

## **Clochemerle Club celebrates 25 years**

Once a group of fun-loving friends gathered to 'throw a few boules around' in the historic village precinct of Guildford in Western Australia. This soon gathered momentum and became Le Club Clochemerle de Pétanque, where the fun and games traditions have now continued for 25 years.

Recently Clochemerle club celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday in the Guildford historic precinct where everything began. Members and founders toasted the club over lunch in the Mechanics Institute hall and followed up - naturally - with some pétanque in the Institute's tree-shaded grounds that are Clochemerle's social play headquarters.

Special birthday guests included Clochemerle's first president Chris Holden, first membership ticket holder Peter Bourke and other founder members Allan Panzich (longest continuous member), Pauleen Hanley, Jean-Claude Pondevie, and life member Bernie Doyle with wife Lee.

There to welcome attendees were the current committee of president Pam John, vice-president Kim Douglas, treasurer Richard Taylor, secretary Sally Friend and tournament organisers Sue Dauth, Walter Lubtschenko and Jenny Silva.

Also present were Terry and wife Barbara Brown, representing co-founder the late Paul Brown who suggested the name Clochemerle after Gabriel Chevallier's classic comic novel of village life; and former secretary and artist Shirley Winstanley whose painting (pictured) shows Clochemerlians at play in their historic precinct.

In early days members met on convivial Friday nights in the grounds of the Mechanics Institute, and played bigger competitions across the road in Stirling Square. Now many members are semi or fully retired and regular play has shifted to Wednesday mornings, while additional Sunday play and major tournaments are held at nearby Spring Reserve.

Throughout all however, the club has strongly retained its inclusive nature. All play is organised via random draws so no-one has to sit on the sidelines hoping to be invited into a team. Membership reflects a wide range of backgrounds too, with players coming from Africa, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Japan, Latvia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, the Ukraine, UK and USA along with Australian-born members.

While most prefer social play and attending events such as the club's annual quiz night and tournaments in attractive rural and riverside locations, a small core of competitive Clochemerlians has regularly featured in successful WA and Australian teams and won State titles in every category.

There's room for all approaches in this characterful club with the unusual name and classic 'village' ambience. One thing's certain - Clochemerle's future will hold lots more fun and games. Vive Clochemerle!

***Kim Douglas***