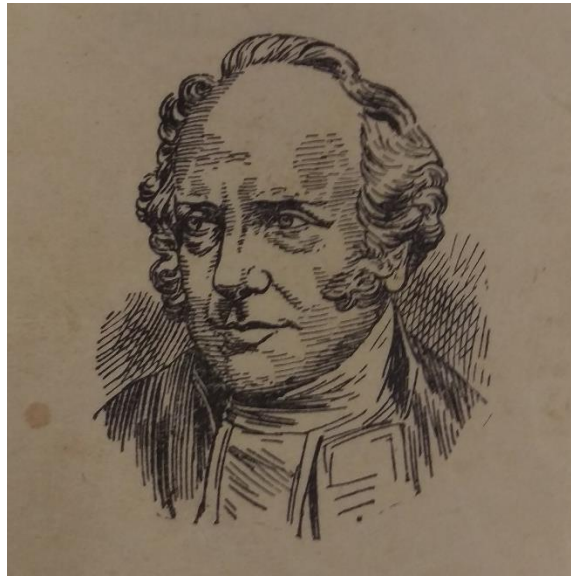


10 facts about the Rev Andrew Reed (1787-1862)



Today, marks the anniversary of the death of the Hospital's founder, Rev Andrew Reed. To celebrate his life and contribution to the hospital, I compiled below a few facts about the great man himself to celebrate his association with the hospital.

- 1) **Andrew Reed started work at the age of 15**, he was an apprentice to his father's watchmaking business. However, Reed was more drawn towards the church and entered Hackney College, an independent theological seminary, in 1807. He was ordained Minister of the New Road Chapel on his 24th birthday and remained a minister for over fifty years until having to step down due to infirmity.
- 2) **Andrew Reed, the non-conformist:** Andrew Reed's life was driven by faith. His family greatly encouraged his pursuit of religion with his father taking early retirement in order to pursue itinerant preaching with Andrew across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Later in life, due to his religious convictions he had to resign from the Board of the Infant Orphan Asylum when the Board introduced the Church of England catechism for the teaching of religious education.
- 3) **His doctorate came from Yale University:** Reed visited America, in 1834, as part of a delegation of two ministers from the Congregational Union of England and Wales to visit the churches of that denomination in the United States. Whilst

visiting he was honoured with the degree of D.D. [Doctor of Divinity] by Yale University by Yale University.

- 4) **Andrew Reed, the social and political reformer:** Reed promoted various causes to promote social justice and liberalism, including black emancipation movement; the repeal of the Corn Laws and abolition of church rates (a tax levied on all parishioners for the upkeep of churches).

- 5) **Andrew Reed, the exceptional and prolific philanthropist:** who over the course of his life helped establish five charities, along with a local grammar school and the East London Savings Bank. His first public charity was the London Orphan Asylum, which was established in 1815 in East London. This was followed in 1827, was the Infant Orphan Asylum based initially in Dalston, then The Asylum for fatherless charity in Coulsden in 1843; The Asylum for Idiots in 1837 and finally the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables in 1854.

- 6) **Andrew Reed the commuter:** Andrew Reed gave his full attention to all his charities and church and clocked up some impressive mileage on his journeys to regular visit each one He wrote in 1857, he wrote that he had 'completed ten years and 30,000 miles on the Eastern Counties line' to visit The Eastern Counties Idiot Asylum, a subsidiary of the Asylum of the Idiots. The Eastern line had a terrible reputation at the time for train delays (think Southern Rail) which makes his regular trips all the more impressive!

- 7) **Andrew Reed, a well-connected man:** Andrew Reed was an expert in securing patronage and financial supporter for his charities and among his supporters included various members of the Royal Family, politicians and various grandees from the City of London. Reed's eminence can be summed up by the Duke of Wellington, who speaking at the first anniversary dinner of the London Orphan Asylum, stated: *"I have not been to a public dinner for some years, and I had resolved that, as age and infirmities are creeping upon me, I would go to no more: but I am here to-night at the request of that great man whose wishes are to me law and whose entreaties I felt as a command it was impossible to resist"*.

- 8) **Charles Dickens inspired the foundation of the hospital:** Andrew Reed read an article about a community of ‘incurables’ he visited in an 1850 article in ‘Household Words’. He wrote: “*It is an extraordinary fact that, among the innumerable medical charities with which this country abounds, there is not one for the help of those who, of all others, most require succour and who die in thousands, neglected and unaided*”.
- 9) **He wasn’t a fan of theatre:** As a deeply pious and driven man seemingly had no time for the performing arts. In his diary, the 16-year-old Reed, admonished himself for being led astray and having visited the ‘cursed playhouses’ *twice* that year. He did not seem to change his opinions later in life describing the crowd coming out of the Victorian Theatre in 1850 as: “*the beggary and rascality of London were pouring in to their low amusements, from the neighbouring gin palaces and thieves’ cellars*”.
- 10) **The Reeds remained associated with the hospital for over 70 years:** The Reed family maintained their association with the hospital for over three generations. Reed’s second son, Sir Charles Reed, Liberal M.P. for Hackney, served as a member of the Board for 1856-1881, His own second son, Talbot Baines Reed, author of popular boys’ stories also became an administer of the charity, along with his brother, Eliot Pye-Smith Reed.

References:

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