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compiled by the late Brian Joyce.

Cricket and Puddingstones

by Christine Field

On a small parcel of land between Wheathampstead and Sandridge lies a common known as **Nomansland**, where sheep once grazed peacefully and gypsies were a common sight with their colourful caravans and horses.

On this common is a cricket club, **Wheathampstead Cricket Club** once known as **Whethampsted Cricket Club**. This cricket club came to an agreement with **The Chapter Estates Manor** and the **Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England**, to use the said cricket pitch and enclose it, and keep it in good repair for the annual sum of one shilling if demanded for the privilege of the use. This agreement was signed by a **publican** and a **blacksmith** and **Wheathampstead cricket club** dated **9th Feb 1899**. Originally cricket was played on this square in the 1800's, but the first recorded match was in **1824**.

The agreement was that the square would be enclosed the same on three sides, leaving the fourth side towards the south open. Such enclosure not exceeding about thirty yards long by twenty four yards wide and such enclosure being effected by posts filled in to the ground in sockets and standing there from not more than three feet high, with metal chains running through such posts in each side making ten in all.

The pitch was rolled with a **horse drawn roller** which **can still be seen** in the woods nearby. See picture on right.>>



On the outfield towards the main road lies a "**Puddingstone**" marking the division between **Wheathampstead** and **Sandridge**, described as "a great boulder of conglomerate" which in former day indicated the boundary between the possessions of the rival monasteries of **Westminster** and **St. Albans**. Sadly as the years have gone on there is only a small part visible. Under a scheme by St. Albans District Council provision has been made for the preservation of the stone as an **object of antiquity**. It was stated in old records as being "to the south of the cluster of cottages on the north side of the common". Below shows one of the "**Puddingstones**" - a conglomerate of many colours.



The stone near the cricket pitch is part of the original stone known to the locals as "**a growing stone**". This marked the spot on which one of the contestants **died in the last bare knuckle fight about 1855**. The original puddingstone stood thirty yards from the front gate of the Fletcher home on the common (16 Nomansland). A section about one foot long projected two or three inches

above the ground. It is now probably overgrown with bushes.

Regards, Christine Field.
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