

Australian Bush Devastation

By Travis Dunn

Weather predictions of a horror bushfire day early in February in south east Australia proved to be understated! February the 7th, 2009 will forever go down as one of the worst natural disasters ever to hit this country. Temperatures nudged 48 degrees Celsius and the wind howled at up to 120 km/h. We could only hope that no fires would start, unfortunately this were not the case.

Several fires started, some through faulty electricity lines, some through arson! The worst fire started at Kilmore East, north of Melbourne, whilst another fire was lit at Murrindindi north east of Melbourne, these two fires would eventually meet. Emergency services were unable to cope with the sheer scale of the disaster, it would be weeks before the full scale of it would be fully known.

grandchildren, they fought the fire trying to save their house for well over an hour. Things became too much for them in the end, they were forced to retreat and take cover in the creek that was running through their property. Here they stayed for a couple of hours until the fire front had passed. Surveying the situation they found that they had lost literally everything, but they were amongst the lucky ones as they were fit and healthy. They have since begun the rebuilding process, they have started to accrue another collection and are doing amazingly well considering the circumstances that they have been through.

Theirs is just one of hundreds of stories to come out of the day, all of which have a sad undertone. The one heartening thing to come from such a disaster is the amazing support that

has been received from fellow countrymen and from people right around the world. Over \$350 million dollars was raised to assist those affected by the fires, many of which were uninsured, and assistance of all sorts has been offered from people from all walks of life. It sometimes takes a disaster to show the generous and kind nature of humanity, that is certainly the case here.

Please spare a thought for those affected and hope that we never have such weather conditions anywhere in the world again which produced such a devastating effect, for there was literally no stopping this fire under those conditions.

The bottles pictured here are just a few examples of ones that are gone forever!

Related article next page



Many towns were consumed in the flames, over 2,000 homes were lost and more than 170 people perished. It is impossible to imagine what it may have been like without being there, the stories that have come out of that day are nothing short of a nightmare.

Several collectors lived in the fire affected areas. One of the stalwarts of the hobby in Australia, auctioneer Ross Roycroft was in the direct path of the bushfire. Along with his wife, Christine, and their





One of the not so fortunate victims was Gavin Dunn - son of June Dunn and brother to Travis Dunn, editors of **The Australian Bottle & Collectables Review**. Here is his story by his brother, Travis.

Gavin was a victim of the fire, living in Flowerdale not too far from the Roycroft's.

Gavin Dunn, born April 2, 1969 passed away February 7, 2009.

The events of February 7th, 2009 will forever go down in our memories as the most shocking day in this country's history. So many lives lost, so much property lost.

Gavin had been living on his Flowerdale property for fifteen years. He loved living in Flowerdale, the lifestyle suited him to a tee.

Being born to Russell (deceased) and June Dunn nearly forty years ago, he was exposed to the bottle collecting community for much of his life. He would, in his younger days, join his father and his two brothers on numerous excursions into the rugged bush, that was to eventually claim his life, in the search for historic sites in the hope of finding the odd bottle or two.

Once he was old enough, his life went in a different direction, being a very independent person, he shied away from the collecting to lead his own life. He would always, however, be a collector at heart.

He left school as soon as he could, gaining an appren-



Small sampling of the devastation

ticeship in the printing trade. Becoming fully qualified, things were going along smoothly until one fateful day when he was involved in a serious car accident.

Having acquired a mild brain injury, he was unable to return to work. Receiving a payout from the TAC, this was used to buy his own property in Flowerdale, which he lived in ever since.

Gavin had a love of motorbikes. His younger days saw him spending many hours on his motorcycles. He had a few incidences along the way, suffering a broken pelvis at one stage and on a separate occasion a broken leg. None of these were to deter him from riding. He had motorbikes right until the end.

Gavin loved his animals, too. He always had dogs as companions and would do anything for his dogs. He could often be seen walking his dogs down the street to the local shop, although, it could be said the dogs were walking him.

He is survived by his three children, twin teenage girls whom he rarely saw and his younger daughter Kim, with whom he had been spending some time.

Gavin will be sadly missed by June (our mom), myself, and his other brother, Mark. We hope that he has gone onto a better place and does not argue too much with his father now that they have been reunited.