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Beatrix Potter bought Castle Farm—in the village of Near Sawrey—in 1905. After she married her real-estate lawyer, William Heelis, the couple lived at Castle Cottage—located at Castle Farm—from the time of their marriage (in 1913) until the time of Beatrix' death (in 1943). This image depicts Castle Cottage. Click on the picture for a better view.

As Beatrix grew older, her eyesight began to fail. Her paintings, during this time of her life, became more impressionistic.

She continued to buy Lake District property, including Troutbeck Park Farm, not far from Holehird Gardens where she had spent the summers of 1889 and 1895. She also judged sheep in local competitions.

Margaret Lane, an early Potter biographer, provides insight into her subject's independent thinking. In a conversation with her publisher, Beatrix reportedly said:

... you are a great deal too much afraid of the public, for whom I have never cared one tuppenny button. I am sure that it is that attitude of mind which has enabled me to keep up the series. Most people, after one success, are so cringingly afraid of doing less well that they rub all the edge off their subsequent work. (The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter)

During WWII, Beatrix was concerned whether her beloved Lake District would fall into German hands. She had a different reaction, however, when 2 Bolton Gardens - Beatrix's "unloved birthplace" - took a direct hit from a German bomb.

As the war dragged on, Beatrix - who was 77 years old in 1943 - developed a bad case of bronchitis. Because she'd had a bout of rheumatic fever when she was young, her heart was not as strong as it might have otherwise been.

Just before Christmas that year, Beatrix had a relapse, although she was still interviewing shepherds. With Willie at her bedside, she died on the 22nd of December, 1943.

She gave Willie all of her property, to enjoy during his lifetime, but she wanted the land to be deeded to the National Trust after Heelis died. When that happened, two years after Beatrix's death, Britain received 4,000 acres of pristine land plus all of her working farms. She added a condition to her bequest, however: Herdwick sheep must always be able to graze on her property.

To Tom Storey, her lead shepherd, Beatrix gave £400 plus the tenancy of Hill Top. Grateful for her kindness, he worked the land until he retired. All of the copyrights to her books, and art, went to her publisher, F. Warne & Co.

On Christmas Day, 1943, Willie Heelis paid a visit to Tom Storey. He gave him a container, filled with his wife's ashes, telling him:

Here's the ashes, you'll know what to do with them.

Tom later recalled, in a conversation with Hunter Davies:

I'd promised her I'd scatter them. Nobody else was to know the place, not even her husband. We'd discussed it several times. I talked to her the night before she died. So I got up from my dinner and went off and scattered them in the place she'd chosen. I've never told anybody where the place is. She wasn't daft. She knew folks would go and look at the place if they knew. I was sorry when she died. She was a good woman. I intend to tell my son the place before I die, so there will always be someone who knows.

Tom did tell his son. But he died, unexpectedly, so no one is now sure where those ashes were scattered.

Not that it matters. What counts are these facts: Today, the Lake District is as beautiful as ever - and - more than one hundred years after *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* was first published, Beatrix Potter remains the world's best-known writer (this is a BBC audio clip) and illustrator of children's stories.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ASHES-and-LEGACY-Miss-Potter>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/ASHES-and-LEGACY-Miss-Potter>

Media Stream



Castle Cottage - Where Beatrix Potter Lived and Died

Photo of Castle Cottage, in the village of Near Sawrey, by Susan Branch.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Castle-Cottage-Where-Beatrix-Potter-Lived-and-Died>



Beatrix Potter - Later Years

Image online, courtesy [University of Pittsburgh Digital Library](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beatrix-Potter-Later-Years>



Beatrix Potter Heelis - Judging Sheep

Image online, courtesy [Friends of Peter Rabbit](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beatrix-Potter-Heelis-Judging-Sheep>



Beatrix Potter Heelis with Tom Storey

Image, described above, online courtesy [Friends of Peter Rabbit / The World of Beatrix Potter](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beatrix-Potter-Heelis-with-Tom-Storey>



Beatrix Potter at Age 77

Image, described above, online courtesy [National Trust Collections](#).

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Tom Storey - Lead Shepherd for Beatrix Potter Heelis

Image, described above, online courtesy [Friends of Peter Rabbit / The World of Beatrix Potter](#).

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