Old Diamond" pulls the cart in one picture (CT, p.320). But at this point she was fifty-eight, her vision was already declining, and she complained that colouring pictures was now too difficult for her. She continued to publish because she needed the income to finance her newfound interests in farming and in preventing the break-up and development of large Lake District estates.

Potter and the National Trust

Beatrix Potter first was first exposed to the English preservation movement and the fledgling National Trust organization through Hardwicke Rawnsley, whom she met on a visit to the Lake District while still in her teens. Rawnsley had developed a great love for the Lake District and had married a woman from Ambleside, on Lake Windermere. While at Oxford, he had been impressed by the opinions of John Ruskin, himself a Coniston resident, on the need to prevent the exploitation of the Lake District and the destruction of its unique natural beauty. Ruskin had become active in the successful movement to prevent the extension of a railway line from Windermere to Ambleside.

Rawnsley became involved in the "Defence Association" which was trying to prevent Thirlmere from being converted into a reservoir, and later in stopping construction of a slate-carrying rail line proposed to run the length of Derwentwater. But there was a need to promote more positive rather than merely defensive tactics, because, in Rawnsley's words, there would "in the near future be more invasions and desecrations of Lakeland to be withstood." (Taylor et al, p.173) A "Permanent Lake District Defence Society" was therefore formed and it included illustrious members such as Ruskin, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and the Duke of Westminster. When "The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest of Natural Beauty" was founded in 1895, Rawnsley became its Honorary Secretary. The new organization arbitrated many disputes between property owners and developers on one side, and preservation groups on the other, and Rawnsley himself fought many battles with his pen, writing to local officials to prevent the destruction of areas of great natural beauty throughout the country. The Trust also began to acquire various properties, the first of which was the site of a memorial Rawnsley built to honor Ruskin, on

Friar's Crag above Derwentwater (Taylor et al, p.180). The National Trust lands were opened to the public to provide "open spaces in which working people were able to breathe." (Taylor et al, p.176)

Over the years, Beatrix Potter's involvement in the Lake District increased and she also continued her friendship with Rawnsley. Her first purchase of Lake District property was a field in Near Sawrey, which she bought in 1903 using royalty money from her earliest books. After she bought Hill Top Farm and began to make her home in the Lake District, she became increasingly concerned about how to preserve the countryside and way of life which she had grown to love.

In 1902, the Trust had the opportunity to purchase Brandelhow Park Estate on the shore of Derwentwater, thus saving it from builders; the needed £7000 was raised in five months, with Beatrix Potter herself contributing something towards the preservation of a place where, in Rawnsley's words, "visitors can land without trespass and where they may wander at will, . . . a fine thing for the nation." (Taylor et al, p.181) In 1906, the Trust acquired Gowbarrow Park on the shore of Ullswater, again preventing building development and allowing the shoreline to be used by the public. Beatrix Potter was one of 1600 people who contributed money for this acquisition, as she she did again in 1913 when Rawnsley requested a donation towards the purchase of Queen Adelaide's Hill on Windermere.

In 1907, an Act of Parliament gave the National Trust broader powers of management and guaranteed its permanent ownership of all its then existing 1700 acres of properties. Potter continued to support the Trust and give donations throughout her life, often anonymously in her later years so that no one really can say how much she gave altogether. But differences in philosophy began to emerge, and as a farmer, Beatrix was not always convinced that the National Trust would prove to be the best custodian for Lake District land.

As Potter became a serious farmer, property seemed to be the best investment of her royalty income, so she had bought some lands adjacent to Hill Top and had also purchased a pretty Sawrey cottage in order to keep it from being torn down. In 1909, she bought neighboring Castle Farm, and later had its house expanded as a residence after her marriage at the age of forty-seven.

One of her practical contributions to public access to the Lake District was an idea in 1913 for automatic gates, which would help protect the farmers from the carelessness of visitors, and thus make them less likely to close their right-of-ways to the public. As a

farmer, she did not think that visitors should be allowed to roam at will, heedless of their impact on the land; this was an early philosophical difference from the ideas of Hardwicke Rawnsley and other Ruskinites who dominated the National Trust. Recently The National Trust has become more conscious of the need to maintain country paths, walls, shorelines, and woods, and to preserve the delicate balance between man and nature in this fragile setting. The Lake District Landscape Appeal has now been established to raise funds for this purpose.

Another of Potter's important social contributions was the organization of the Hawkshead and District Nursing Association, with one of her cottages donated as the nurse's residence. She also contributed generously over the years to The Armit Library in Ambleside, which developed into a treasury of materials on the literary, social, and natural history of the Lake District, as well as its art. Potter gave the library some of her watercolors, including studies of fungi. She also encouraged other artists such as William Heaton Cooper, Deimar Banner, and William Hartley Waddington, for whom Potter found a cottage in Sawrey where he could build a studio.

Potter became more active on behalf of the National Trust while in her fifties and sixties, after she became established as a Lake District farmer. Perhaps because of the early influence of her friend Canon Rawnsley, she felt a need to preserve the old farmhouses, barns, cottages, fields and stone walls, and to prevent the construction of cheap modern housing along the picturesque country lanes. She also fought to preserve as much as possible of the fells and valleys, with their old stone shelters for stock. She had become a dedicated and skillful sheep farmer and breeder, and she wanted to keep sheep farming alive in the Lake District. Preservation of farming and the villages was necessary to keep the traditional heart of the Lake District from dying. Potter was less of an idealist than Rawnsley, who like his teacher Ruskin saw the preservation of nature as a means toward improving the life of the common man, especially the worker. Potter was more concerned with preserving the country way of life which she had grown to love.

Crucial to this objective was keeping large farms and land holdings in the Lakes from being broken up into small parcels and sold off to developers, or from falling into the hands of careless absentee owners. Potter began to purchase properties as they came on the market, using the proceeds from her books. Her husband Willie Heelis helped her with the legal and financial aspects of her real estate dealings; this in fact was how they had originally met. He often would get advance notice of property going on sale, particularly after World War I when many properties had to be sold. (When Heelis died, he also left the Na-

tional Trust most of his property, including the building housing his Hawkshead law office. It is now "The Beatrix Potter Gallery," operated by the National Trust and open to visitors from spring through autumn.)

Potter next acquired Penny Hill Farm in Eksdale, along with a herd of her favorite Herdwick sheep, and an eighteenth century farmhouse and barn, all set in a lovely landscape. But it was the farms that she was interested in preserving; the beautiful landscape simply came along with it.

In 1924 she purchased the 2000 acre Troutbeck Park Farm, located in a spectacular setting in a lovely valley near Lake Windermere, and considered to be one of the finest landholdings in the Lake District. She introduced more of the hardy local Herdwick sheep to Troutbeck in addition to the 1000 head already there. Canon Rawnsley had long before realized that this breed of sheep, which could survive the wet climate and the cold winters on the high fells, was a key element in the Lake District ecology, and therefore worthy of preservation. Potter hired an experienced local shepherd, Tom Storey, to take care of her Herdwicks, paying twice his former wages.

From this time on, Beatrix became more and more interested in raising sheep, breeding them, and showing them. She acquired an excellent reputation as a farmer, judging local farm shows and becoming President of the Herdwick Sheepbreeders' Association, founded by Canon Rawnsley. She also continued in her determination to acquire and preserve more Lake District farms. By now, painting and publishing were important only as a means to these ends. She started using royalties from her American publications in *The Horn Book* (arranged through her American friend and supporter Bertha Mahoney) to finance The National Trust. In 1927 she also sent fifty signed sketches based on the original Peter Rabbit illustrations to be sold in America to raise money for National Trust land purchases at Cockshott Point on the east shore of Lake Windermere, thus helping to save this last remaining section of the lakeshore from falling into private hands.

The original 1929 publication of *The Fairy Caravan* in the U.S.A. also financed a major land purchase which benefitted the National Trust. In 1930 she bought the 4000 acre Monk Coniston Estate, which extended from Coniston Water to the breathtaking fells and valleys of Little Langdale, and included Tarn Hows, Tom Heights, Tilberthwaite, and several small farms. Beatrix then immediately sold more than half of the estate, 3000 acres, to the National Trust at her original cost. She promised to deed the other half over to the National Trust on her death.

Because of her experience as a farmer in the area, Beatrix was asked to manage the

new property for the National Trust, collecting rents from tenant farmers and advising them, making necessary repairs, and planting new trees. This was not an easy job for an aging woman, particularly in the midst of the Great Depression, but she continued to do it until a new agent was finally appointed in 1937, when she was seventy-one years old. But even after this she continued to help educate the new agent, Bruce Thompson, so that he could competently look after the huge estate. This transfer of responsibility marked an important turning point for the National Trust, which from then on became an active administrator of lands instead of just a passive custodian owner.

Beatrix continued to feel concern over the problems of public access to the National Trust properties. She was worried about the effect of swimming on Tarn Hows, and opposed the intrusion of cars onto the shoreline, and “gramphoning and wirelessness” in natural areas, as “a great nuisance” (Taylor et al. p.197).

Before entering hospital for surgery in 1940, Beatrix arranged with Tom Storey to secretly dispose of her ashes when she died. At the same time she revealed, “After my day, Storey, every farm that I own will go to the National Trust.” (Taylor et al, p.201) Beatrix survived this operation only to confront once again the hardships of the war years, which taxed her strength. She finally left the world she loved on December 22, 1943. Tom Storey had “been talking to her an hour or more the night before, about the farm and everything.” (Taylor et al, p.202) Only Tom Storey and his son Geoff knew where her ashes were scattered. Tom Storey lived at Hill Top Farm until his retirement, when he was succeeded by his son, who in turn held the farm until his death in 1988. Now Hill Top has been re-let and is still a working farm.

Beatrix Potter Heelis’ death was a great loss to the Lake District and to her husband, who only survived her by eighteen months. But her legacy to the future was a great one: she left 4,000 acres of land to the National Trust in her own will, and the remainder of the Heelises’ Lake District property passed on to the Trust when William Heelis died in August 1945. This combined “Heelis Bequest” was the largest gift of land which had been received by the National Trust up to that time. The Trust also became the owner of most of Potter’s original drawings through her cousin.

One effect of The Heelis Bequest was to widen the scope of the National Trust’s mission beyond the protection of empty countryside, extending its commitment to protecting Lakeland farms and farming and the associated way of life which Beatrix Potter had so greatly valued. She had specified in her will that Herdwick sheep still be bred by the Trust on her farms, and the Trust is now the biggest owner in the U.K. of this breed of sheep, as

well as the largest landowner in today's Lake District National Park, owning one third of its area. The Trust has also acquired other agricultural estates elsewhere in the U. K., and has developed expertise in their management. The preservation of the distinctive farm buildings included on these new properties and on the Heelis lands has also come to be recognized as a valuable service to the nation, as Beatrix Potter had understood so many years before.

Conclusion

Beatrix Potter once said, "If I have done anything, even a little, to help small children on the road to enjoy honest, simple pleasures, I have done a bit of good." (CT, jacket note) She was surely successful in this endeavor if we judge by the continued popularity of her books. Modern city children both in England and many other countries have been exposed to their first images of nature and idyllic country life through the realism of the rural scenes of her stories. Adults too can feel a nostalgia for the simpler life associated with the idealized countryside.

In her will, Beatrix said that she wanted her house to be kept exactly as it had been during her life, specifying how some of her treasured objects should be displayed. Clearly she understood that she had established an enduring reputation for herself through her books and paintings, some of which were also to be kept at Hill Top.

But her even greater contribution to those who came after her, the donation of all her painstakingly acquired Lake District lands to the National Trust, is an accomplishment that most of her readers are never aware of unless they happen to visit the place which she made her home and immortalized in her art.

By preserving a large area of undeveloped scenic countryside and farmland in the Lake District through her bequest to the National Trust, Beatrix Potter has succeeded on an even greater scale than she originally hoped in achieving her goal of helping us appreciate what is "honest" and "simple". While the tiny rustic village of Near Sawrey now attracts a horde of Potter-fans at the peak of the summer tourist season, their impact is only temporary, and little has really changed from the pre-war days when Potter lived there. Thanks to her dedicated efforts, the natural beauty, rustic simplicity, and farming way of life in this area of the English countryside have been preserved for present and future generations to enjoy and love as she did during the nearly forty years she spent there. This a legacy in which anyone could take pride.

Postscript

This poem was written by Beatrix Potter shortly before her death and was found in her papers at Castle Cottage (Linder, 1971, p.xxvi). I feel that it is a fitting final comment on her love of the Lake District. I must confess that while doing the research for this paper, I myself have fallen under the spell of this timeless, magnificent place.

*I will go back to the hills again
That are sisters to the sea
The bare hills, the brown hills
That stand eternally,
And their strength shall be my strength
And their joy my joy shall be.*

*There are no hills like the Wasdale hills
When spring comes up the dale,
Nor any woods like the larch woods,
Where the primroses blow pale,
And the shadows flicker quiet-wise
On the stark ridge of Black Sail.*

*I will go back to the hills again
When the day's work is done,
And set my hands against the rocks
Warm with an April sun,
And see the night creep down the fells
And the stars climb one by one.*

—Beatrix Potter (1866-1943)

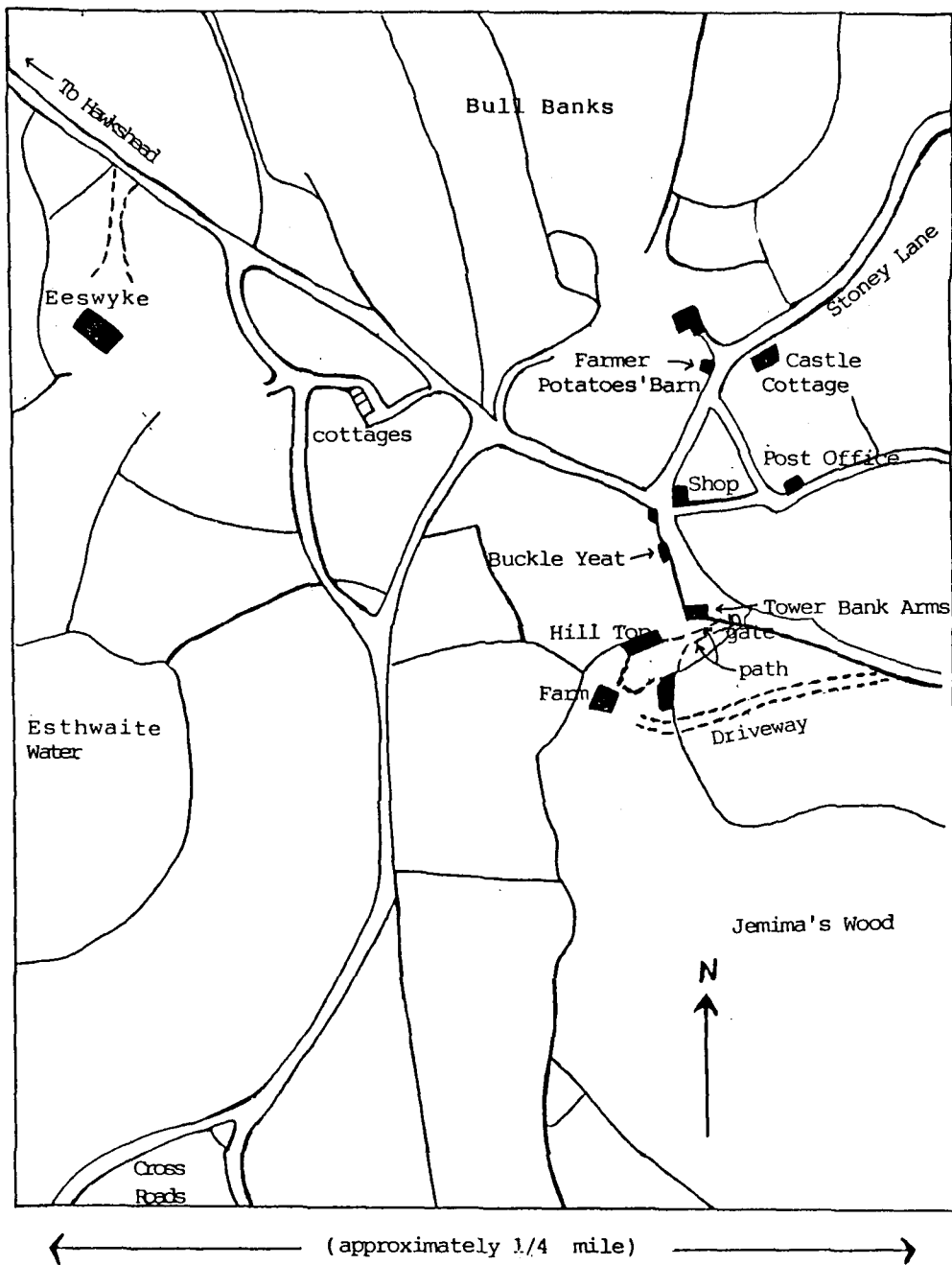
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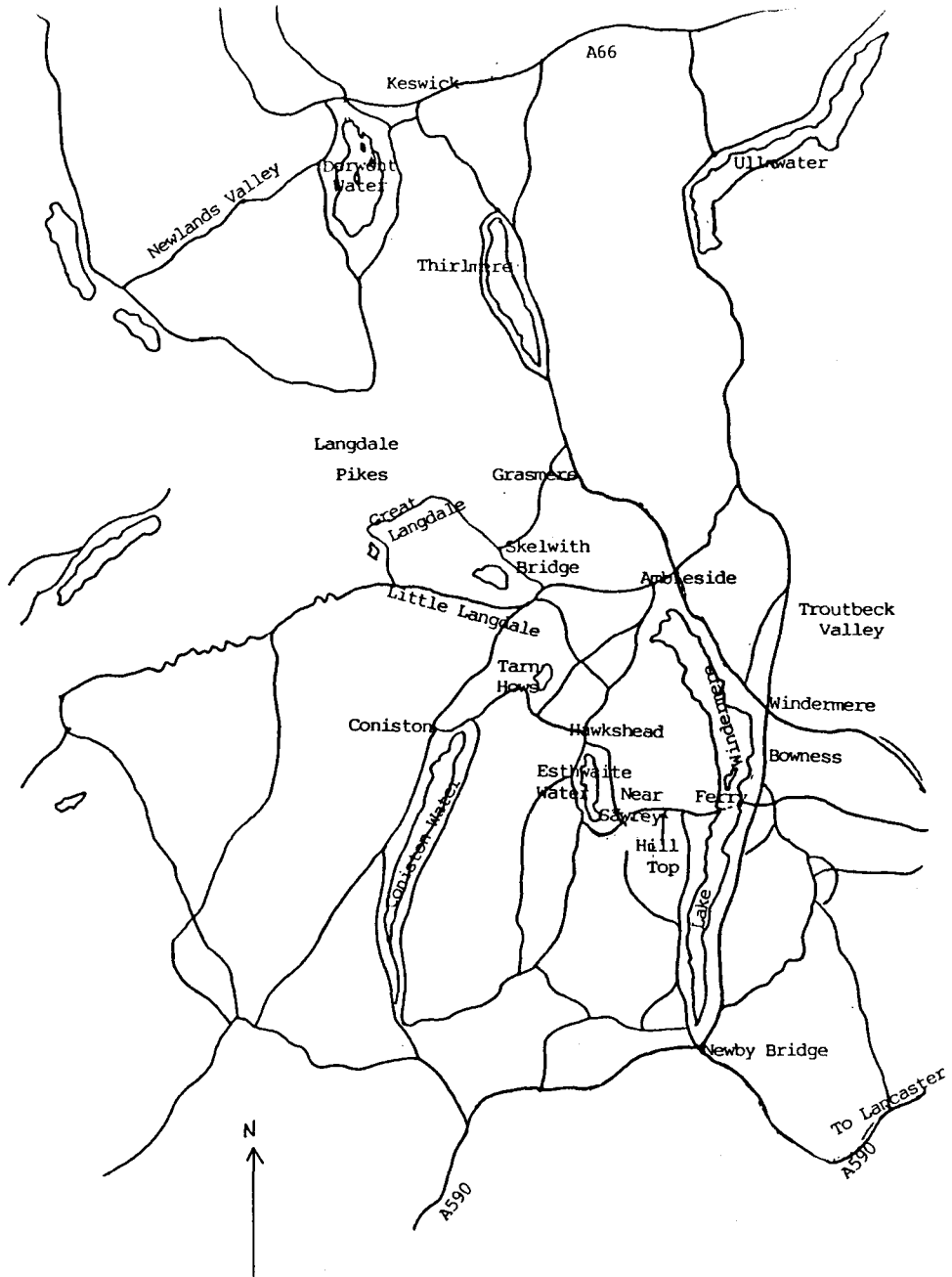
The Legacy of Beatrix Potter

Figure 1. Map of the Village of Near Sawrey. (Adapted from Linder, 1971.)



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Figure 2. The English Lake District.



The Legacy of Beatrix Potter

Photo 1. Hill Top, Near Sawrey

(See *The Complete Tales of Beatrix Potter*, page 148.)

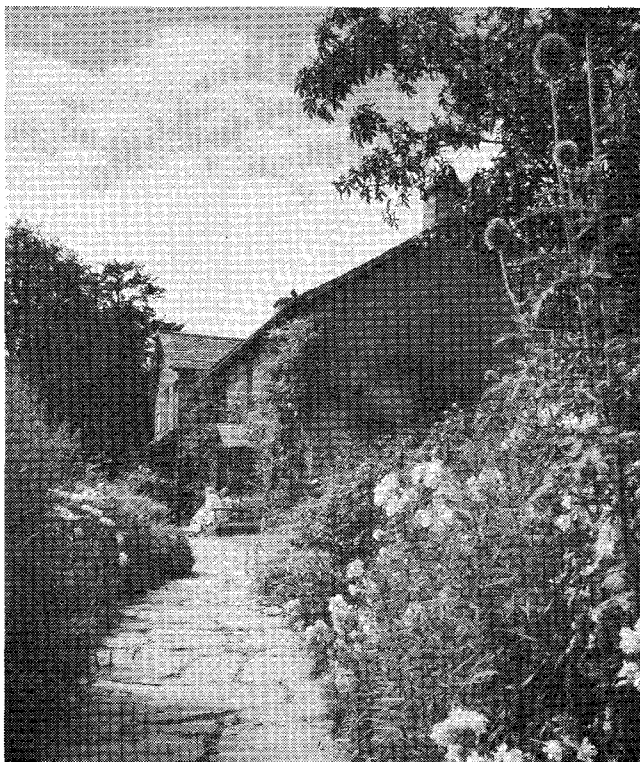


Photo 2. Hill Top Farm. (See *Complete Tales*, Page 156, 161)

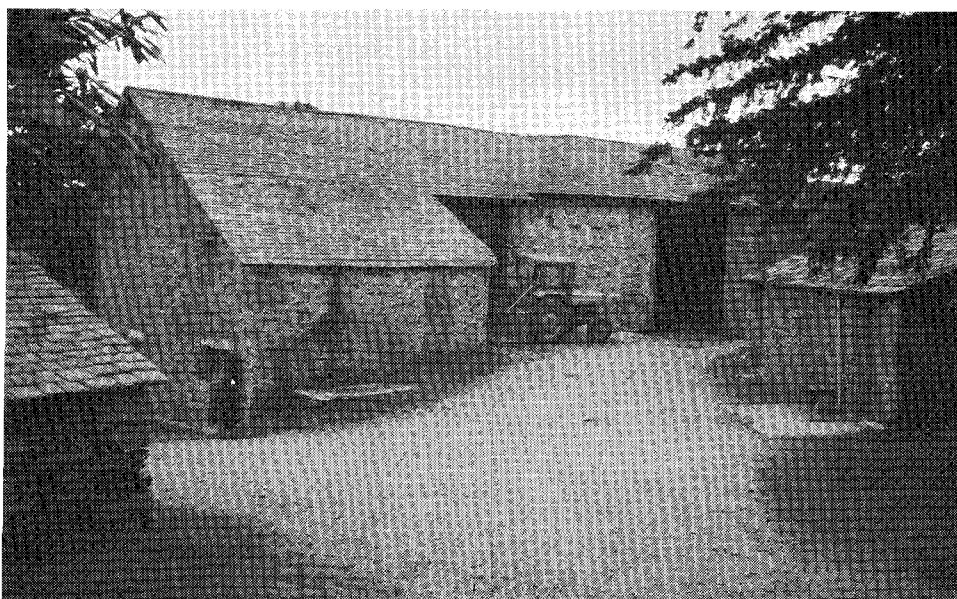
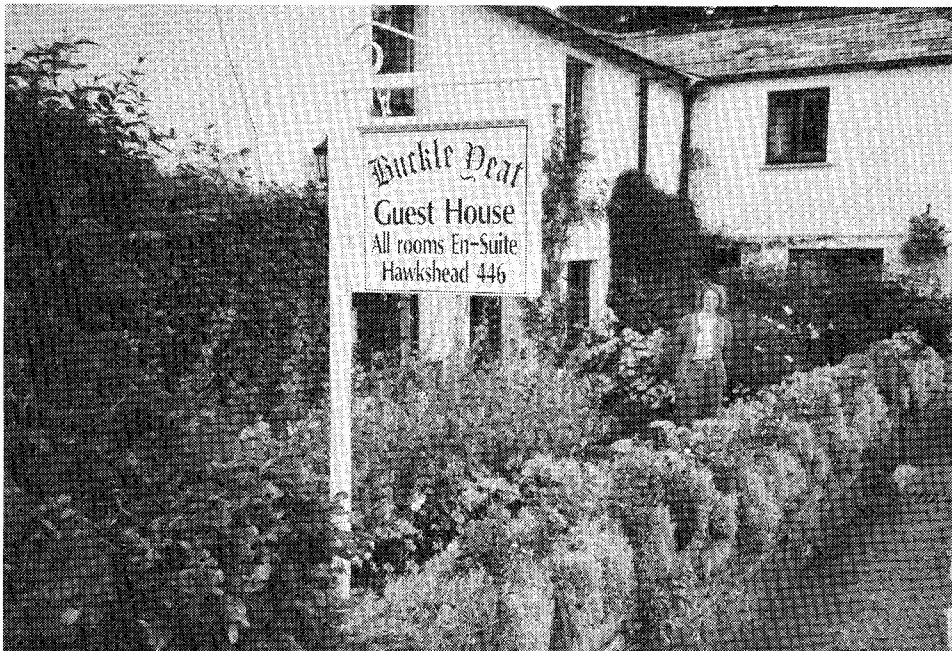


Photo 3. The Tower Bank Arms, a pub in Near Sawrey. (See *The Complete Tales of Beatrix Potter*, page 168.)



Photo 4. Buckle Yeat, Near Sawrey, now a guesthouse.
(See *The Complete Tales of Beatrix Potter*, pages 104 and 154.)



The Legacy of Beatrix Potter

Photo 5. The kitchen garden of Hill Top Farm and its famous gate. (The rhubarb patch is on the right.)
(See *The Complete Tales of Beatrix Potter*, page 162.)

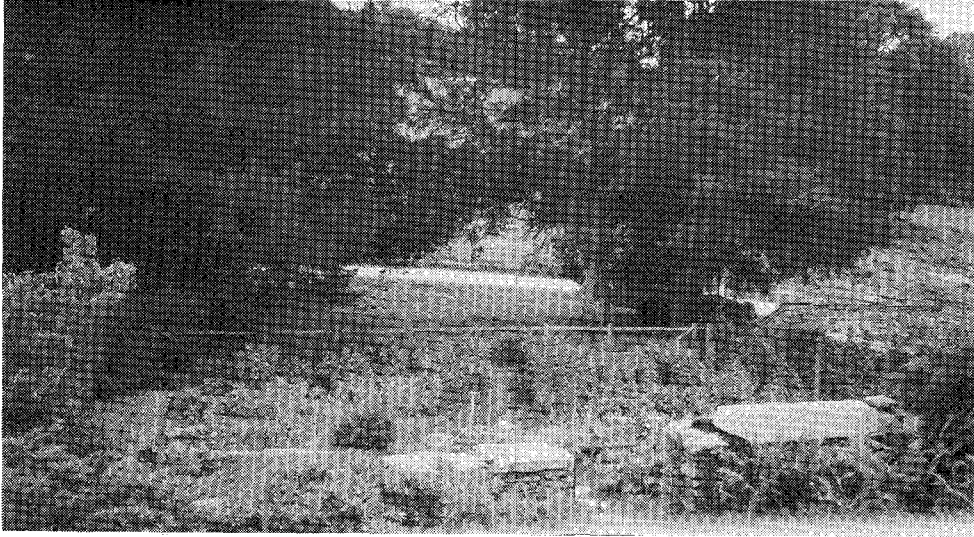
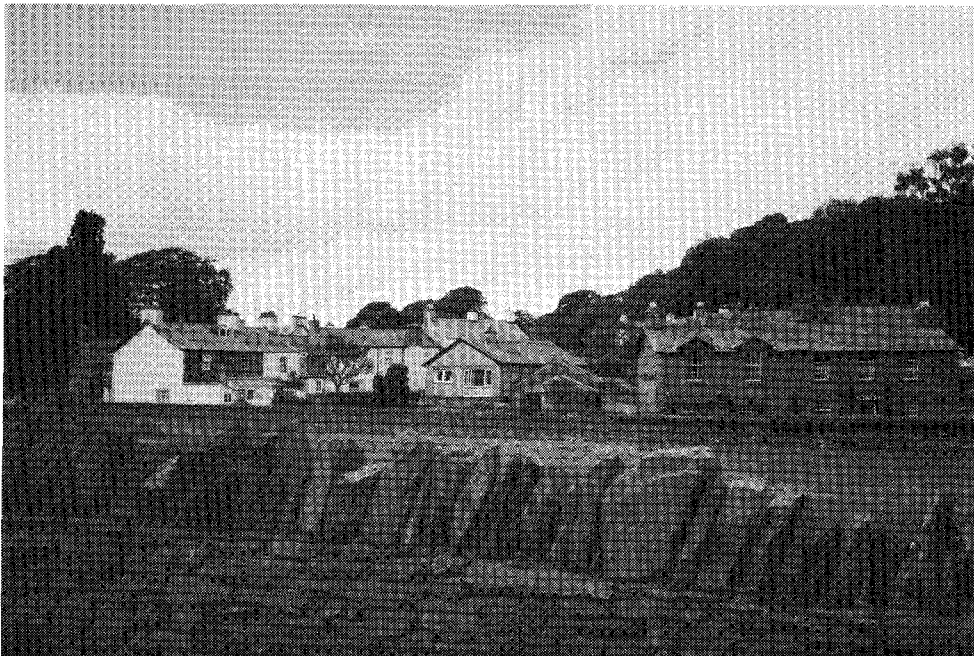


Photo 6. A view of Near Sawrey village from the high road opposite Hill Top Farm.
(See *The Complete Tales of Beatrix Potter*, page 153.)



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Photo 7. Fields opposite Hill Top Farm, Near Sawrey.
(See *The Complete Tales of Beatrice Potter*, page 157.)



Photo 8. Esthwaite Water, with Langdale Pikes in distance, as seen from the high road, Near Sawrey.
(See *The Complete Tales of Beatrice Potter*, page 162.)

