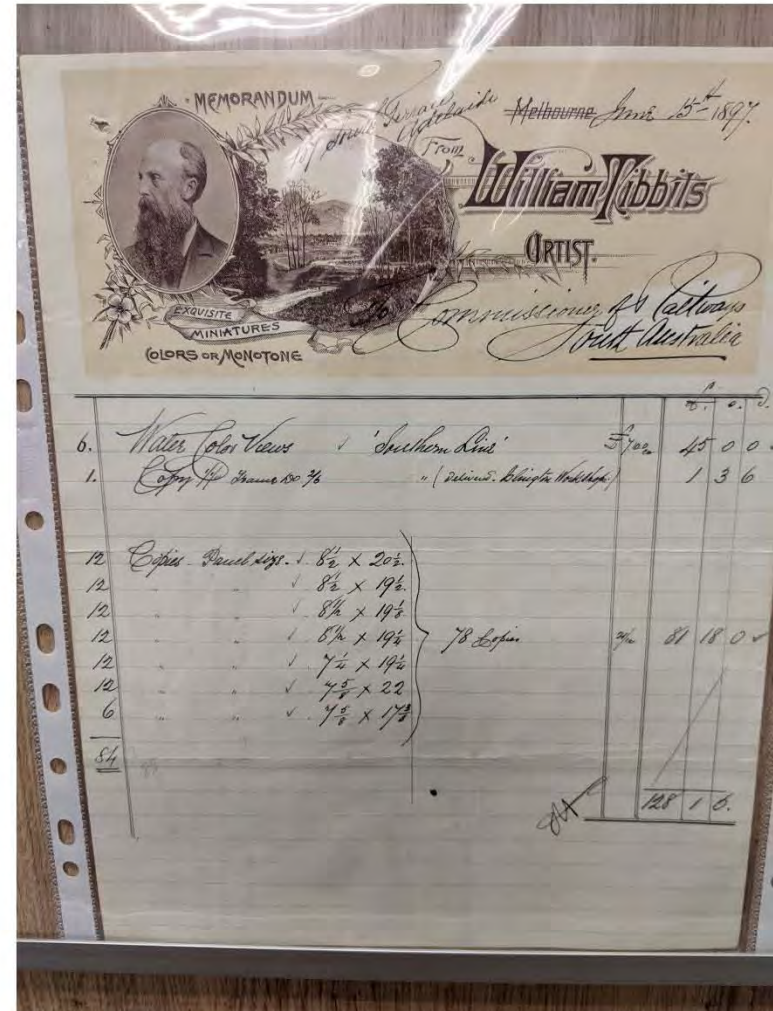


Members Items from Gaye Chequer



There are other examples of Beatrix Potter using parts of her house in the 'little books' but as there are no real-life post-cards to illustrate alongside her sketches, I can not draw a comparison.'

Invoice from William Taylor Tibbits to SA Railways



Some historical facts on Aussie postcards

AMONG THE PIGEON-HOLES. *(Continued from the August edition)*

He waved his hand, over a sort of War Office of pigeon-holes with three million picture postcards, duly sorted, arranged, and classified, resting in them. Here you travelled, pigeon-hole by pigeon-hole, round the British coasts. There you made the acquaintance of sweet little backwaters on the Thames. Then you wandered among grand old cathedrals Salisbury, Winchester, Durham, and the rest. Then you fell among golf champions you saw how this famous player stood and how another set to work. You sped in a minute to Ireland, and in two contiguous stacks you saw the old Irish low-backed car on the one hand and Sackville-street, Dublin, with its up-to-date tramway-cars on the other, Rows of pretty children, knots of fluffy kittens, be vies of beautiful actresses (of whom a word soon), a collection of frowning castles, colleges enough to arouse memories in the midst of the flower of English youth – these and many other classes of subjects lurked in their own particular tiers of boxes. You pulled out “a chunk of Eastbourne.” or took “half a dozen Brightons.” You found picture postcards for every place you hail ever visited or dreamed of; picture postcards for all the emotions in all the wide gamut of human feeling. Do you long for the autograph of your favourite actress? Get a pictorial postcard bearing her beautiful portrait, send it, to her together with a postal order and she will gratify your wish. I don’t know the autograph prices of all our leading actresses, but I am informed that Miss Ellen Terry charges half-a-crown. Of course, the whole of the money thus derived goes to the theatrical charities.

SEMI PICTURE POSTCARDERS.

Tabloid correspondence was born when the picture postcard arose. There is no room for much writing on the new medium. The languorous, soft-scented three volume missive of grandmother’s day is an impossibility now, and the picture postcard is a merciful provision in the breach. Now that production of the London letter has spread far and wide to the colonies, our friends overseas neither want nor expect long letters from home. But the picture postcard with “All’s well” or “Willie’s married” jotted in the corner can be dropped into every departing mail with a fresh feature of English life every time.



Refer to text bottom of previous page.

From *The Tale of The Pie and the Patty-Pan* (page 38), we see Ribby warming her paws beside the north-country open range, which provided Beatrix with all her comforts, a source of warmth, hot water and the cooking of food.

Finding photograph postcards of the items included in Beatrix Potter’s drawings is a harder challenge than the postcards of her wonderful characters, but a rewarding experience when found.



Members Items from Gaye Chequer

The postcard taken inside the house shows the kitchen. Upon entering, is seen the dresser and range that have been included in several 'little picture books'. *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers*, (page 23), shows Anna Marie running in front the dresser.



The dresser is again shown in *The Tailor of Gloucester* (page 23). Underneath the dresser, the wooden wainscots (skirting board) were "mice holes" from where the brown mice came at night. These mouseholes are still there to be seen by visitors to Hill Top cottage.

Tabloid correspondence has so taken hold of our busy age that there are young ladies, I am told, who are willing to compress all their "letter-writing" into the scribbling off of a few "pics" while finishing breakfast. For such there is only one logical conclusion. It is a stern and rigid society with an official button, such button to have at the back a large white disc bearing the simple, potent pledge, "No pics between meals."

150 years of the postcard

The world's first postcard is recognised as being issued 150 years ago, by Austria in 1869. This was a simple, blank, light-brown card (8.5cm x 12cm), with an area for a message, the address and an officially imprinted stamp on the other side, which was half the cost of a normal letter.

An economics professor from Vienna had written an article in the newspaper suggesting that there must be a simpler, cheaper and more practical way to send a short message than a letter, and the Austrian postal authority answered his call.

Other postal administrations followed, including the United Kingdom (1870) and United States (1873). The first Australian postcard was issued by New South Wales (1875), followed by Victoria (1876), South Australia (1877), Western Australia (1879), Queensland (1880) and Tasmania (1882).

Early postcards were Post Office monopolies; private postcard makers submitted unstamped cards for the stamp image to be printed. It was not until 1895 in Australia that private makers could sell unstamped (pictorial) postcards on which the adhesive stamp could be affixed.

In 1895, the Victorian Government gave permission for the use of privately printed postcards, with strict conditions: " ... they must be made of ordinary cardboard not thicker than the material used for the official postcard, and measure not less than 1 inch x 3 inch nor more than 5 ¼ x 3 ¼ inches, and that there be nothing affixed, written, or otherwise impressed on the front thereof except the address and stamps in payment of postage. On the reverse side any communication may be written or printed but nothing whatever can be attached except adhesive stamps in payment of stamp duty".

Some historical facts on Aussie postcards

Australia's first picture postcard was most likely in 1894, when Tasmania produced one for its International Exhibition of that year.

In November 1898, the New South Wales Post Office introduced pictorial postcards featuring attractive scenes of buildings, rivers, waterfalls, etc., printed on the message (reverse) side together with headings, "With Christmas Greetings", "With New Year Greetings" and "Greetings From". The printing filled most of the card area, leaving enough space for short written messages. At the time, post office regulations specified the address only could be written on the front. The postcards featured imprinted one penny (1d) or one and a half pence (1½d) New South Wales stamps. Postcard postage throughout Australia cost 1d and to overseas destinations, 1½d.

Between 1900 and 1920, picture postcards in Australia became an incredibly popular phenomenon. People could cheaply and easily send messages, without the formality of a letter, and they provided a cheap form of souvenir.

Eventually, every event of significance was commemorated in some way with a postcard, and this led to the development of a 'picture on one side and a message/stamp on the other' postcard we are familiar with today. They were also a popular form of advertising.

Most of the postcards Australians sent each other were manufactured overseas (such as the "Grüss Aus" ("Greetings From") postcards from Germany and the Raphael Tuck postcards from Britain). There were prominent Australian firms such as Kerry and Co., Rose Stereograph Co. and W H Beattie, however the quality was often an issue.

The postcard boom was relatively short-lived, due in part to the introduction of a one-penny charge for sending letters, in 1911, the same level as postcard postage. The commencement of World War I (WWI), in 1914, did boost sales a little, due to a sense of patriotism and the desire to communicate with loved ones, and the practice of sending postcards home to Australia increased significantly.

The boom has led to large collections of postcards in museums and libraries around Australia.

Postcards are still purchased and sent around the world, especially by tourists and by Post Crossing enthusiasts, and there is of course a collector market – in fact collecting picture postcards in Australia began during the postcard boom.

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Members Items from Gaye Chequer

Few postcards of Beatrix Potter exist, but this of her standing in the doorway of her beloved cottage is believed to have been taken just prior to her marriage to William Heelis, local solicitor. Here Potter is seen standing to the left-hand side of the portico entrance to Hill Top cottage. A juxtaposition to this image is that of Ribby at the front door, but on the opposite side and about to enter the kitchen.



Mrs Ribby

Members Items from Gaye Chequer

The Tale of Samuel Whiskers (page 34) shows a view from the roof of Hill Top cottage. The view is due north, looking at Stoney Lane from the slated roof, where Tom Kitten had



hoped to catch sparrows. A gable end of Hill Top can be seen to the left of the chimney.



The designs of vintage postcards not only provide an insight into the culture and lifestyle of bygone eras but their messages also provide insights into the lives of Australians. As with stamps, those who collect vintage postcards often do so by theme.

Nostalgic greetings

Sentimental and patriot postcards were a popular theme in early postcard production. The distance of Australia from Britain, in particular, led to a series of “Hands Clasped across the Sea” postcards, which were highly sentimental greetings, as well as various versions on the same theme. This type of card was also prevalent during WWI, when people were also parted from loved ones.

Australian scenes

While many postcards were cheaply produced using poor to average photography, many artists were commissioned to produce postcard series. A H Fullwood (1863–1930) was one such artist. His art was used in 17 sets of cards depicting the Australian landscape, for the popular English postcard firm Raphael and Tuck and Sons; the cards were called “Oilettes”. Born in England, Fullwood left for Australia at age 18 and became an illustrator and lithographer for various newspapers. He was a capable and respected artist, and painted with many members of the Heidelberg School, such as Arthur Streeton. He worked overseas and then returned to Australia in 1920. Interestingly, the Australian series of postcards were painted while he was in England, based on sketches he made in Australia, which may be one many are said to contain inaccuracies. They date from 1905 to around 1910, the lightwater mark of postcard collecting.

Silk postcards from WWI

Australian soldiers in Europe during WWI regularly sent news to concerned family members back home via postcard. Colourful embroidered silk postcards reached the peak of their popularity during this period, particularly to use as greeting cards for birthdays, Christmas and Easter. It was estimated 10 million silk postcards were produced in Europe between 1915 and 1919.

The Silk Postcard Collection, housed in the Australian War Memorial, contains more than 900 woven and embroidered silk postcards from WWI (and a collection from WWII). Produced mainly in France, these sentimental greetings were sent by home by soldiers, including to Australia. The postcards peaked in popularity during World War I, which resulted in a thriving small-scale embroidery industry in France during this time. An estimated 10,000,000 hand-made cards were produced between 1915 and 1919, with remembrance a key theme. Pretty pastel-coloured flowers featured prominently – a stark contrast to the harsh conditions faced on the Western Front, as did butterflies, birthday or sentimental greetings and the flags of allied countries.

Beatrix Potter and Hill Top cottage

Many thanks to Gaye Chequer for the following article on her collecting interests.

Having an interest in anything associated with Beatrix Potter and being a member of the Beatrix Potter Society inspired me to collect postcards on this theme. The sole purpose for most tourists visiting the town of Near Sawrey is to visit her cottage, Hill Top and take away a better appreciation of her works and influence on the Lakes District. This was where Beatrix Potter worked on many of her children's novels. If you examine the colour plate illustrations in the 'little books', as they are affectionately known, areas of the house can be seen.

*An early view of Hill Top is shown in the background of the frontispiece from *The Tale of The Pie and the Patty Pan*. The cottage has not yet had the addition to the left-hand side to accommodate farm manager, Cannon and his family. Potter retained the old original cottage for her personal use.*



From *The Tale of Tom Kitten*, the frontispiece shows Mrs Tabitha Twitchett leading her children up the path to Hill Top's front door. Here we can see the added wing of Hill Top.



The cottage is again shown in the background of the last plate from *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck* (page 58), where Jemima is seen with her four hatchlings.