



# Truth Conquers All: A history of Reading Blue Coat School

Peter van Went

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Reading Blue Coat School was opened in 1660 to teach twenty 'children of honest poore men', according to the bequest of merchant Richard Aldworth. Despite his and subsequent bequests, the school was initially housed in a dilapidated former inn, and it was a constant struggle to make ends meet and keep the school open. In the mid-nineteenth century the perseverance of the school was rewarded with a new home, 42 Bath Road, and the school began to thrive, with entrance examinations, new subjects, and day boys. The world wars and the inadequacies of the site for a growing school posed new challenges, culminating with the threat of closure if the school didn't meet the government's new criteria in 1944. But the school emerged in triumph with the move to Holme Park. Here the school has grown, offering more facilities and opportunities for pupils, ever raising standards, and creating a sixth form. While one may struggle to see a link between twenty blue-coated boys in an old inn and Reading Blue Coat School today, this history shows how the school has conquered every difficulty to continue to fulfil Aldworth's aim of creating 'good citizens'.



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