

village shop in Butley Street and made into undergarments. Often a worn petticoat was cut down for a child to wear. A shirt involved some 20,600 stitches and took an experienced worker about fourteen hours to make.⁸ Even when sewing machines were invented in the 1850s they remained beyond the reach of the rural poor who continued to stitch by hand everything they needed. The only exception was the distinctive uniform with crested buttons worn by the menfolk employed on the big estates as gamekeepers. This livery was made by professional tailors and could cost several weeks' wages.



5. Selection of 18th and 19th century crested livery buttons found on Capel Green and near the Priory by David Boast and Alan Calver.

Samuel Kilderbee, steward for the Wrights and Hamiltons (top left);
Lord Rendlesham, subsequent owner of the estate (bottom right).

(Photos: author)

The learning process

Child labour was an essential part of country life until World War II. George Ewart Evans has famously chronicled some of the outdoor activities in which children were required to participate.⁹ They were the gatherers of the family, collecting wild fruits, nuts, eggs, or pails of fir-cones ('dealies') and sticks for kindling. Beautiful watercress grew below Capel's springs and children gathered it to sell from door to door, as Harold Chambers of Butley recalled. Labouring families depended on their children's earnings to make ends meet. An older child could earn 2d per day as a mother's help or school monitress; a few lived-in as servants: a boy in the back'us¹⁰, a girl in the attic. Even when they could afford to send their children to the village school, parents sometimes kept them at home to help out, especially to glean at harvest-time, while tiny children, like Margaret Fulcher aged 2, might be sent to school to free a mother to do her chores in field and home.

As there was no school in Capel St Andrew children walked the path 'Church Lane' across the field to Butley's school built in 1842 beside the church. The age-range of children in a single class made teaching difficult, especially as class sizes grew when education became compulsory after 1870. A bigger classroom for the over-11s was added in that year and the original one became known as the Infants Room (Illustration 6). After the schools at Boyton and Chillesford closed Butley's pupil numbers increased and the village hall had sometimes to be used as a classroom. Chillesford School had a reputation for corporal punishment and Mr Shipp who taught the older children at Butley was violent, but Roy Collins has nothing but praise for Mrs Richards who ran