

## THE DRAGON'S TREASURE

MARK GREENWOOD

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YEAR LEVEL: Y4–8

### ABOUT THE BOOK

On a summer morning in 1931, four children on a remote beach make a remarkable discovery. But this is only one of many astonishing finds in the same area: silver coins, hidden chests, mysterious stones, strange objects and an unidentified skeleton. Why is it all there? Where has it come from? Can the truth be found? Join the History Hunter to unravel the marvellous mystery in *The Dragon's Treasure*.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Greenwood is a history hunter. He enjoys searching for lost explorers and glittering treasure, delving into baffling mysteries and investigating famous cold cases. His award-winning books examining history and multicultural themes have been honoured internationally.

### THEMES

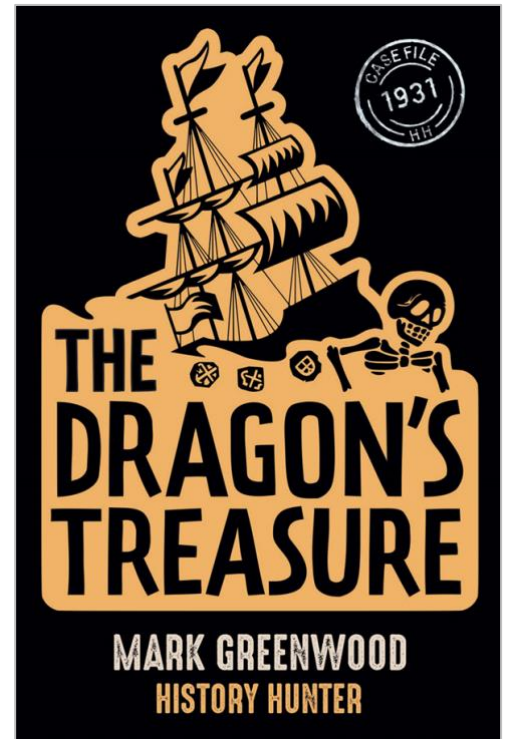
- History
- Adventure
- Treasure
- Settlers/pioneers
- Exploration
- Tall ships
- The Dutch East India Company

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- Y4–8 English
- Y4–8 Humanities and Social Sciences
- Y4–8 The Arts

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [markgreenwood.com.au](http://markgreenwood.com.au)
- Australian online library database: [trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au)
- Australian National Maritime Museum: [sea.museum](http://sea.museum)
- Western Australian Museum, Shipwreck Databases: [museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/maritime-reports](http://museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/maritime-reports)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. **'Treasure'** is the very first word of this book. What stories, images or ideas does 'treasure' conjure for you?
2. How do you think the children felt when they first found the coins?
3. If you found treasure, would you keep it or hand it in to authorities? Why?
4. What was the significance of bees and swallows flying in and out of the bush? (p. 12)
5. Some historic artefacts explored in the story have been lost or destroyed, such as the **'VERGULDE DRAECK 1656'** inscription, and many of the found coins (pp. 35–36). Do you think it's important to preserve artefacts from the past?
6. Page 41 introduces surveyor Alfred Burt. What did surveying involve in the late 1800s? Why was this an important job?
7. What do you think happened to the stranded survivors from the *Gilt Dragon*? Consider:
  - a. What would they have done after food and water provisions ran out?
  - b. Where did they shelter?
  - c. What threats would they have faced on the land?
8. To this day, the circle of stones (p. 39) remains a mystery and continues to baffle history hunters. Find out more online, then consider these questions:
  - a. Do you think shipwreck survivors marked the spot?
  - b. Do you think treasure is buried there?
  - c. What features of the landscape make searching for the circle of stones so difficult?
9. What is the **'Southland'** referring to on page 53?
10. On page 54, the Governor-General and his council in Batavia must decide if they will send a ship to recover the survivors of the *Gilt Dragon* shipwreck. What would have been some of the reasons for and against sending the rescue mission?
11. What do the following words from the story mean? Use each word in an original sentence:
  - a. calamity (p. 6)
  - b. knack (p. 31)
  - c. corroborate (p. 34)
  - d. expedition (p. 43)
  - e. elusive (p. 45)
  - f. speculation (p. 46)
  - g. salvation (p. 55)
  - h. relics (p. 63)
  - i. plundered (p.65)
  - j. perilous (p. 70)
12. What do these **'tall ship'** terms mean?
  - a. mast (p. 33)
  - b. musket balls (p. 35)
  - c. rigging (p. 51)
  - d. cargo (p. 52)
  - e. provisions (p. 54)
  - f. ballast (p. 63)
13. What is the meaning of this quote: **'For history hunters, that's where the truth can be found ...'** (p. 89).
14. This story blends fact with fiction. Find examples of fact and fiction from the story. Why do you think the author chose to include both?
15. Do you agree with the author's statement that **'sometimes the truth is stranger than fiction'** (p. 61)?
16. Why do you think history hunters like Mark Greenwood revisit historic events?

## Creative Writing

1. Write a short story involving dragons, treasure, or both.
2. Write a fictional recount as if you were with the Edwards children on the day they found the ancient coins, or, with sixteen-year-old Graeme Henderson when he discovered the ancient shipwreck of the *Gilt Dragon*.
3. Imagine your school is similar to Baramba: '**... a bush timber shed with walls patched with hessian sacks. Under a corrugated iron roof that leaked in winter ...**' (p. 32). Write a fictional journal entry about a day at school.
4. Imagine you're a passenger on the *Gilt Dragon*. Describe the moment the ship was wrecked and what happened afterwards.

## Humanities and Social Sciences

1. What do you think life would have been like for the Edwards family in the 1930s? What would you have liked and disliked about living in this place and time?
2. The Edwards family were pioneers. What does this mean? What drew people to become pioneers?
3. What skills and knowledge did First Nations peoples have that assisted the European settlers in surviving in the harsh Western Australian landscape?
4. Research a historic vessel on the Australian National Maritime Museum website. Write a list of focus questions to guide your research, then present your findings in a multimedia presentation.
5. What do you know about the Dutch East India Company and the Spice Islands? Write a list of focus questions then search online or in the library to uncover the answers.
6. Create a timeline poster that summarises the events outlined in this story.
7. Why do you think the author has included primary sources such as photographs and newspaper articles?
8. Become a history hunter yourself and research another lost treasure or shipwreck treasure mystery. Look for information online and at the library.
9. History Hunter Mark Greenwood says, '**The most rewarding stage in bringing history to life is to visit the setting I'm writing about, where the historical events occurred**' (p. 91). On a modern map, locate the places mentioned in *The Dragon's Treasure* including: Seabird, Moore River, Gingin, Guilderton, Woodada Well, New Norcia Mission, the Edwards' camp site, Eagles Nest, Money Desert, Ledge Point, Cockleshell Gully, Arrowsmith River, and Walga Rock.
10. Use the information in the timeline (p. 92) to plot the intended route of the *Gilt Dragon* from the Netherlands to Batavia (Jakarta), as well as the actual route the ship took.

## The Arts

1. Draw a picture of Baramba school as described on page 32.
2. Research the bronze statuette in the shape of an anchor entwined by a slender dragon (now a treasure of the Benedictine collection at New Norcia). Use this as inspiration to design your own nautical-inspired statuette.
3. People visited the Edwards' homestead to make pencil rubbings of the ancient coins. Make pencil rubbings of a selection of modern coins. What details are captured? What details are lost?
4. Search online to find examples of Indigenous rock art and petroglyphs. Choose one you like, then write a paragraph describing the artwork.