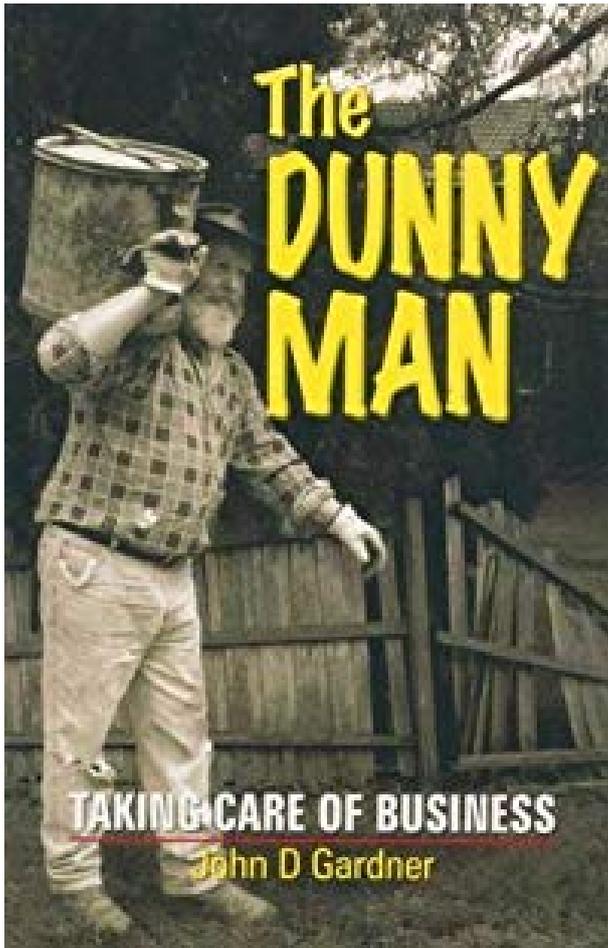


# The Dunny Man: Taking Care of Business



<b>Pages:</b>	172
<b>Language</b>	English
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<b>ISBN10:</b>	0646517546
<b>Genre:</b>	Uncategorized
<b>ISBN13:</b>	9780646517544
<b>Goodreads Rating:</b>	4.25
<b>Published:</b>	December 1st 2009 by Lost and Found Books

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The Dunny Man is about 200 years of Australian history and John's story is of those last few decades before this task was phased out.

It is the recollection of his childhood from the 1940s when 'the dunny man', as he was known, was a common sight in most communities, and of John's experiences and association with the men that conducted this most essential service. It's the story of how decades later, almost unwittingly, John found himself in the role of a dunny man in the outer-suburban areas of Melbourne. The story also covers the history of the dunny man and explains the tasks he had to perform, as many readers would have little or no knowledge of this tradition. It's a humorous tale about actual events, some very strange employees and many challenging situations. It also includes stories from many of the old men, now in their 70s and 80s, who worked as dunny men during their lives. It tells of the conflict between the sanitary contractors and the managers of the local councils who employed them, and of their attempts to outsmart the dunny men and prove that there were dishonest practices. But most importantly it captures for the first time, and probably the last, a comprehensive written record of the life of the dunny man and the history of the sanitary service, before it's lost forever. These days, when most homes include at least one internal bathroom, it's hard to imagine that just 60 or so years ago

Melbourne's sanitary conditions were what would now be considered third-world standard.

There were no luxury bathrooms with spas and bidets and fancy tiles then, just a dunny in the backyard.

The blue-stone cobbled lanes of Melbourne's inner city, where the dunny man came at night to empty the pans, are the only aspect of this era that remains. In a few more years, the men will be gone and so will their memories. This book will help preserve them and shed some light on an era when no matter where you stood in life, when nature called almost everyone stood or sat in a small building somewhere in the backyard.