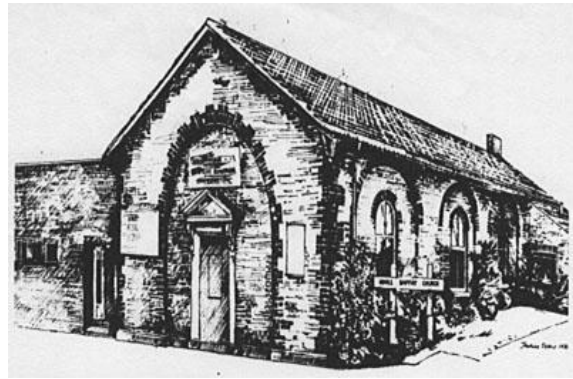


HOOLE BAPTIST CHURCH

In 1881 Hoole's population was nearing 3,000 and Ebenezer Baptist Church (then at canal side in Milton Street), hired the Lecture Hall and Reading Room in Peploe Street for Sunday services. A drawing was commissioned in 1980 to show how the building would have looked when it had a front door. There is also a picture of the foundation stone of the Lecture Hall laid by the Rt. Hon. Earl Grosvenor in August 1863.



The Baptist Church, Peploe Street

A newspaper cutting gives details of the first anniversary of the Sunday services in September 1886 (although the Church's current website suggests that the building was hired from 1883). On the anniversary, there were morning and evening services on Sunday and after an open-air service on Monday, about 100 people sat down to a tea provided by Richards Bros. the bakers and confectioners then located in the shop in Charles Street where Chatwins is now.

BRANCH MISSION AT HOOLE.—The first anniversary of the Ebenezer Baptist Church Branch Mission was held last Sunday and Monday in their place of meeting, the Lecture Hall, Bishopsfield. Mr Mackenzie (superintendent) took the service in the morning and the Pastor (W. S. Jones) in the evening. The Church from Milton-street came up in the evening to show their interest and sympathy with their brethren sent to this new field of labour. From the report the work has steadily grown since the commencement both in the Church membership and the Sunday school; tracts are distributed and open air services held each Sunday. On Monday a public tea meeting was held, when about a hundred sat down to tea, catered by Richards Bros., Bishopsfield. Afterwards a service of song was gone through by the Pastor and choir from Milton-street, entitled "Lost Gipsy," which was greatly appreciated by the audience, which completely packed the hall.

The second cutting from September 1897 shows the eleventh anniversary when tea was followed by a lecture on 'Billy Bray – the Cornish Miner'. The "attendance of Church of England friends whose presence and support were appreciated" is interesting at a time when All Saints Church were ejecting the non-conformists from running the Westminster Schools.

BAPTIST MISSION, HOOLE. — This mission, which is a branch mission connected with Milton-street Baptist Church, has just held its eleventh anniversary services. Special sermons were preached on Sunday—morning, afternoon, and evening—by Mr. A. Gooderham (the London evangelist) to full congregations. At the close of the evening service a united communion service was conducted by Pastor Wm. Povey. On Monday the annual tea was held, being followed by Mr. Gooderham's lecture on 'Billy Bray, the Cornish Miner.' The pastor presided. The attendance and collections at the services have been far in advance of former years, and the Baptist Mission in Hoole is evidently in a prosperous condition. One marked feature of the Monday gatherings was the attendance of Church of England friends, whose presence and support were appreciated.

POOR CHILDREN'S BREAKFAST.
The teachers and workers connected with the Ebenezer Baptist Mission Church, Milton-street, Chester, gave the usual breakfast to the poor children on Christmas morning. This year friends have willingly and liberally helped, thus enabling them to provide a substantial breakfast for 300 children. At nine o'clock the time announced for meeting, the children began to gather from various parts of the city, and in a short time the lecture-room was filled with happy, expectant faces. It is needless to say how thoroughly they enjoyed the following half-hour. Breakfast being ended, Mr. W. Mackenzie, the superintendent of the Sunday school, conducted a short service. Brief, appropriate addresses were given by Messrs. Edwin Dutton, T. Reynolds, and Pastor Wm. Povey. An orange and bag of sweets were given to each child on leaving. Supplies of bread and cake were also freely distributed to many needy families in the immediate neighbourhood. In the afternoon a tea was given in the Lecture Hall, Hoole, the branch mission of this church. Thanks to the generosity of many friends, Mrs. Dewar and her fellow-workers were able to supply over a hundred of the poorest children in the district with a splendid tea. The hall, which had been decorated for the occasion, presented a cheery appearance. After tea, Pastor Wm. Povey gave a short address to the children, Mrs. Dewar and the helpers were warmly thanked for their kindness, a box of sweets and an orange were presented to each child, and a most happy hour was thus brought to a close.

The third cutting tells us what happened at Christmas 1897. Firstly, at Ebenezer Church, and then of the afternoon events in Hoole, a reminder of how poor most of the children of the district were at that time.

In 1911, the Lecture Hall was put up for sale. The Baptist Church bought the property and continued its mission work there as a branch of Grosvenor Park Baptist Church. In 1952 it became Hoole Baptist Church with 32 founding members. It was a growing organisation and in 1965 substantial alterations were made to the building. The Lighthouse Centre was added, and the Church still flourishes today.



The Lighthouse Centre