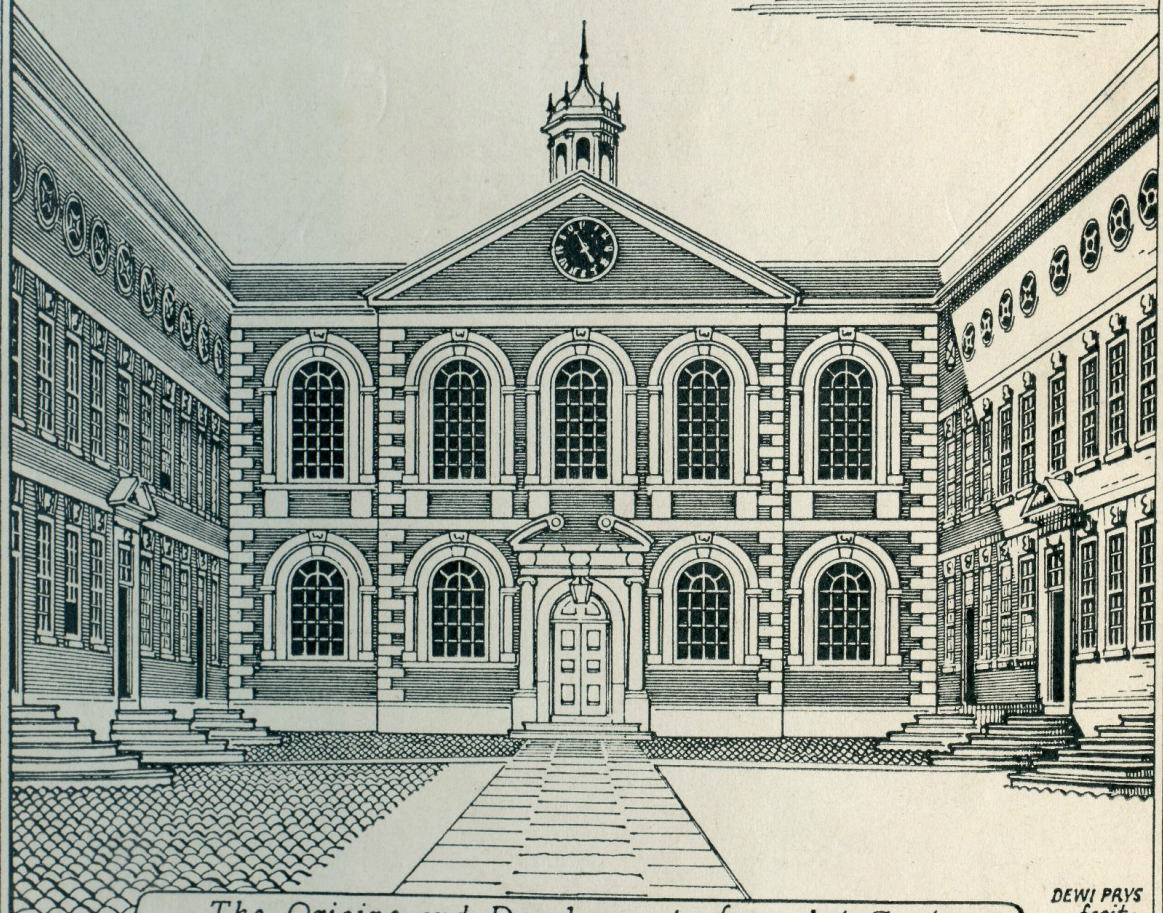


BLUECOAT CHAMBERS W. S. MACCUNN

BLUECOAT
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The Origins and Development of an Art Centre

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W. S. MACCUNN

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‘A BEAUTIFUL and historic building which is almost the only relic of our grandfathers and fathers and which has won the admiration of our most famous architects.’ It was in these words that a former Lord Mayor described the old Blue Coat Hospital when launching a public appeal to save the building in 1926.

The struggle to preserve the structure and its site from various kinds of modern vandalism and even from demolition had then been the concern of some citizens for almost a quarter of a century. That such a beautiful building should be preserved in its entirety and made a centre of the Arts would seem at first sight to be a matter beyond dispute, for visitors as well as citizens, down the years, have invariably been most enjoyably surprised on discovering this architectural gem withdrawn from the busy thoroughfare of Church Street. In fact, efforts to secure its preservation covered, in the end, almost half a century and had many moments of true drama.

Mr. MacCunn’s illuminating chronicle of these years is indeed more than a valuable contribution to local history. Readers will find themselves appreciating anew the charm and quiet dignity of this remarkable building so fortunately erected by Brian Blundell’s unknown architect in 1717—and the achievement of those whose courage and imagination ensured its preservation.

112