

Nature collages inspired by Beatrix Potter



DENBIGHSHIRE DIGITAL ADVENTURES

Download tomorrow's adventure

Beatrix Potter was truly inspired by the countryside around her. The animals, the plants and flowers, the hills and the streams, are all beautifully portrayed in her books, whether through gorgeous watercolours or simple yet descriptive sentences.

This activity brings together her love of nature with her great creativity and tells you how to make a wonderful nature collage of a flopsy bunny.

Before you start



How to get there

This activity takes place on a woodland walk on the outskirts of Denbigh.

The woodland is just off the B4501 road out of Denbigh towards Nantglyn. As you are heading out of Denbigh, after approximately a mile you'll come to a sign on the side of the road for Cae Dai – Denbigh's 1950s Museum. Find a safe place to park by the sign.

Post code:

LL16 4SU
(this is the Cae Dai museum itself).

Public transport:

For public transport options, call Traveline Cymru on 0871 200 2233 or National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50.

Activity starting point:

To start the activity, stand facing the Cae Dai sign, and then take the path to the left, past the style and follow the woodland track down.

How long will this activity take?

The walk should only take you 20mins to half an hour. However, you may want to take longer if you are gathering materials for your nature collage!

Let's get started

Beatrix Potter came to Denbighshire to stay with her uncle and aunt at their home in Gwaenynog Hall, which is a couple of miles away from here. She fell in love with the area and the hall's gardens, which inspired her to write *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies*, a sequel to *Peter Rabbit* and *Benjamin Bunny*.

Beatrix Potter was inspired to take elements from nature to create her stories and, as you walk through the woodlands, you'll spot all kinds of natural things that you can collect.

For this activity, you'll be gathering up any natural materials that you can find, and then using them to create a collage of a flopsy bunny.

You should be walking down the track by now, which leads you down hill through the woodland. **(1)** After a minute or so, you should come to a waymarker. At this point, turn right, and continue down the stepped path.



Look out for leaves, especially the smaller, pointed ones, like the wild garlic that grows next to the footpath – it's perfect for rabbits' ears.

There's ivy growing on some of the trees too. These leaves could make a cute bunny nose! Make sure you don't pull green leaves from the trees though – use those that have already fallen, instead.

Nuts like acorns, as well as seed pods, could be useful finds.

Look out for odd shaped stones and pebbles, and ones which have an unusual colour. You might find the most interesting ones nearest to the river, further on in your walk.

Gather up small pieces of moss and lichen.

Twigs and sticks are brilliant for so many things, such as legs and arms, or you can stick them in the ground and use them as mini trees.

Feathers are also a great find. Look out for the shimmering orangey-bronze feathers of pheasants, as well as those from crows, gulls and pigeons. If you're really lucky you might find a beautiful blue one from a jay.



What you need

Good walking shoes – things can get muddy!

A bag to collect things in.

Loads of imagination.



Useful information

Please be aware that this walk goes through woodlands, fields and by a river, so care should be taken at all times. The path at times can be quite steep, and there are a number of steps, so it may not be suitable for buggies or prams.

The woodland walk is part of a 2-3 hour trail that takes in Gwaenynog Hall, where Beatrix Potter stayed when she visited the area. This walk is detailed, with a map, in the Rural Walks in Denbighshire booklet, available from the information centre in Denbigh library or downloadable from www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk/rural-walks.

If you decide to walk on to Gwaenynog Hall, please remember that it is a private residence. The gardens are open to the public, by appointment only, from June through August.

For more information:

Contact Gwaenynog Hall during the summer months on 0174 581 2066. Entrance is £3.

www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside

To continue the walk, when you reach the path's T-junction, turn right onto a wider path. Just before a gate, take a small path bearing left down the bank and over a stile into a field beside the river. **(2)**



Of course, every bunny needs a fluffy tail! Sheep sometimes live in this field, so have a look for any wool that's been snagged on fences or bushes.

It's OK to take one or two wild flowers from the field to use in your collage. Grasses are great, too. Other more unusual finds could be old birds' nests that have blown out of trees, animals bones and skulls and pieces of bark that have fallen off trees.

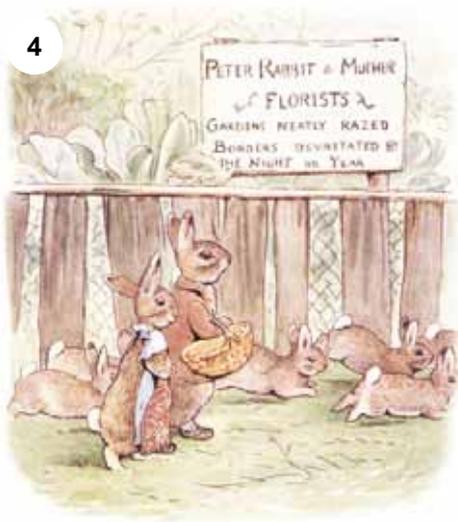
It wasn't just fluffy bunnies that grabbed Beatrix Potter's attention. Everything in nature seemed to inspire her, from the smallest flower to the largest tree, ancient fossils to colourful fungi, pushing its way up through the soil or sprouting from rotting wood.

So if you spot something different or unusual that doesn't seem very 'bunny-like' at first glance, it might still be worth picking it up – you could have a brainwave later on!

Once you've gathered all your bits and pieces, you need to decide how and where you're going to make your collage. You could take all your wild treasure with you, and create a collage at home, using glue to stick the bits onto a large piece of card.

But if it's a nice day, why not make the collage here in the field, either by laying out your collection on the grass, or by nipping over the bridge to the other side of the river, and using the picnic table that's over there. **(3)**





Beatrix Potter's drawings capture the detail of a situation and she is great at letting us know just how the rabbits are feeling, often by giving them human qualities. A slight shift in the position of their ears or their tail gives her drawings real personality. **(4)**

Perhaps you can think of others ways to make your bunnies look different? Are they asleep? Or eating? Or playing chase? Or, like so many of Beatrix Potter's animals, perhaps they're wearing clothes? **(5)**

You might want to wander a little further, past the bridge and through into the next part of the field. You can get closer to the river here, if you'd like to hunt for more materials. **(6)**



If you need some more ideas for your collage, think about:
A fluffy piece of moss is perfect for a furry body.

Small stones make good eyes, whiskers made from grass, and perhaps a white pebble for that pom-pom tail. They could also be nibbling on something green, or perhaps you've found an orange feather that could double for a carrot?

If you're going to dress your bunnies, how about some big leaves decorated with flowers? And if you're taking your treasure home with you, then of course you can use coloured pencils to draw in their features, or even cut out paper clothes for them to wear.

Now you've made your collage (or have enough bits to take them all home to make your collage later on) you're ready to head back to the car. You'll need to go back the way you came, taking care as you climb back up the hill through the woodland.



Getting back to the start

You'll need to retrace your steps to get back to the car; back through the field and up through the woodlands. Take care, the walk back is up hill!



What did you think?

Tell us what you thought about this activity, and share some of your photos of your bunny collages on the Discover Denbighshire Facebook page.

Don't miss

Whilst you're in the area, there's lots of other great places that you could visit...

Denbigh Castle walls

Pick up your own key to unlock the gate and explore over half a mile of walls that still circle the town. Look out for the impressive Countess Tower and Goblin Tower!

Collect a key from Denbigh library on High Street. The staff in the library will direct you to the best starting point.

The Castle walls are managed by Cadw.

For more information, visit www.cadw.wales.gov.uk or call 01745 813385.

Denbigh Castle

'Dinbych' in Welsh means 'Little fortress', so don't miss the chance to explore the town's Castle. It was one of a chain of fortresses built across the heartlands of Wales by Edward I and its impressive triple-towered gatehouse is still considered one of the great wonders of Wales.

The entrance to the Castle is on Castle Hill, LL16 3NB.

As with the Castle walls, the Castle itself is managed by Cadw.

For more information visit www.cadw.wales.gov.uk or call 01745 813385.

Bodelwyddan Castle

The castle is set in 260 acres of magnificent parkland and dates back to the mid 1800s.

As well as an historic house and museum, the castle retains strong links with the National Portrait Gallery, and has an impressive art collection of its own. The grounds include practice trenches used during the First World War and well as an adventure playground and garden maze.

Leave the A55 at junction 25 of the A55 and follow the brown and white signs.

For more information visit www.bodelwyddan-castle.co.uk or call 01745 584060.