

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE RIVERSIDE DICKENS FESTIVAL



Dickens Diary is published four times a year by the Riverside Dickens Festival, Inc., at the address below. Editorial submissions and queries may be sent there. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

Editor - Stephanie Rasner

Office: (951) 781-3168  
info@dickensfest.com

For more information on the Festival visit our website today!  
www.dickensfest.com

This is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization,  
EIN:33-0617090

### Outgoing President's Message

*Spring has Sprung Dickensians!*

As the snow melts and the recent deluges of spring rain ensure the blooming of May flowers, we get a sense of renewal and rebirth on the horizon. With that rebirth comes the time of reinventing ourselves and embracing the newness that comes with change. The last two years I have been privileged to usher the Dickens Fest from a pandemic into an era of health and wealth and prosperity as President. While the unexpected spring deluge inhibited us from having an in-person festival this year, rest assured we are already working hard on next year's presentation.

My term has been full of challenges and victories and I'm proud to be passing the baton to the next in line to keep this non-profit going. I would like to formally welcome the Dickens Fest youngest president, Miss Carole Kelley, who we all have confidence will lead us into 2024 with creativity and flare. I would like to thank my board with whom we could not have made so many things possible, the volunteers who gave their time so freely, and the patrons for their understanding and loyalty.

Wishing you all the best for a fruitful future,

Shanna Lovette



# **Greetings from our New President**

**When I was younger I always loved the things that my family, and most kids, didn't. I loved history and reading, feeling as if I could never get enough of either. When I was introduced to Jane Austen in high school my whole world changed. Here my love of reading took on a different tone. I started to delve into the classics, not only Austen, but Alexander Dumas, the Brontës, Bram Stoker, and so many more. I dreamed of sharing this love with other people and hoped that one day I would find a way to do so. When I learned of this festival, I was given another passion. It was here that I found a world where it was possible that I could combine my love of performing with my love of classic literature, and use that to educate people. In the six years I have been involved with the Riverside Dickens Festival this love has only grown stronger. I got my start with the great honor of portraying Anne Brontë. Now I am humbled under the weight of bringing Austen to life.**

**Getting involved behind the scenes allowed me to see what it really takes to make this festival happen. As there are not many of us, that accomplishment is not an easy task, but we do it by working together all year long. I started my behind the scenes journey by heading the social media committee. This allowed me the opportunity to interact with people online, working to make our festival known through a whole different platform. I was introduced to an entirely new responsibility after joining the executive board as their secretary. Becoming President of the Riverside Dickens Festival was definitely not a plan that I had for myself, but I am prepared for the task. Our purpose of educating people and doing it in a way that is entertaining is a mission I truly believe in. A mission that I want to share with all of you. I wholeheartedly believe that our festival has a place and purpose in the community, it is why we are going onto our 31st year. Thank you to everyone who has been and will be a part of this festival. I look forward to working with everyone to make the 31st annual Riverside Dickens Festival an amazing one.**

**Sincerely,  
Carole Jene Kelley  
Dickens Fest President**





# DREAMING OF DANCING

## THE NIGHT AWAY...

Mark your calendars and join us for a DREAM of a time!



July 29th, 2023 at 7pm

Riverside Municipal Auditorium

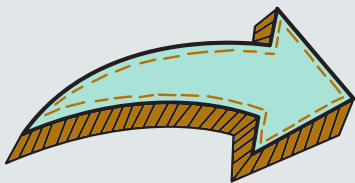
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/midsummer-nights-dream-a-victorian-fantasy-ball-tickets>

## OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE INDISPENSABLE!

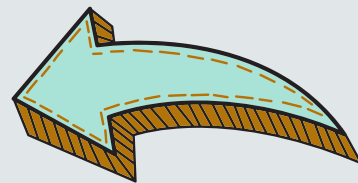
Have time to offer your talent to the festival?

Need community service hours for college or high school credits?

As an all-volunteer nonprofit organization



WE  
NEED  
YOU



Your help can make the 2023 festival a great experience for everyone!

If you want to help with the planning committees and/or with the various activities during the festival, please contact us NOW!

Contact us on our website at [www.dickensfest.com](http://www.dickensfest.com)

or call and leave a message at (951) 781-3168.

# Author Spotlight: Beatrix Potter



Beatrix Potter was a multi-talented person who achieved significant success in multiple fields. Her biggest achievement was her success as an author and illustrator. Beatrix at first struggled to find a publisher for her stories, but that quickly changed. Her first book, “The Tale of Peter Rabbit,” published in 1902 by Frederick Warne & Company, became an immediate hit. She went on to write over 60 books, 23 featuring characters such as Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, and Jemima Puddle-Duck. Her books have since been translated into over 30 languages and have sold millions of copies worldwide.

Born in London on July 28th, 1866, she grew up in a privileged family who often traveled to the countryside. Beatrix was educated at home by governesses and enjoyed drawing and painting from a young age. Her interest in natural history was encouraged by her parents, and she often visited museums and galleries with them. In the late 19th century, Beatrix’s family started spending holidays in the Lake District. Here she fell in love with the area and started to write and illustrate her own stories featuring animals observed while on walks in the countryside. Particularly fond of rabbits, she kept several as pets. As a shrewd businesswoman, Beatrix took control of her own literary career. She owned the copyrights to all her books and used her profits to invest in property, becoming one of the largest landowners in the Lake District. She also negotiated deals with publishers, ensuring that her books were printed to her exacting standards. Her success as an entrepreneur paved the way for future women in the publishing industry.

Beatrix’s love of the natural world extended beyond her storytelling. She was also an accomplished scientific illustrator with a keen eye for detail. In the early 20th century, she illustrated a scientific paper on fungi published by the Linnean Society. She also conducted her own experiments, such as breeding lilies, and was a member of the Mycological Society. Beatrix was among the first people to recognize the importance of preserving the landscape and wildlife of the Lake District. She was a passionate conservationist who believed that the land should be protected from development and that wildlife habitats should be preserved. She also promoted organic farming and the use of natural fertilizers. Her activism was ahead of its time.



Beatrix died December 22nd, 1943, succumbing to bronchitis and heart trouble. Beatrix Potter was a versatile and accomplished woman. She is remembered as a pioneering figurehead in children’s literature, natural history, and conservationism. Many museums and attractions in the Lake District are dedicated to Beatrix Potter and her contributions. Her legacy lives on through the Beatrix Potter Society and other conservation groups. Her stories continue to enchant children worldwide.



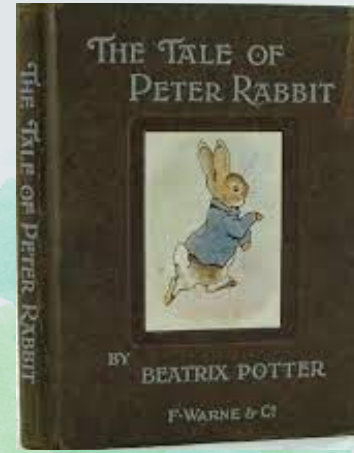


# Literary Corner: The Tale of Peter Rabbit



"The Tale of Peter Rabbit" is a classic children's book written and illustrated by Beatrix Potter in 1902.

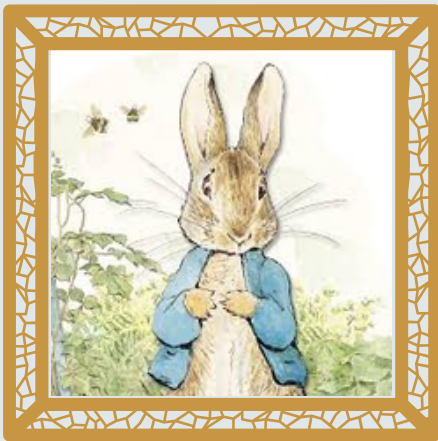
The story follows the mischievous adventures of a little rabbit named Peter, who disobeys his mother's orders not to venture into Mr. McGregor's garden and nearly gets caught by the farmer. Set in the English countryside, illustrations vividly depict the idyllic landscapes, meadows and gardens.



## Character Descriptions

### Main character:

**Peter Rabbit**, is a young, impulsive, and curious bunny who ignores his mother's rules and gets into trouble. He is adventurous and bold; but also vulnerable and naive. His actions stem from his desire to explore the world around him and taste the forbidden fruits, but he learns the hard way that disobedience has consequences.



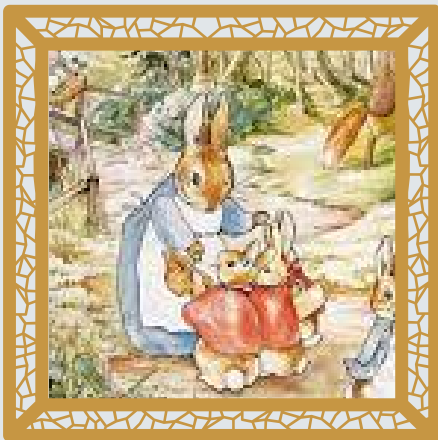
### Secondary character:

**Mr. McGregor**, is the antagonist of the story. A grumpy mean-spirited farmer that does not like rabbits or any other pests. He personifies authority and rules. His garden symbolizes the land of the unfamiliar and the dangers that come with it.



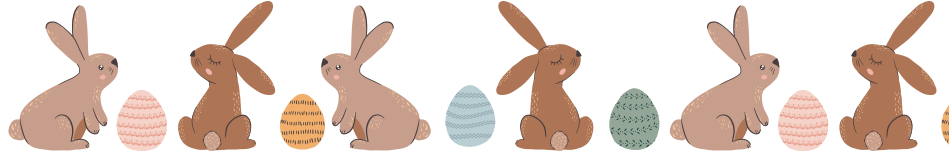
### Peter's mother:

**Mrs. Rabbit**, is a caring and responsible parent. She tries to keep her children safe and out of harm's way. She embodies traditional values of motherhood, nurturing, and protection. She serves as a moral compass for the story.



**This timeless classic teaches a valuable lesson about obedience, responsibility, and consequences. It is a must-read book for children and adults, and its popularity has remained steadfast for over a century.**

# Easter in Victorian Times



The Victorian era played a significant role in developing Easter traditions and celebrations. While Easter had long been observed as a religious holiday, it became a major cultural event during the Victorian era. All classes of people participated in the festivities and activities, which typically lasted for a week. Palm Sunday is the first day of the celebration. People attended church and carried palm branches adorned with ribbons and flowers. Homes were decorated with flowers and special foods were prepared in the weeks leading up to the festivities. During the week before Easter, individuals would fast and abstain from meat; dishes like almond soup, fish, and vegetable stews were consumed instead. On Maundy Thursday, people participated in the washing of feet, symbolizing humility and servitude. Good Friday was a day of solemnity and mourning. The bells of the church were silent, and services were conducted in a somber tone. Easter Sunday was the big day, people attended church services where hymns and special anthems were sung. People gathered with family and friends and exchanged Easter greetings after the service.

The period saw a revival of interest in medieval and ancient traditions around the holiday, including the use of Easter eggs and bunnies. The creation of new customs defined Easter for many. Easter eggs were one of the most important holiday symbols during the Victorian era. People dyed and painted eggs in bright colors and decorated them with ribbons, glitter, and other embellishments. Eggs were given as gifts to loved ones and friends. Affluent Victorians commissioned jewelers to create ornate eggs made of gold and precious stones. Additionally, various games and activities such as egg-rolling, egg hunts, and egg-and-spoon races were enjoyed by both children and adults. A popular part of celebrations in England, hot cross buns were one of the special treats made, and are still enjoyed today. Traditionally eaten on Good Friday, the sweet buns have a cross on top that symbolizes the crucifixion and are often flavored with spices like cinnamon and nutmeg. The idea of an Easter bunny bringing gifts and treats to children originated in Germany, but was popularized during this time. Bunnies became associated with Easter celebrations due to their association with fertility and the new life that emerges in the springtime. By the late 19th century, the Easter bunny had become a common feature of Easter celebrations and is one of the most recognizable symbols of the holiday today. Another tradition that developed during this time was the practice of sending Easter greeting cards to friends and family. Greeting cards depicted images of eggs, chicks, and bunnies, sharing messages of peace and renewal.

Altogether, Easter celebrations during the Victorian era were a time of religious reflection, family gatherings, and fun activities. The era represented a time of change and innovation in how Easter is celebrated. The customs and traditions established during this period continue to shape our modern understanding of the holiday and continue as an integral part of how we mark the coming of spring and the renewal of life.





# The Great Exhibition



The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, also known as the Great Exhibition, was the first World's Fair, held in Hyde Park, London, from May 1st to October 15th, 1851. This event, organized by Prince Albert, Henry Cole, and other members of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, celebrated modern industrial technology and design. Designed to showcase the best of Britain and the rest of the world, with exhibits from over 25 countries, the exhibition boosted the reputation of Britain as a global economic

and technological power showing the best that the world had to offer at the time. In equivalence to a third of the entire population of Britain, the exhibition had more than six million people visit. The average daily attendance was 42,831 peaking at 109,915 on October 7th. The Great Exhibition was the place to go, whether you were a celebrity or a person on the street. Charles Darwin and Charles Dickens were two of the more notable in attendance. Queen Victoria visited three times with her family and 34 times on her own. Other famous attendees included Karl Marx, Michael Faraday (who assisted with the planning and judging of exhibits), Samuel Colt, and writers Charlotte Brontë, Lewis Carroll, George Eliot, and Alfred Tennyson. The world's first soft drink, Schweppes, was official sponsor of the event.

Visitors to the exhibition could see displays of the latest technology, machinery, and inventions. The Great Exhibition allowed industrialists, inventors, and scientists to showcase their latest innovations while promoting trade and commerce.



The exhibits, totaling 13,000, included almost every marvel the Victorian age could offer. These included pottery, porcelain, ironwork, furniture, perfumes, pianos, firearms, fabrics, steam hammers, and hydraulic presses. One of the most famous exhibits at the Great Exhibition was the Crystal Palace, designed by architect Joseph Paxton. Home to the exhibition, the palace was over 1,800 feet long and contained more than 300,000 panes of glass. It became one of the most iconic structures of the era. Other famous exhibits included the Koh-i-Noor diamond on display by the East India Company, the largest diamond in the world at this time and one of the most famous jewels in history. Invented by Samuel Morse, the telegraph machine was the first practical electrical telegraph, revolutionizing long-distance communication. Firearms manufacturer, Samuel Colt, demonstrated his prototype for the 1851 Colt Navy and his older Walker and Dragoon revolvers. The Jacquard loom was a machine that used punched cards to control the weaving of patterned fabric. This invention played a significant role in the development of the textile industry. The first modern pay toilets were installed



here, with 827,280 visitors paying a penny fee to access them. The toilets remained even after the exhibition came to a close. "Spending a penny" became a euphemism for using the facilities.



**Queen Victoria's gown from the Great Exhibition's opening ceremony – from the Victoria & Albert Museum Collection**



**Victorian A-list celebrities:  
Charles Darwin,  
Charlotte Bronte,  
Charles Dickens,  
George Eliot,  
Lewis Carroll,  
Alfred Lord Tennyson**



**The Koh-I-Noor diamond  
(186 carats)**



**A Colt "show floor giveaway" provided to Prince Albert and other distinguished attendees)**



**Both sides of a 1851 Penny from the United Kingdom**

Overall The Great Exhibition of 1851 was widely considered a great success. It represented a significant milestone in the history of industrialization and global trade. It helped to establish the modern World's Fair as a regular event. Many of the exhibits became famous in their own right for their ingenuity and impact on industry and society. The Great Exhibition generated a large amount of revenue both from ticket sales and the sale of goods and products displayed. The event made a

surplus of £186,000 (equivalent to \$41,704,697.06 in 2023). This surplus created the ability to found the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum, and the Natural History Museum. The remainder was applied to set up an educational trust to provide grants and scholarships for industrial research. This educational trust continues to provide today.





# Victoria Sponge Cake

Anna the Duchess of Bedford, one of Queen Victoria's ladies in waiting, is most often credited with the creation of Afternoon Tea in 1840. Queen Victoria adopted the idea of afternoon tea, and by 1855, the observance had been firmly established. After the death of Prince Albert, it is believed that the favored cake was renamed Victoria Sponge Cake. This cake, often called a sandwich, is regarded as the quintessential English teatime treat. According to legend, Queen Victoria enjoyed a daily slice at 4:00 p.m.



This recipe comes from a Scottish-Italian food and travel writer, recipe developer, and cook. Check out more of her delicious British recipes at [christinascucina.com](http://christinascucina.com)

Prep time: 20 MINUTES

Cooking time: 35 MINUTES Additional time: 10 MINUTES Total time: 1 HOUR 5 MINUTES

Yield: 1 Cake

## Ingredients

- 2 1/2 sticks (300g) good quality butter, unsalted and at room temperature (if you only have salted butter, omit the salt)
- 1 1/4 cups (300g) superfine or Baker's sugar (caster sugar in the UK)
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups (300g) self-rising flour (or all purpose flour with 2 tsp baking powder), SIFTED
- a good pinch of salt
- raspberry jam for filling
- heavy whipping cream for filling
- superfine/Baker's or confectioner's sugar for the top of the cake

## Instructions

Special equipment: two, 8" round cake tins, parchment paper, handheld mixer

Oven temperature: 350° F (180°C)

### Making the Cake

1. Line the bottoms of the pans with parchment paper. Grease the pans using butter or a spray and dust with flour. Set aside.

2. In a stand mixer or using a handheld mixer, cream the butter and sugar until very light and fluffy. It will begin to pale in color, too (given that you're using a good quality, yellow butter).

3. Add about one third of the beaten eggs, and mix well at medium speed. Then add about a third of the sifted flour. Repeat this step. Add the rest of the eggs and mix well, then turn the mixer to low and add the final flour and just mix until well combined.

4. Using a scale, divide the mixture evenly between the two tins and place in the center of a preheated oven for about 35 minutes. Since ovens vary greatly, do not open the oven until you start to smell the cake and it looks well risen (through the glass).

5. Carefully check that the cake is done with a cake tester or thin skewer. If it is too raw, the cakes will fall and you won't be happy, so the previous step is important. When the cake is done, remove them from the oven and allow to cool before removing from the tins.

6. To remove: place a cooling rack over the top of the cake and flip it over quickly. Remove the tin and the parchment paper and allow to cool completely before filling.

### Fill and Decorate

1. Beat the cream without any added sugar or flavorings until it's thick enough to fill the cake, and support a layer, but not so thick that it starts to become butter.

2. Using a cake slicer, place the cake layers flat side down on the counter, and slice off the top to make them even.

3. Place one layer cut side up on a serving plate, and spread a generous amount of the raspberry jam to cover the top. Don't worry if you put too much or too little jam the first time as it will take a little experience to know just how much to put, and it won't affect how good it will taste in the end.

4. Next, spread the cream over the jam. Again, be generous, but bring it almost to the edge as the weight of the top layer will push it down a bit. Top with the second layer, but this time, CUT SIDE DOWN.

5. Sprinkle with sugar or dust with confectioner's sugar, and place in the refrigerator for an hour or two. This helps a lot in making nice slices when you cut into the Victoria Sandwich.

### [Victoria Sponge Cake, Afternoon Tea Cake – Recipe for US Kitchens](#)



With a new recipe to try its  
the perfect excuse to throw  
yourself a tea party.

