

# Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria

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Christine  
Williamson  
Heritage  
Consultants



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*Front cover:*

*Participants at the zoom webinar panel discussion by Traditional Owners at the 2021 Colloquium. Top row: Darren Griffin, Liz Foley, Dave Wandin—Wurundjeri Woiwurrung; bottom row: Racquel Kerr—Dja Dja Wurrung, Tammy Gilson—Wadawurrung, Ben Muir—Wotjobaluk and Jardwadjali. (Screenshot by Caroline Spry)*<sup>e</sup>

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## Editorial note

The papers included in this 10th issue of *Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria* were presented at the annual Victorian Archaeology Colloquium held on-line via zoom webinar between 1 and 4 February 2021. This allowed even more than our usual number of people to register as participants, including some from interstate and overseas: their commitment and involvement testifies to the importance of this fixture within the local archaeological calendar. Many were fortunate to be able to meet in person, under appropriate protocols, for an outdoor boxed lunch at La Trobe University on 5 February.

We have taken the opportunity of celebrating our 10th anniversary by looking back over the last decade, both through a more formal analysis and through a less formal panel discussion of the history of the Colloquium and this publication. Another panel discussion transcript allows space for some Traditional Owners to reflect on particular examples that they feel have been of value in the complex process of cultural revival through a form of experimental (perhaps better experiential) archaeology.

The other papers published here deal with a variety of topics and approaches that span Victoria's Aboriginal and European past. While some papers report on the results of specific research projects others focus on aspects of method, approach, education and the social context of our work and approach. These all demonstrate how our Colloquium continues to be an important opportunity for consultants, academics, managers and Aboriginal community groups to share their common interests in the archaeology and heritage of Victoria.

In addition to the more developed papers, we have continued our practice of publishing the abstracts of other papers presented at the Colloquium, illustrated by a selection of the slides taken from the PowerPoint presentations prepared by participants. These demonstrate the range of work being carried out in Victoria, and we hope that many of these will also form the basis of more complete studies in the future. Previous volumes of *Excavations, Surveys and*

*Heritage Management in Victoria* are freely available through La Trobe University's institutional repository, Research Online <[www.arrow.latrobe.edu.au:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/latrobe:41999](http://www.arrow.latrobe.edu.au:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/latrobe:41999)> and through Open at La Trobe (OPAL) <<https://doi.org/10.26181/601a321a11c0d>>. We hope that this will encourage the dissemination of ideas and information in the broader community, both within Australia and internationally. We have also now set up a website for the Colloquium <<https://victorianarchaeologycolloquium.com>>

For the first time we have included an obituary to mark the passing of a member of our community: David Rhodes of Heritage Insight, a long-time supporter of our activities. Here we should also mention that we have also lost Ron Vanderwal who made important contributions to archaeology and the curation of heritage, although he was unable to participate in the Colloquia.

Once again we have been fortunate in the support given to the Colloquium by many sponsors: ACHM, Ochre Imprints, Heritage Insight, Biosis, ArchLink, Christine Williamson Heritage Consultants and Extent, while La Trobe University continued to provide facilities and a home for our activities, even if this year it was a virtual one. We would like to thank them, and all others involved for their generous contributions towards hosting both the event and this publication. Yafit Dahary of 12 Ovens was, as always, responsible for the catering, despite the limitations on her usual spread.

All papers were refereed by the editorial team. This year Deb Kelly managed this process and the sub-editing of this volume. Layout was again undertaken by David Frankel. Preparation of this volume was, like so much else in the last year, undertaken during the severe restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope that 2022 will be a better year for all.

The presenters, editors and authors acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and heritage discussed at the Colloquium and in this volume, and pay their respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

# The Birds! Faunal analysis of 364–378 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

Christopher Biagi<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*During excavations at 364–378 Little Lonsdale Street, identified on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (HV) as H7822–1024 and H7822–1025, a large faunal assemblage consisting of 71 species of mammals, birds, shellfish, fish and botanicals was recovered from a cesspit at property No. 368. Of particular interest was the range and quantity of birds, which included domestic poultry as well as coastal and wetland species. These birds appear to have been part of a large-scale single depositional event, rather than the result of the accumulation of meal remains over a long period. This paper will explore why these birds were deposited, the reason behind the number of species and argues that the birds were being kept and raised rather than caught wild, eaten and their remains discarded.*

## Introduction

The excavation of a nineteenth century cesspit from 368 Little Lonsdale Street, in Melbourne's CBD, was undertaken by GML Heritage and the artefact analysis was completed by Christine Williamson Heritage Consultants. This pit contained 71 species of mammals, birds, shellfish, fish, and botanicals. Of particular interest in this cesspit was the wide range and large quantity of bird remains that derived from both domestic poultry and coastal and wetland species. This paper discusses this unique faunal assemblage and focuses on assemblage composition, how the deposit may have formed and why so many different species of birds may have been discarded in the pit. This paper also examines what became of the people who it is argued cared for and raised this diverse range of birds. Little work has been undertaken on the role of pets and keeping animals in an Australian context, and particularly the effects of keeping large numbers of birds on small domestic urban lots. This is in large part due to faunal assemblages in Australia being primarily food remains as well as the ability of analysts to identify fine species divisions within broader class classifications, such as small bird (Baylem 2009).

## Site location

364–378 Little Lonsdale Street is located in the

Melbourne CBD between William and Queen Streets on the northwest side of Little Lonsdale Street. It occupies two parcels of land, No. 364–370, known as the Mint Cottages (HV7822–1024), and No. 372–378, known as the Lebanon Terraces (H7822–1025) (Figs 1 and 2). The Mint Cottages were constructed in 1868 by Fitzroy builders Leech and Bricknell, and were owned by W.H. Dillon, a local confectioner. The cottages remained in use until 1927, when they were demolished to make way for the construction of the Tuberculosis Bureau building (Godden et al. 2021).

## Methods

Data on the recovered artefact assemblage was entered into an Excel spreadsheet developed by Dr. Christine Williamson, which is consistent with Heritage Victoria recording requirements. All animal bones, shells and botanicals were identified using a number of online and comparative resources. A number of quantitative standards were used in this study in order to understand the actual number of animals in the deposit. These include:

- Number of Identified Specimens (NISP),
- Minimum Number of Elements (MNE),
- Minimum Number of Animal Units (MAU),
- Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI), and
- Minimum Number of Butchery Units (MNBU).

The NISP was used to record all material types in the No. 368 cesspit sample MNE, MNBU and MNI were recorded for the bone sample, with the latter two methods being combined to create the MAU. Calculating the MAU helps to overcome numerical biases that arise from comparing remains from large animals (generally purchased as butchered sections) with those of smaller animals (usually purchased as whole animals). MNIs were recorded by siding individual elements and identifying the presence of distinct morphological features on the bones. The number of individuals was then determined based on the number of repeating bones for each species. Butchery units were recorded using Weaver's (2003) Australian butchery typology, with the location, direction, technology and number of butchery marks recorded.

## Site formation and assemblage composition

The No. 368 cess pit was located in the rear yard. The

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Figure 1: Aerial image of 364–378 Little Lonsdale Street (H7822-1024 and H7822-1025)

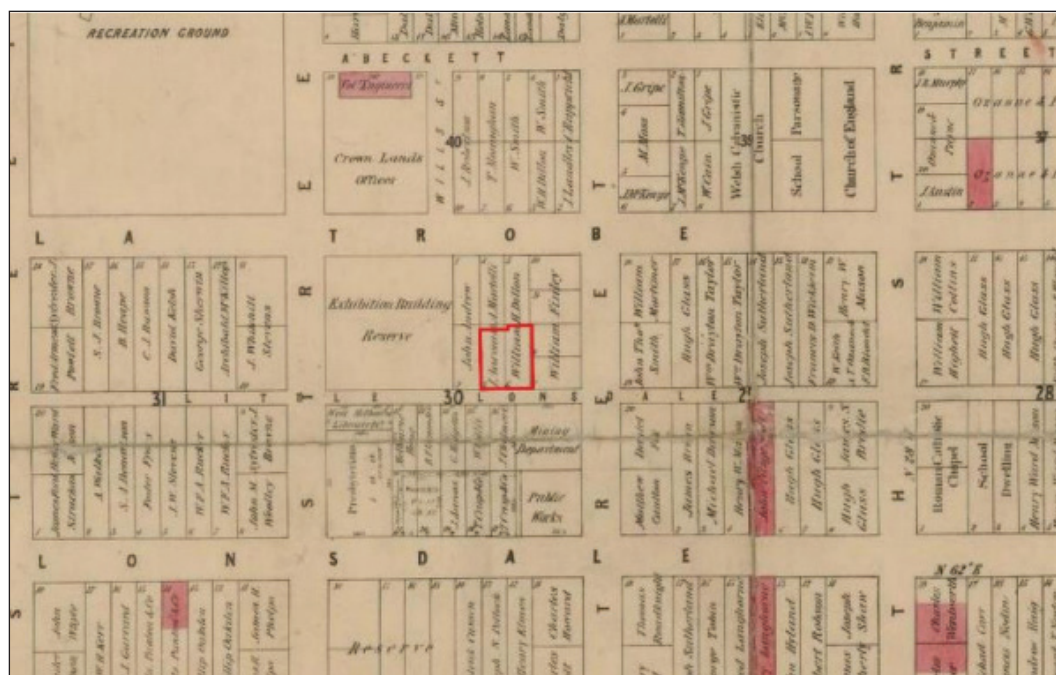


Figure 2: Location of 364–378 Little Lonsdale Street is highlighted in red (PROV VA 3021)

sample discussed here was recovered from two contexts: a cess deposit (1096), which was located approximately one metre below the capping clay layer (1059), and a dark cess deposit at the base of the cesspit (1245). The 5912 artefact fragments from these two contexts primarily consist of organics items ( $n=5277$ ), with bone making up the largest portion ( $n=4407$ ), followed by seeds ( $n=430$ ) and shell ( $n=430$ ), with glass, ceramic and metal artefacts collectively making up one tenth of the assemblage (Table 1).

The artefacts in the No. 368 cesspit were probably deposited between 1870 to 1878. During this period, a mandate was sent out by the Victorian Government

requiring all cesspits to be closed due to hygiene concerns (Hayes 2016; Minchinton and Hayes 2018). At the time of closure, cesspits were generally cleaned out and then often filled with rubbish, such as household items and food remains, interspersed with sandy sediments and then capped with a layer of clay (Hayes 2016; Minchinton and Hayes 2018). Further, as cesspits were regularly cleaned out before the contents of the pit began leaking into the surrounding soils (Hayes and Minchinton 2016:3), it is unlikely that the assemblage represents an accumulative deposit resulting from detritus being discarded into the cesspit over time. However, this does not exclude the possibility that these artefacts may

Material	Object form	NISP of context 1096 and 1245	MNV/MNE of context 1096 and 1245	NISP % of context 1096 and 1245	MNV/MNE % of context 1096 and 1245
<b>Ceramic</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>1.04</b>
	Bottle	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Button	4	4	0.07	0.07
	Chamber pot	53	4	0.9	0.07
	Container	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Cup	57	13	0.96	0.24
	Jug	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Plate	24	11	0.41	0.2
	Saucer	12	6	0.2	0.11
	Unidentified	47	15	0.79	0.28
<b>Composite</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0</b>
	Shoe	5	0	0.08	0
<b>Glass</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>5.78</b>	<b>1.3</b>
	Bead	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Bottle	238	45	4.03	0.84
	Stopper	3	3	0.05	0.06
	Tumbler	11	4	0.19	0.07
	Unidentified	85	16	1.44	0.3
	Window	4	1	0.07	0.02
<b>Inorganic</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.04</b>
	Coal	55	2	0.93	0.04
<b>Metal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.19</b>
	Hook and eye	4	4	0.07	0.07
	Nail	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Unidentified	25	5	0.42	0.09
<b>Organic</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5277</b>	<b>5231</b>	<b>89.26</b>	<b>97.43</b>
	Bone	4407	4372	74.54	81.43
	Seed	430	430	7.27	8.01
	Shell	430	428	7.27	7.97
	Stopper	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Unidentified	9	0	0.15	0
<b>Unidentified</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5912</b>	<b>5369</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 1: NISP, MNV and MNE of materials from No. 368 cesspit context (1096) and (1245)*

represent a secondary depositional event, where artefacts from rubbish piles that had accumulated in yards were then deposited into cesspits at the time of closure. In this scenario the assemblage may represent a longer period of accumulation, potentially up to a year (Williamstown Chronicle Saturday 11 March 1876:3), where rubbish was collected in backyards, often in a single area to avoid smell or disease (Williamstown Chronicle Saturday 11

March 1876:3) and only disposed of when it had become a ‘nuisance’.

It is no exaggeration to say that at this moment there are thousands of tons of these filthy offscourings in the back yards and back streets of this city [Melbourne], which remain from month to month because the occupiers of the premises will not go to the expense of removal until the accumulation becomes of mountainous



extent. (The Herald Thursday 1 December 1864:2)

The artefact dates also suggest the assemblage accumulated in the 1870s, although may contain items made in the 1850s, which is not unexpected as ceramics have long use lives and glass bottles were recycled (Figure 3). With this being said, the bone data may allow us to more accurately pinpoint how the deposit accumulated.

Although the No. 368 cess pit contains a large number of animal bone, shell and botanical remains, these only represent 155 shellfish, 56 botanicals, 14 mammal butchery units and four fish. Oysters were eaten *en-masse* in the nineteenth century and their small meat yield meant that large numbers were frequently purchased. The 151 oysters in the sample only represent one or two bushels of shellfish, and it was estimated that the approximately 100 oysters in a bushel were sufficient to feed four to six people (Geelong Advertiser Friday 21 November 1875:4). Similarly, the high number of individual botanicals, such as grape, raspberry, and mustard seeds, represent only a few individual fruits and likely represents the contents of jam and mustard jars that were identified in the sample. Overall, the low number of diet-related faunal remains suggests that the artefacts from this sample do not represent household waste discarded into the cesspit over time but are rather the result of a single depositional event at the point of cesspit closure (Table 2). This is also further supported by the presence of several pets in the cesspit deposit, including seven dogs (a single adult individual and six puppies) as well as three cats.

### The Birds

The remainder of this paper will focus on the 11 species of birds that were identified in the No. 368 cess pit. Based on the presence of repeating skeletal elements, an MNI of 188 birds has been calculated for the sample, with most represented by near to complete skeletons (Table

3). Domestic species, such as chickens, geese, pigeons, ducks, quails, turkeys, and roosters, make up more than two thirds of the faunal sample (Table 3). The remaining birds are coastal and wetland species including the plover, curlew, oyster catcher and stilt.

The assemblage contains several wetland and coastal birds that have not previously been noted/identified in Australian historical archaeological assemblages. Newspaper resources note that these wetland species were kept as pets, curiosities or collected as status symbols (The Australasian 1876 Saturday 9 December:7) and on occasion were eaten as luxury foods along with their eggs (The Argus Tuesday 6 February 1877:4). These wetland and coastal birds were also often noted as Australian native game, and birds such as the plover were highly sought after and valued by hunters and collectors throughout Australia (Queenscliff Sentinel and Portarlington and Sorrento Advertiser Saturday 28 January 1888:3). 'To the sportsman, also, Jambaroo offers a source of endless amusement... and the swamps and ponds around Port Phillip swarm with wild duck, plover, curlews, red-bills, &c.' (The Sydney Herald Monday 11 May 1840:4). The cost of purchasing these native birds was significant, as they cost between three shillings and eight shillings per bird (The Australasian 1876 Saturday 9 December:7), which was three to four times the cost of turkey, which was the most expensive domestic bird then available at one shilling, 11 ½ pence (Biagi 2020). Due to their exorbitant cost, it is unlikely that these species of birds were kept as food or for their eggs (as there appears to have only been a small market for these animals) and they are also very few in number compared to the domestic species in this assemblage.

The large number of birds recovered from the cesspit of No. 368 Little Lonsdale Street suggests that the person or people who formed this assemblage may have been bird keepers. Bird keeping was common

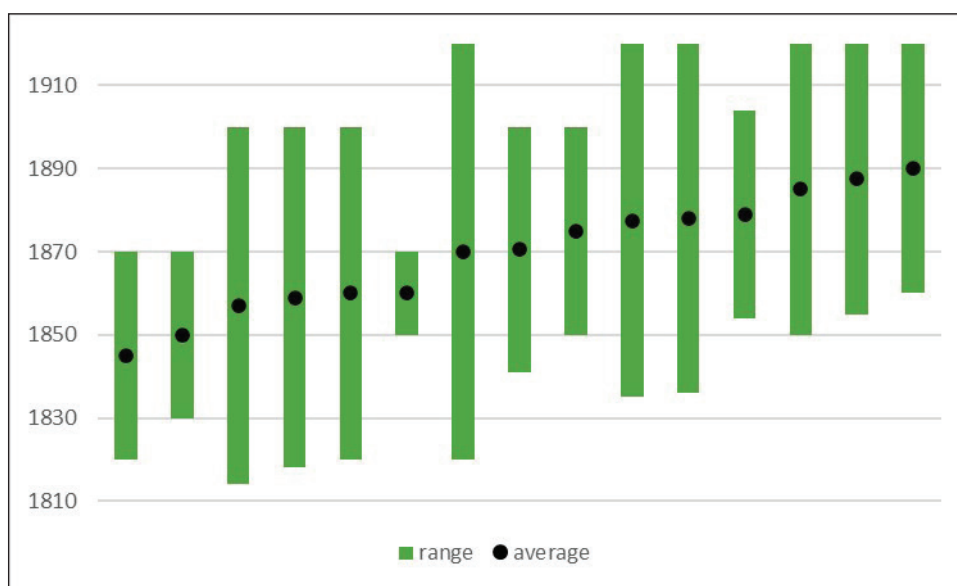


Figure 3: Date ranges for contexts (1096) and (1245) from No. 368

Group	Species	NISP	MNE	MAU	NISP %	MNE %
Avian	Bird	1794	1792	23	34.06	34.26
	Chicken	658	645	66	12.49	12.33
	Curlew sandpiper	1	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Duck	66	64	16	1.25	1.22
	<i>Galliformes</i>	4	4	3	0.08	0.08
	Goose	3	3	2	0.06	0.06
	Lapwing	24	24	5	0.46	0.46
	Oystercatcher	1	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Pigeon	278	277	65	5.28	5.3
	Quail	140	141	16	2.66	2.7
	Rooster	7	7	4	0.13	0.13
	Stilt	15	13	8	0.28	0.25
	Turkey	2	2	4	0.04	0.04
Mammal	Cat	12	12	3	0.23	0.23
	Cow	5	5	4	0.09	0.1
	Dog	220	206	7	4.18	3.94
	Mammal	248	248	indet	4.71	4.74
	Marsupial	2	2	1	0.04	0.04
	Pig	1	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Rabbit	54	54	4	1.03	1.03
	Rat	2	2	1	0.04	0.04
	Sheep/goat	25	24	9	0.47	0.46
Marine	Cockle	2	2	2	0.04	0.04
	Fish	14	13	3	0.27	0.25
	<i>Gastropoda</i>	2	2	2	0.04	0.04
	Pippi	1	1	1	0.02	0.02
	<i>Pyramidallidae</i>	1	1	1	0.02	0.02
	Rock oyster	424	422	151	8.05	8.07
	Sardine	15	15	1	0.28	0.29
Flora	Chilli	10	10	10	0.19	0.19
	Grape	54	54	27	1.03	1.03
	Mustard	36	36	36	0.68	0.69
	Passionfruit	2	2	2	0.04	0.04
	Peppercorn	5	5	5	0.09	0.1
	Raspberry	323	323	3	6.13	6.18
Unidentified		816	816	indet	15.49	15.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>5267</b>	<b>5230</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2: NISP and MNE of species from contexts (1096) and (1245)

Species	MNI
<b>Domestic</b>	
Chicken	66
Pigeon	65
Quail	16
Rooster	4
Duck	16
Turkey	4
Goose	2
<b>Coastal/Wetland</b>	
Curlew (Sandpiper)	1
Lapwing (Plover)	5
Oyster catcher	1
Stilt	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Table 3: Minimum number of individual birds from No. 368 cesspit

Species	Cut	Uncut
ChickenW	–	658
Curlew	–	1
Duck	1	65
Goose	–	3
Lapwing	–	24
Oystercatcher	–	1
Pigeon	5	273
Quail	–	140
Rooster	–	7
Stilt	–	15
Turkey	–	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1189</b>

Table 4: cut mark frequency on bird bones from No. 368 cesspit

during the nineteenth century, with people often keeping pigeons, chickens, quails and turkeys (South Bourke and Mornington Journal Wednesday 11 June 1879:4). These birds were most often used for secondary purposes, including egg production, as messengers, for racing and shooting as well as eventually becoming meals (Leader Saturday 18 October 1873:19; The Herald Saturday 10 November 1877:3; Mount Alexander Mail Tuesday 14 March 1871:2). However, most discussions of urban archaeological sites in Australia that contain bird remains discuss these animals based on economy and diet and do not consider them outside of these narrow parameters (e.g. Steele 1999; Howell–Meurs 2000; Weaver 2003; Simons and Maitri 2006; Baylem 2009; Biagi 2018, 2020).

No. 368 Little Lonsdale Street is unique among Australian urban sites that contain bird remains because of the large number and wide range of birds that were being kept on a small premises. What also separates this assemblage from other sites containing bird remains is that it is unlikely that these birds were solely, or even primarily, used for food. This suggestion is supported by the absence of cut marks on the majority of bird bones, with only five pigeon and a single duck bone having been cut (Table 4), as well as the skeletal representation showing that numerous whole animals were deposited.

Further, a large number of tracheal bones (those that make up the windpipe) were noted in the assemblage. These bones are usually not present in assemblages where birds were being purchased as food, as the neck and head of the bird is commonly removed before sale. Similarly, they are often not present within home butchery assemblages as the neck is again removed from the body before preparation and cooking and is therefore discarded separately. The very small size of tracheal bones and the fact that they are made of cartilage means that they are highly susceptible to taphonomic processes such as weathering and transportation through wind or rain. Therefore, their preservation strongly suggests that they must have been deposited into this cesspit and covered over relatively quickly (in the earlier stages of decay) to have been preserved in such high number (N=110). In combination, the presence of tracheal bones along with the bodies of whole and largely unmodified birds (Table 4) strongly suggests that the birds were killed and discarded whole and then deposited relatively quickly into this cesspit. Together this evidence supports the theory that the bird bones are not food remains.

### Who, What & Why?

There was significant occupant turnover in Melbourne during the nineteenth century, as noted by Minchinton (2017), and the Mint cottages were no exception to this. A search of rate books, postal directories and online newspaper resources has revealed the names of people that lived at No. 368 (then No.53) Little Lonsdale Street throughout this period (Table 5).

There are several suspects in the story of who may have been keeping these birds (Table 6). It is possible to eliminate William Sayer and Henry Gooch due to the early date of their departure from the premises and what is currently understood about the timing of the closure of the cesspits (Hayes and Minchinton 2016). These individuals also only occupied the premise for a short period, making it unlikely that they would have amassed

Name	Occupation/Relation	Occupation date
William Sayer	Wholesale fruiterer	1869–1870
Henry Gooch	Wine merchant	1871
Martin Krieger	Tailor	1872–1880

Table 5: Names, occupation and occupation dates of those living in No. 368 in the 1870s

such a vast number of birds in a year or less.

This leaves Martin Krieger, who moved into No. 368 in 1872 and continued living at the cottage until ca.1880. It is unlikely that Krieger, if he owned these birds, would have willingly killed off his entire flock in the 1870s without reason. Although it is possible that he may have been the owner of these animals, excavations have failed to find evidence of a large birdcage and there is no record of any such structure on town planning maps. Bird cages were required to hinder escape and also to protect the birds from predators such as foxes and cats and it is highly improbable that they would have been left to roam free in the yard. Therefore, it is unlikely that these birds were being kept by any of the mentioned occupants of No. 368.

Instead, this assemblage may represent the communal sharing of cesspits as rubbish dumps during the 1870s. Hayes and Minchinton (2016:11), in their paper on cesspit formation, suggests that:

For cesspits closed from 1870 onwards, the almost-simultaneous introduction of municipal collection of household refuse and the filling up of disused pits by an MCC contractor raises the possibility of artefacts being deposited from sources other than the immediate household.

If those living in the households during the cesspit closure mandate, did not have enough detritus to fill these pits, they may have allowed their neighbours to discard any unwanted goods they had at the ready into the cesspit before closure (Hayes and Minchinton 2016).

Interestingly, across the street at No. 475 Little Lonsdale Street we find that there was a family of four called the Rogers who had a large bird cage in their rear yard (Table 6 and Figure 4). This family lived at the location for three years, from 1872 to 1875, during the years of mandatory cesspit closures.

During their first year on Little Lonsdale Street

Charles Jr. succumbed to an unknown illness and died at a young age (it is not stated if the family knew the cause of death) (The Age Friday 27 September 1872:4). Three years later in 1875, nine-year-old Susan Rogers was playing at school when she fell ill with a headache, fever, dehydration, and shortness of breath. Over the following two days, Susan developed diarrhoea and vomiting and eventually died on the third day. When the doctor arrived, Susan was unable to breathe. Doctor Youl, who conducted the postmortem examination, stated that Susan had died of an ‘acute inflammation of the lungs’ (The Herald Tuesday 22 June 1875:3).

The death of Susan Rogers can be directly linked to the presence of birds on the property. It is well known that people who keep birds can suffer from a number of conditions (Chopra et al. 2017; Gorman et al. 2009). In this case, it appears that Susan was suffering from potentially both, Bird Fancier’s Lung and Bird Egg Syndrome. Both conditions begin with a person becoming sensitised to avian (bird) proteins through exposure to their feathers and droppings. This can lead to severe gastrointestinal and respiratory issues, especially when the allergen is not

Name	Occupation/Relation	Occupation date
Charles Rogers	Post office clerk	1872–1875
Louisa Rogers	Wife of Charles Rogers	1872–1875
Susan Rogers	Daughter of Charles and Louisa Rogers	1872–1875
Charles Rogers Jr.	Son of Charles and Louisa Rogers	1872–1875

Table 6: Names, occupation/relationships, and occupation dates of the Rogers family

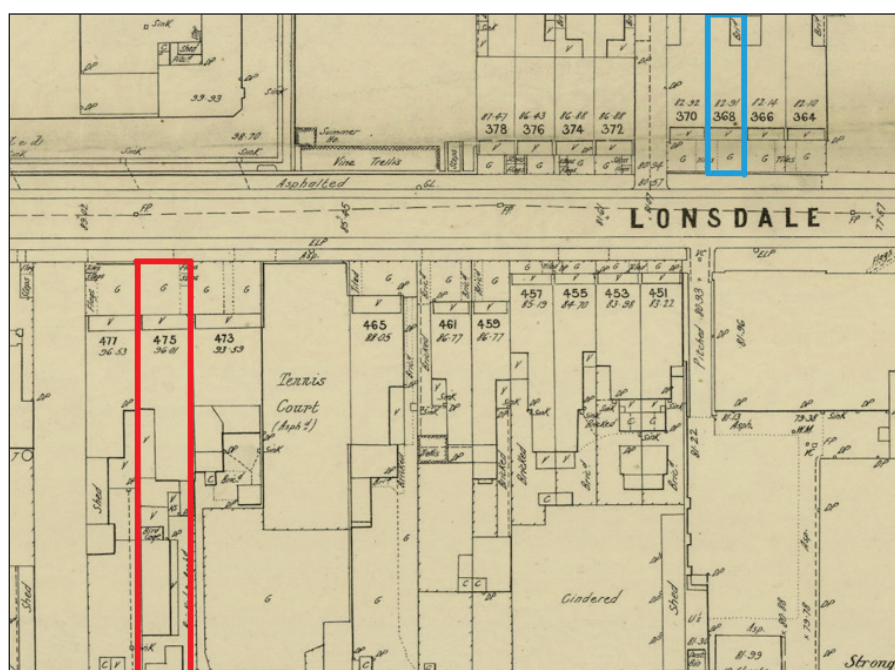


Figure 4: Location of 475 (red) and 368 (blue) Little Lonsdale Street. (PROV VA 714)



immediately removed, as displayed by the death of Susan Rogers. If the high number of birds were being kept by the Rogers, it is likely that hygiene conditions were poor, and Susan would have been repeatedly exposed to bird droppings and the birds themselves.

In 1875, shortly after Susan's death and now childless, Charles and Louisa decided to move from their Little Lonsdale Street home to East Melbourne and it is likely that their departure coincided with the timing of the closure of the No. 368 cess pit. The evidence points to the large numbers of birds and other pets that were killed and thrown into this cesspit being an abandonment assemblage associated with the relocation of Charles and Louisa Rogers. Whether they knew that it was the birds that caused their daughter's death, or they did not have the capacity to move such a large number of birds is unknown.

An alternative explanation is that the birds were deliberately killed for a reason unrelated to the tragedy that befell the Rogers' family. Widespread disease decimated poultry populations in nineteenth century Melbourne, with croup and diphtheria common amongst flocks (Ovens and Murray Advertiser Wednesday 4 November 1857:3; The Australasian Saturday 5 November 1870). These diseases led to many people attempting to make home remedies, but ultimately culling their birds in an attempt to save the uninfected (The Australasian Saturday 5 November 1870). These diseases may have ravaged the birds from the No. 368 cess pit, and whomever owned these animals may have been forced to cull them either in a single event or over time, coinciding with the period leading up to the cesspit's closure. This scenario may equally explain the skeletal representation of whole birds and the lack of butchery marks, as people would have avoided eating these animals for fear of falling ill. Lastly, as discussed by Hayes and Minchinton (2016), Murray and Crook (2019) and others, there is considerable difficulty in attributing cesspit assemblages to occupants and therefore it is important to note that this assemblage, while still representing the shared use of space, may also reflect the discard of multiple household's rubbish.

In a final sad twist to the Rogers' tale, in 1878 at East Melbourne, three years after the death of Susan, Charles Rogers aged 39 died of the same disease that killed his daughter (The Australasian Saturday 10 August 1878:26). It is likely, that years of exposure to birds resulted in a chronic form of Bird Fancier's Lung that eventually took his life. There is no mention of what happened to Louisa Rogers, however, in Charles' obituary no children or wife are mentioned, and it is possible that she had already died or that after the death of their children Louisa and Charles separated.

## Discussion

Faunal remains are an under studied aspect of Australian historical sites that can help archaeologists develop a greater understanding of not only dietary behaviours but the relationships between people and animals that exist outside of this framework (Kost et al. 2019:337). For

centuries people and birds have occupied the same space in what has been referred to as '*humanimal relations*' (Lestel, Brunois, and Gaunet 2006; Guillo 2009; Taylor 2011), '*anthrozootechnical agencements*' (Doré and Michalon 2017) and notions of '*non-human personhood*' (Descola 2005; DeGrazia 2006; Hill 2013; Locke 2017; Morton 2017). Further research into the keeping of birds and other animals can lead to insights into social status, symbolism, environmental reconstructions, and secondary commodities (Serjeantson 1997). Human-animal relationships that go beyond the purely economic, need to be further explored in historical archaeology. Historical documentation that describes people's interactions with, and views on, these animals allow for more nuanced interpretations of human behaviours.

In the case of 364–378 Little Lonsdale Street, despite the small size of cottages in the inner city of Melbourne during the nineteenth century, at least 188 birds were being kept, (whether all at once or over a longer period) with people sharing their already confined living space with numerous animals. This would have created a significant amount of noise, especially with several roosters and dogs, as well as smell and mess, with the yard and any coops requiring constant upkeep. As very few of the birds were eaten, it is likely that they were highly valued for other reasons, such as their aesthetic qualities, their secondary commodities or they may have been a sign of status amongst other bird lovers (Serjeantson 1997:257). The keepers of the No. 368 cess pit birds had not only domestic species but native coastal and wetland birds that would have required time, money, and effort to obtain. The time, energy, and cost of feeding 188 birds would have also been considerable, suggesting that the keepers were willing to invest in the upkeep of these animals.

It is likely that the faunal assemblage from the No. 368 cess pit represents the complex sharing of space that has been noted to have occurred in nineteenth century Melbourne. Most archaeological interpretations focus on attempting to relate cesspits and other deposits directly to those living at a site, although linking artefacts to people is an inherently difficult process and has been discussed at length by a number of authors (Hayes and Minchinton 2016; Murray and Crook 2004, 2005, 2019). Instead, where appropriate, viewing these assemblages through the lens of a shared community landscape reflects the likelihood that many parts of nineteenth century Melbourne were shared spaces. This is an avenue of research that needs to be more highly considered in any interpretation of urban assemblages. The concept of shared community landscapes may offer insights into not only how people interacted and moved around Melbourne but may also lead to greater and more nuanced interpretations of assemblage formation, consumer behaviour and discard practices in the nineteenth century.

Finally, animals continue to be essential touchstones of human life and the examination of human/animal relations can tell us much about the past. Further research into this field is sorely needed in Australian historical archaeology (Feinberg et al. 2013; Kost & Hussain 2019:

368; Marvin and McHugh 2014; Wilikie 2013).

## Conclusion

A unique faunal assemblage that has 11 species of domestic, coastal and wetland birds was recovered from a nineteenth century cesspit at No. 368 Little Lonsdale Street. These 188 birds were probably being kept as pets, or for secondary commodity purposes, and it is likely that they were all killed in one event in the 1870s at the time that the cess pit was closed. The archaeological assemblage offers an avenue into deeper research surrounding faunal assemblages, shared community landscapes, bird keeping and animal human relationships that moves beyond the simple understanding of animals as food. Further research into shared community landscapes and human animal relationships is required and should be embraced by Australian archaeologists.

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