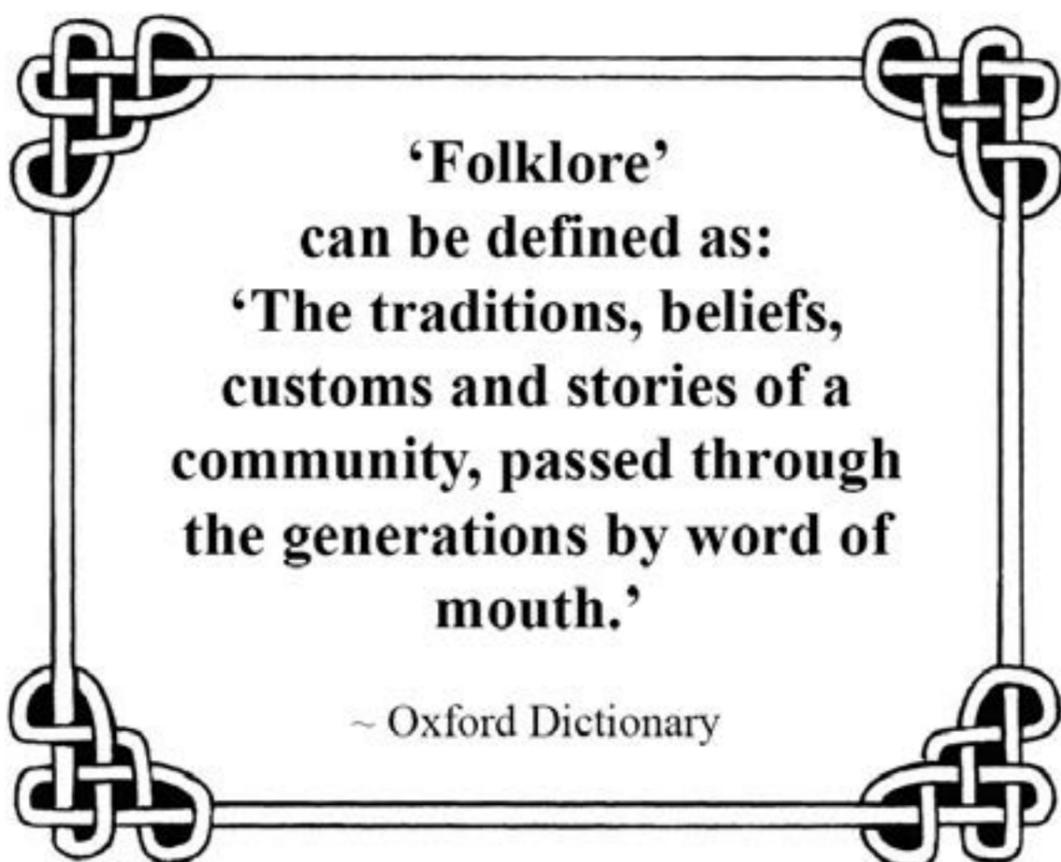


Myths, Legends and Folklore

This term the LRC is diving into the depths of myths, legends and folklore. What are they? Why are these stories and creatures still so popular today? Is there any truth behind them?



Old stories can usually be divided into histories, myths and legends:

- History describes events that we know actually happened.
- Legends tell the stories of heroes and their heroic actions but have not necessarily been proven.
- Myths focus on stories about creatures, divine beings and gods and again, have never been proven to be real.

Whatever category the stories fall into, they were often passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth as a way of recording knowledge and beliefs. Folktales tell us how we lived and often keep local history alive, building connections to the land and meaning to the environment around us. They were also a means of entertainment on cold winter nights and a way of teaching important morals and lessons to the next generation.

Every country has its own collection of myths and legends and these were often influenced by their understanding and interpretation of their environment. As travel and exploration became more widespread, these stories and beliefs travelled too. Britain has developed a wide variety of folklore tales due to the settlement of different people and cultures on her shores; Celtic, Norse mythology, Roman and even Greek influences. There are (understandably) a great deal of oceanic and water themed folk tales from these predominately coastal places.

The sea held many mysteries in its vast, deep, dark and unpredictable waters, demanding respect from all who ventured on her and, unsurprisingly, these fed many superstitions within the sailing community during a time of limited scientific knowledge. Even today, with more technology and science, only a small part

Here be monsters

If you haven't seen something, does that mean it doesn't exist? Many of the following mythical creatures feature in folklore because of the very fact that people believed in them. Sometimes it can be argued that the sightings were mistaken identity, for example sightings of a giant squid, sperm whale or oarfish, and so some of the creatures still do exist. But with 95% of the world's oceans still a mystery, it is plausible that there are species and creatures yet to be discovered or rediscovered.

Select the bubbles to find out more about each creature.

Further Reading

- [WHERE DO MYTHS, LEGENDS AND FOLKTALES COME FROM? | TORCH | The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities](#)
- [Water mythology \(lenntech.com\)](#)
- [Ocean Myths Origins and Influences | Sport Diver](#)
- [7 Fish Folklore Stories From Around the World - Ocean Conservancy](#)
- [The Incredible Origins of the Mermaid Myth | Ocean Info](#)
- <https://www.lenntech.com/water-mythology.htm#ixzz7kuV2VS1Y>
- [Here Be Monsters: Sailor Stories & Nautical Folklore | Blackthorn & Stone \(blackthornandstone.com\)](#)
- [Songs of the Sea: The Origins of Shanties – #FolkloreThursday](#)
- [Dolphin Folklore of the Ancient World – #FolkloreThursday](#)
- [5 Surprising Facts About the Oarfish That Has Been Washing Up on Beaches \(nationalgeographic.com\)](#)
- [The Kelpie, Mythical Scottish Water Horse \(historic-uk.com\)](#)
- [Kelpie | Myths and Folklore Wiki | Fandom](#)
- [Selkies: Irish Myths & Legends Part 4 | Wilderness Ireland](#)
- [Kelpie - Mythical Creatures \(weebly.com\)](#)
- [The Sirens in Greek Mythology - Greek Legends and Myths](#)
- [Home of Scottish Folklore- Scottish Myths & Legends - Folklore Scotland](#)

