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As a budding naturalist, Beatrix Potter created this drawing of caterpillars when she was a young girl spending her summers in Scotland. The original is maintained at the [Victoria and Albert Museum](#) in London.

Like many artists, Beatrix wanted to know how her subjects were constructed so she could draw them more accurately. Following the standard practice of the time, she boiled animals to their skeletons so she could better study them.

It wasn't just animals that interested Miss Potter. She was fascinated by the many different plants she saw. And living near London's [Natural History Museum](#) and [South Kensington](#) - as the [Victoria & Albert Museum](#) was then called - Beatrix was able to copy whatever intrigued her.

Since she was a little girl, summering in Scotland, Beatrix had observed local flora and fauna. Over the years, she became especially interested in [fungi](#). In 1887, at the age of 21, Beatrix created her first-known fungus painting.

In 1892, when she was twenty-six, Beatrix met [Charlie McIntosh](#), a Perthshire naturalist and postman at Dunkeld. McIntosh, who had walked fifteen miles a day during his years as a mail-carrier, had observed fungi, ferns and mosses. He and Beatrix had much to talk about.

By 1897, Beatrix was convinced that, among other things, some fungi were hybrids and [lichens](#) were actually part-fungi and part-algae. Writing as Helen B. Potter, the thirty-one-year-old submitted a scientific paper, *The Germination of the Spores of Agaricineae*, to the [Linnean Society of London](#).

Although women, at the time, could neither be members nor attend meetings, they were allowed to submit papers to the 209-year-old scientific association. Someone else - a man - presented Beatrix's work to the society.

Her paper was never printed. Initially, some members of the Linnean Society were antagonistic toward her results. Her lichen theory, however, has since been proven true. The Linnean Society, it is said, may yet apologize for rebuffing the self-taught Potter.

Between 1887 and 1901, Beatrix made hundreds of natural-history drawings. In exchange for some of her paintings, [Charlie McIntosh](#) collected fungi for Beatrix to paint, posting them to London during the winter months.

Before Beatrix became a famous writer and illustrator of children's stories, she was thus a budding naturalist. Eventually, she produced hundreds of fungi drawings and [paintings](#).

Beatrix Potter, however, is not remembered most for her drawings and paintings of fungi. She is loved, the world over, for her stories and paintings of animals. The setting, for many of these tales, is Britain's Lake District.

Let's take a virtual visit to the places which Beatrix loved.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BEATRIX-THE-NATURALIST-Miss-Potter>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BEATRIX-THE-NATURALIST-Miss-Potter>

Media Stream



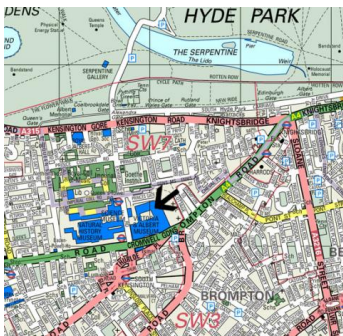
Beatrix Potter - Youthful Drawing of Caterpillars

Original maintained at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London. Image online, courtesy [Peter Rabbit](#).

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beatrix-Potter-Youthful-Drawing-of-Caterpillars>



Beatrix Potter - Location of Natural History Museum

Image online, courtesy [Victoria & Albert Museum](#).

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South Kensington Museum - Influence on Beatrix Potter

Image online, courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

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Charlie McIntosh - Perthshire Naturalist

Image online, courtesy Peter Rabbit.

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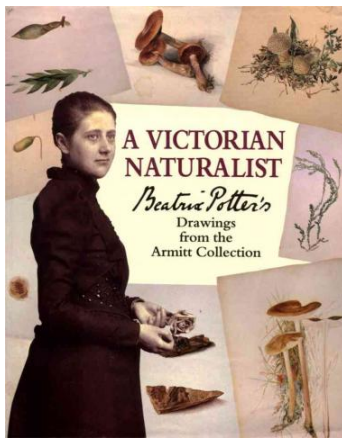
Charlie McIntosh - Friend of Beatrix Potter

Image online, courtesy [Visit Dunkeld](#).

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Victorian Naturalist - Beatrix Potter's Drawings

Book-cover image online, courtesy Amazon.

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