

WOMEN WHO MADE BRITAIN

My nomination for The Women who made Britain is Beatrix Potter.

Beatrix Potter is my nomination for two reasons :

1. She became a prolific writer and illustrator at a time when it was difficult to get published as a woman. Her books have since been translated into 35 languages and sold over 100 million copies. She also understood the power of merchandising and made her own Peter Rabbit doll board games and wall paper which were produced in her lifetime.
2. For her conservation work... she left...4000 acres and 14 farms in Cumbria to the National Trust. This unique hill country landscape is what we can all appreciate and enjoy today as the Lake District National Park. She also left all her original illustrations for her books to the National Trust.

Helen Beatrix Potter was born on 28th July 1866 in London. She was educated by governesses. She had numerous pets which she used as models for her book illustrations. Her love of the landscape flora and fauna was developed from holidays spent in Scotland and The Lake District. She studied fungi and was widely respected in field of mycology.

Peter Rabbit was her first book and published in 1901 and by the end of the year had been reprinted 6 times. She became engaged to her publisher Norman Warne but he died of Leukemia before they could marry.

In 1905 heartbroken and with the profits from her writing and a legacy from an aunt Beatrix bought Hill Top Farm and over following decades purchased additional farms to preserve the unique country landscape around her.

She married William Heelis in 1913. She became a prize winning breeder of Herdwick sheep and in 1943 was the first woman to be elected President of the Herdwick Sheep Association. She was a prosperous farmer keenly interested in land preservation. She was also an authority on Lake land crafts, period furniture and stonework. She died in 1943 of pneumonia and heart disease. Hill Top Farm opened to the public in 1946.