

The last three years my wife Lyn and I have been fortunate enough to be invited to The Murray Maul at Echuca, hosted by Woodend-Hanging Rock Petanque Club.

**Following our second 'maul' in 2016, I composed the following poem.
I am sure some members will relate to it.**

We have had great times each year and value the friendships we have made.

I hope you enjoy my poem.

**Kind Regards
Martin Connolly
Mornington Peninsula Petanque Club inc.**

PETANQUE BY THE MIGHTY MURRAY

**As the Mighty Murray flowed on by, the fierce combatants came
From across the land, boules in hand, to play this awesome game.
We socialised on Friday night, all laughs and “How's ya bin?”
But well we knew, me and you, that we just wanna win!**

**Some acted like they're best of friends, all chummy with good cheer,
“Hello mate, you're looking great, let's go and have a beer.”
But lurking in the murky depths an enemy was present,
All now warm but come the morn things could get quite unpleasant.**

**The morning came, a hint of rain, but spirits were still high,
Here and there you'd hear a prayer that we would all stay dry.
The forecast was a gloomy one, it didn't look so fine,
“Good chance of rain” (but if it came a real good chance of wine!)**

**The cold set in and coats were donned, and jumpers – some quite funky. Six
degrees, enough to freeze the boules off a brass monkey!
The mist on the river made us shiver, eyeballs froze in sockets,
It was so damned cold, a solicitor, I'm told, had his hands in his *own* pockets!!**

**Now we all know how pistes should go, flat and sort of level
But the centre ground was a flamin' mound, with twigs and stones and pebbles!
And then that moment came around, we tried to keep our cool,
Stepped in the ring experiencing the nervous first-throw boule.**

**Now, nowhere but Echuca Maul does play have frequent stopping
When horse and coach make slow approach, their pounding hoofs clip-clopping.
I'm sure I saw one Clydesdale nag eye the road and mutter
“These bloody fools, look at their boules, they're rolling down the gutter!”**

**Now some would throw beside the coch and step out with a smile
But it's no joke that others choked and missed it by a mile!
Some would point and others shoot, and some were just wild hurls,
Others became Margot Fontaine, all pirouettes and twirls!**

Shortly some would gloat and smirk but others they would bristle
Their collective sigh silenced only by a paddle steamer's whistle.
Chinka arced when his partner barked, "Get me a strong flat white!"
"Now steady sister, I'm a barrister not barista, but for a healthy fee I might!"

For lunch one Scot - I'll name her not - had haggis, two at least,
So this Scottish lass, being full of gas, did echo round the piste.
My wife Lyn did the self-same thing, she always blames me, though;
She said, "Martin stop it!" But I wouldn't cop it - "Yes, dear, which way did it go!"

At the end of the day in the bar after play and boules were put aside
We all had a few, both hot and cold brew, and told some fearful lies.
But I kid you not (I don't talk rot) when I tell you what I'm thinking
The Nagambie guys they took the prize, but only for their drinking!

So we did part with heavy heart and shed a little tear,
We had a ball at The Murray Maul, as happens every year.
We'd love to do it all again but can't turn back the clock
But we can exude our gratitude to Woodend-Hanging Rock!

20 August 2017