

Scottish Myths and Legends



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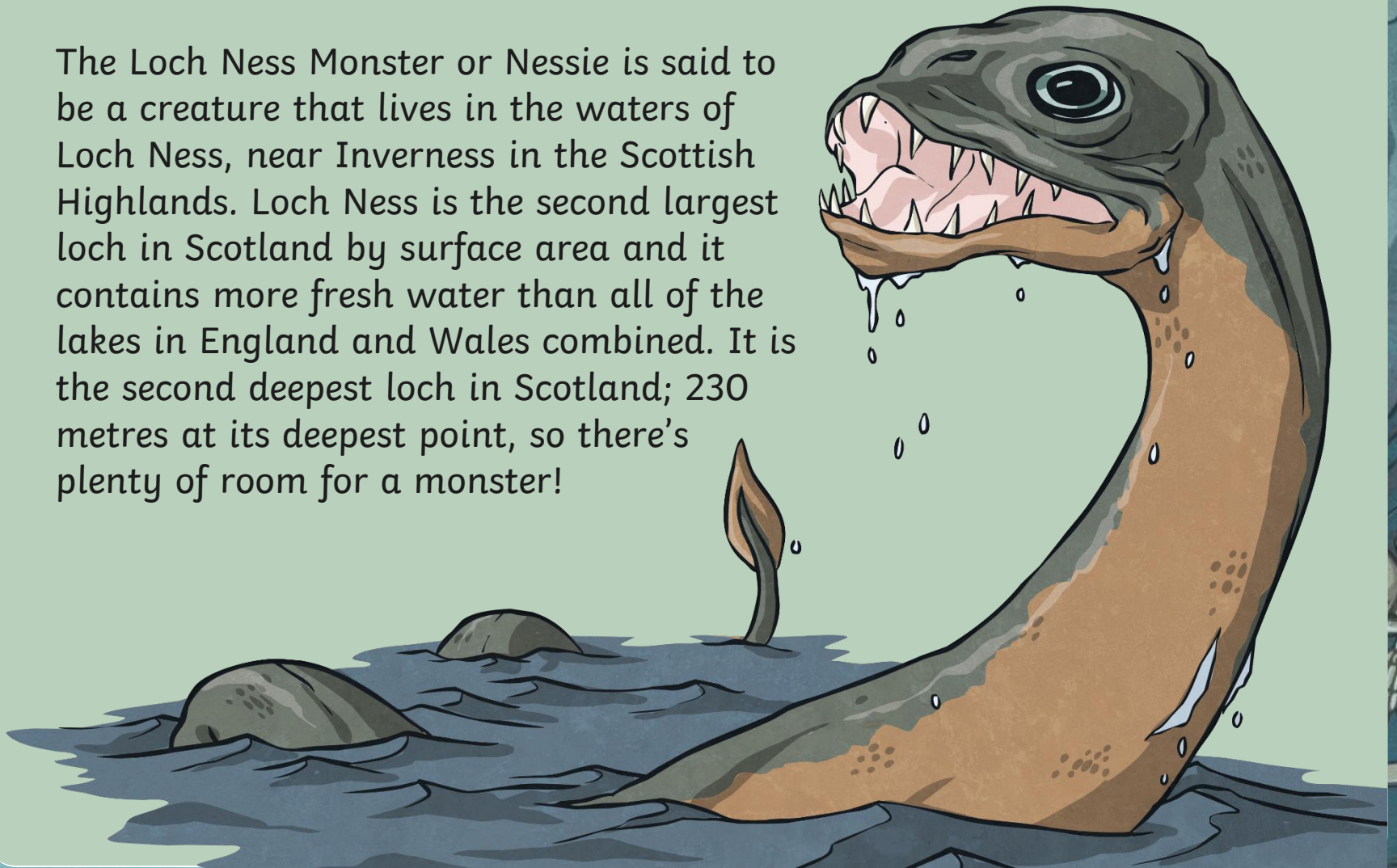
Scotland has a rich history going back over 2000 years. In the past superstition was common and unusual events were often explained by stories. These stories were then passed on by word of mouth resulting in the many myths and legends around today.

Here is some more information about eight of these Scottish myths and legends:

- The Loch Ness Monster
- The Kelpies
- Selkies
- The Blue Men of Minch
- Bean-Nighe
- Wulver
- Ghillie Dhu
- Red Caps

The Loch Ness Monster

The Loch Ness Monster or Nessie is said to be a creature that lives in the waters of Loch Ness, near Inverness in the Scottish Highlands. Loch Ness is the second largest loch in Scotland by surface area and it contains more fresh water than all of the lakes in England and Wales combined. It is the second deepest loch in Scotland; 230 metres at its deepest point, so there's plenty of room for a monster!



The Loch Ness Monster

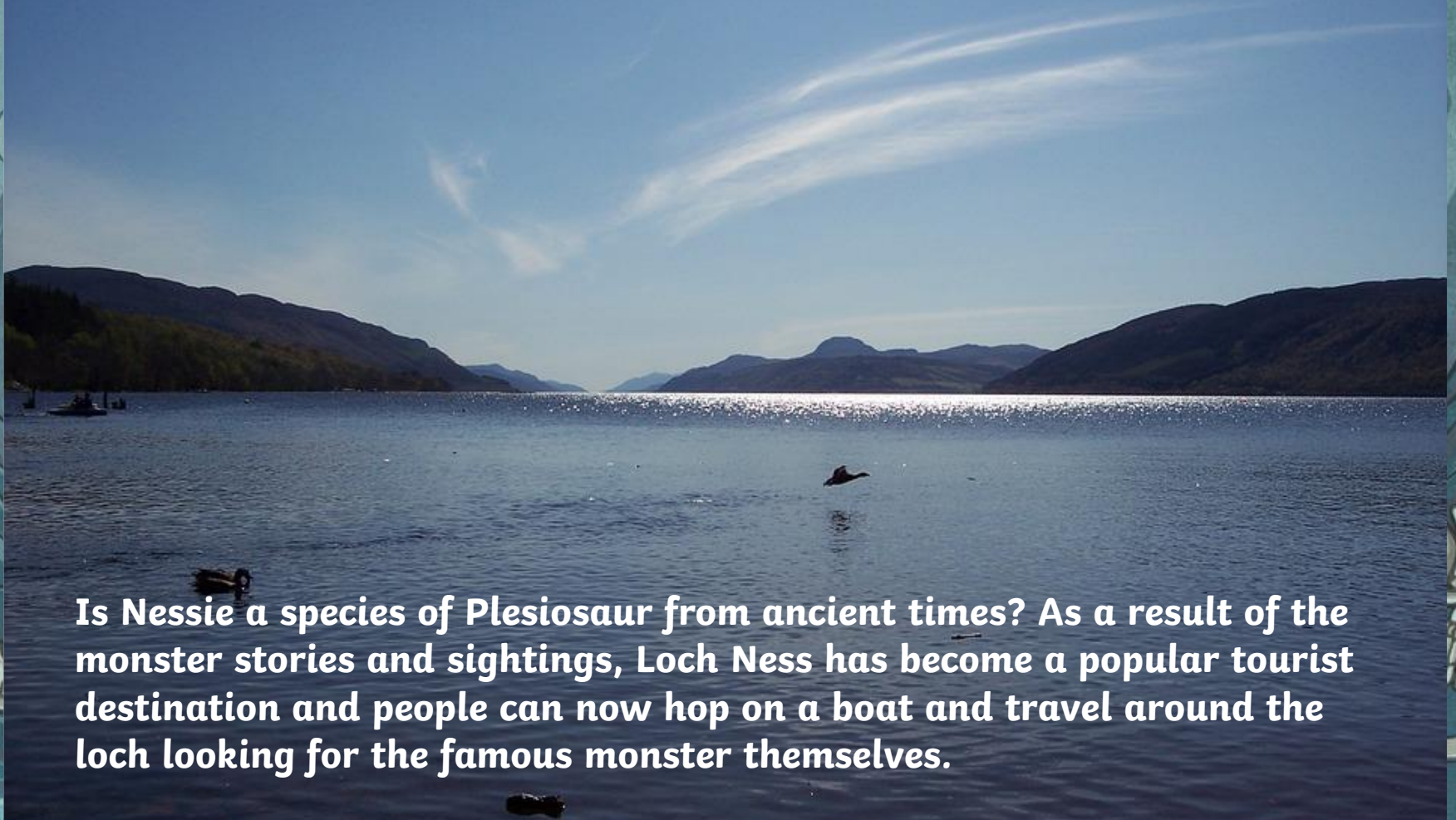
The first recorded sighting of the monster was in AD565, when it supposedly attacked and killed a local man, before being stopped from attacking another man by St Columba. Over the years, rumours have spread around the world about strange events and sightings at Loch Ness. Photographs have been studied, eyewitness accounts examined and boats have scanned the deep waters looking for evidence but, to this day, there is no definite proof that the monster is real.



The water of the loch is dark and murky due to the high levels of peat in the surrounding soil. This makes visibility poor and adds to the difficulty of getting a clear photograph underwater. However, many genuine observers have been utterly convinced they have seen a monster in the water.

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The Loch Ness Monster



Is Nessie a species of Plesiosaur from ancient times? As a result of the monster stories and sightings, Loch Ness has become a popular tourist destination and people can now hop on a boat and travel around the loch looking for the famous monster themselves.

The Kelpies

The mythical kelpie is a creature known as a water horse that is said to haunt Scotland's rivers and streams.



The kelpie would appear as a tame pony with a dripping wet mane. However kelpies were said to be nasty spirits. Stories said they would entice people, often children, to ride on their backs but once on the horse's back, they could not get off and the kelpie would then gallop off with them to a watery grave!

The Kelpies

Kelpies were also said to be able to shape-shift; this means they could change their form from a horse to a human or any other creature. They might appear by the water's edge as a handsome young man, hoping to lure a young woman to her death. The clue to their identity would be their dripping wet or weed-entwined hair!

The kelpie did have a weak spot; it was said that if you could take and keep a kelpie's bridle then you could control it. These mythical beasts, if captured, were said to possess the strength and endurance of one hundred horses. Similar tales in Orkney call the water horse the nuggle and in Shetland it is called the shoopiltee.



The Kelpies



Today, the kelpies are well known because of the horse head sculptures that have been made to celebrate both these mythical water horses and the heavy horses used for industry in the early 20th century. The kelpies can be seen next to the Forth and Clyde Canal near Falkirk.



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