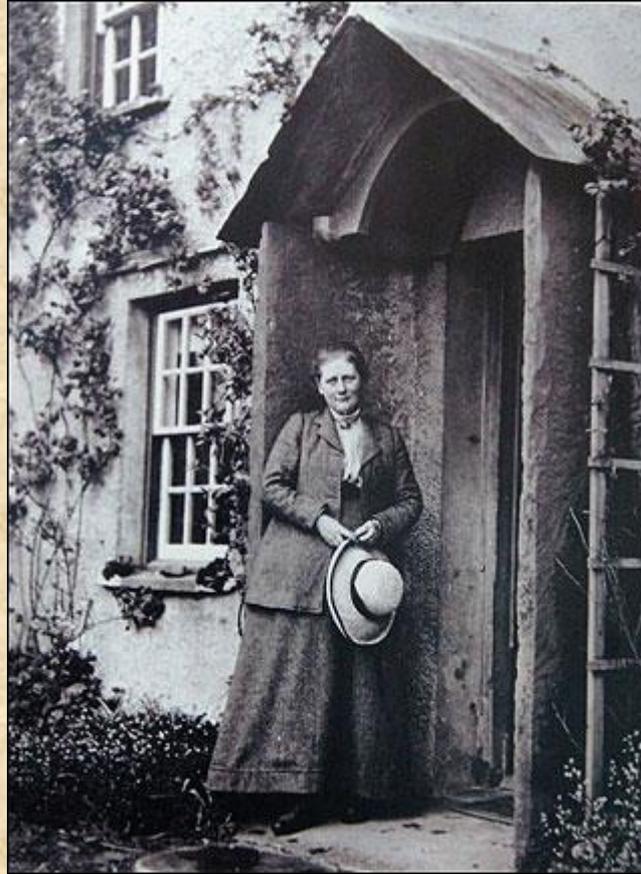


The life of Beatrix Potter



Early days

A little girl in Victorian England, Beatrix Potter was taught at home by governesses and studied art while her brother was sent away to school. She was a shy, reserved personality when interacting with the outside world, but her secret diary written in her own code, revealed a lively young girl with highly critical opinions of her fellow artists.



(Photograph: Beatrix, aged 9, courtesy of Warne Archive.)

Beatrix Potter - the artist.

Despite not going to school Beatrix was an enthusiastic student of nature, teaching herself while painting and drawing the things she saw around her. Her childhood sketches reveal an early fascination for the subject which would continue throughout her life. She also painted many exquisite landscapes that show her pleasure in the countryside.

Beatrix Potter - the artist.

Beatrix and her brother, Bertram, kept many animals in their schoolroom, from mice to birds and lizards to snakes. Beatrix Potter's pets were often subjects for sketches and paintings, and were later to inspire the much-loved characters in her books.

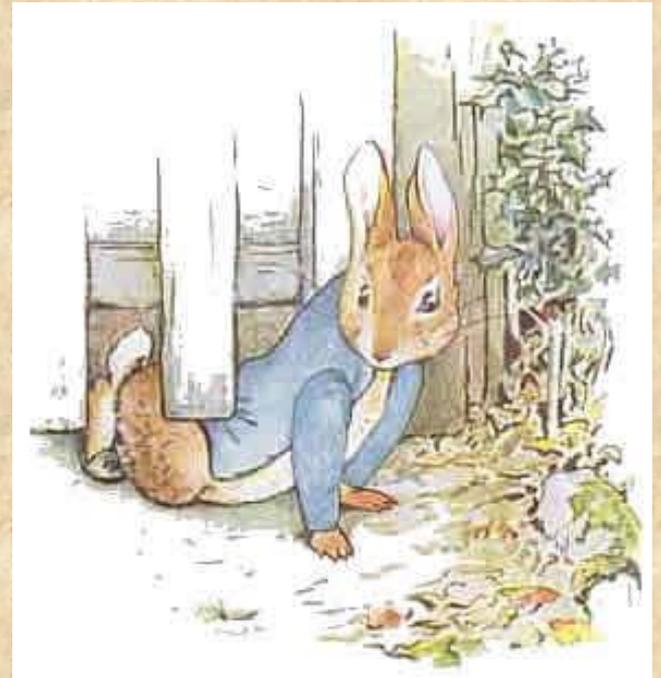
Beatrix Potter - the artist.

*In 1893 Beatrix Potter wrote *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in a picture letter to a little boy she knew who had been ill for a long time. In 1901 she went on to privately print 250 copies of the tale in time for Christmas. A sign of the future success of this little story, these first copies sold very quickly at a shilling each, meaning she quickly had to print another 200 two weeks later.*

Peter Rabbit

The Tale of Peter Rabbit was published by Frederick Warne & Co. in 1902 with an initial 8000 copies printed and the tale has never been out of print since.

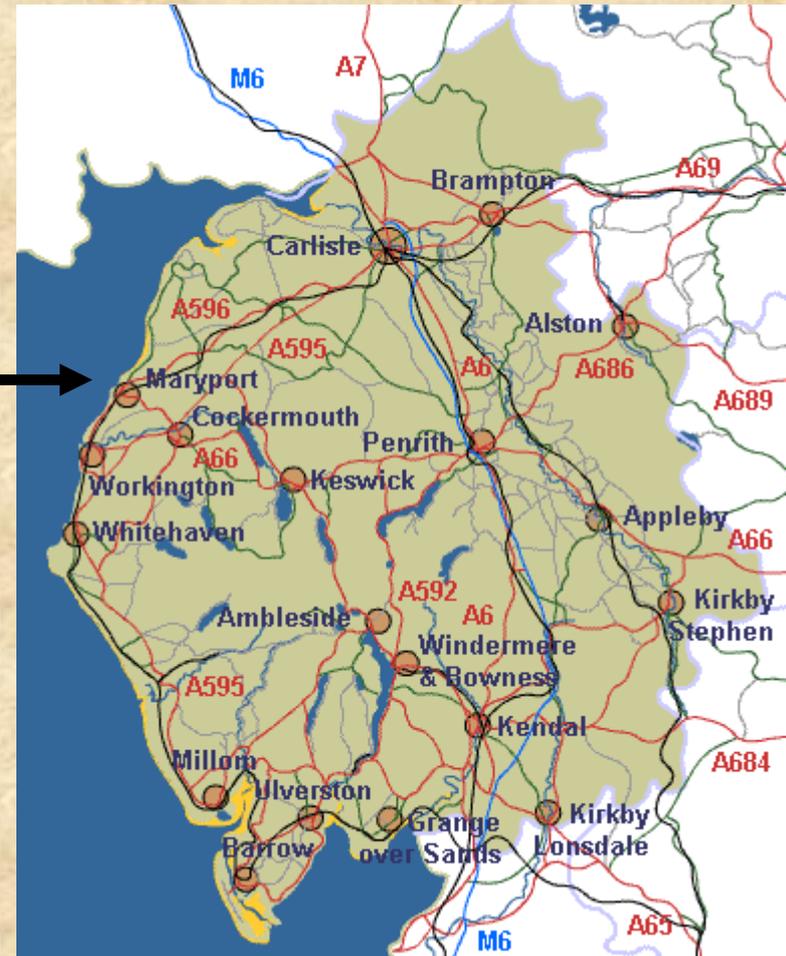
She went on to publish another 22 little books over the next 28 years, the proceeds from which enabled her to buy Hill Top Farm in the Lake District. Eventually she went on to own 15 farms and over 4,000 acres of land in the area.



Where is the Lake District?



Where is the Lake District?



Lake District



Lake District

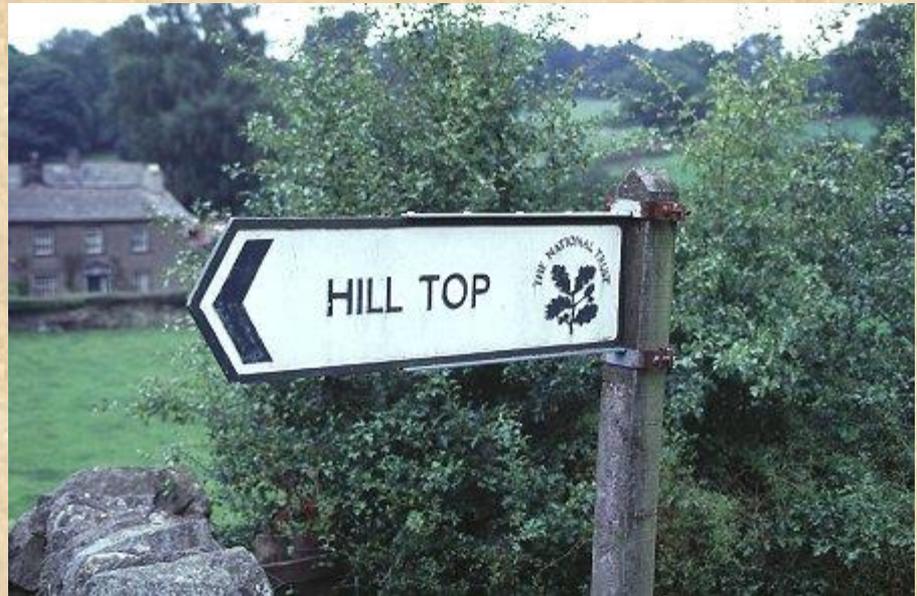


Lake District



Hill Top Farm

Beatrix had always loved the Lake District since childhood holidays, and now, with the money she was earning from her Peter Rabbit books she was able to buy Hill Top Farm in the village of Sawrey.



Hill Top Farm

She kept on the farm manager, John Cannon, and invested in a flock of Herdwick sheep. She could not stay in her beloved new home because she was expected to take care of her parents in London, but it was her first step to independence, and she visited it whenever she could.



Life at Hill Top Farm

Beatrix Potter had always been interested in 'real' animals, and after her marriage to William Heelis in 1913 she was able to settle in the Lake District permanently, and devote herself almost entirely to her farming.

By the end of her life, Beatrix has bought fifteen farms, and took a very active part in caring for them. Dressed in her clogs, shawl and old tweed skirt, she helped with the hay making, waded through mud to unblock drains and searched the fells for lost sheep. She said she was at her happiest when she was with her farm animals.

Writing at Hill Top Farm

*Beatrix Potter used Hill Top as the backdrop for several of her tales. The first was *The Tale of Tom Kitten*, which she wrote in 1906. She included favourite views of her new home in the *Tales of Jemima Puddle-duck*, *Samuel Whiskers* and *Pigling Bland* and *Ginger and Pickles*' shop is set in Sawrey village. In 1947 the National Trust opened the house to the public and receives thousands of visitors a year.*