

# Scoop secured job for Anne Robinson

★ TV personality **ANNE ROBINSON** owes her journalistic career on the *Daily Mail* to the late Liverpool lawyer **REX MAKIN**.

The Liverpool-born former host of *Countdown* was on trial as a young reporter with the newspaper on the day **Brian Epstein**, the man who discovered the Beatles and managed the group, was found dead at his Belgravia, London, home in August 1967.

She told guests at the launch of Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation's series of 150th anniversary heritage events on Sunday, which she compered:

"It was a Bank Holiday Monday and in those days the *Daily Mail* gave trial shifts. They probably thought I was just going to be on a watching brief all day.

"So I went straight from my flat in Sloane Square to Belgravia Square. There were probably 12 of us there."

Makin arrived during the morning and went into Epstein's house.

"None of us knew how Brian Epstein had died," said Anne. "The big question was who would take over NEMS and The Beatles and we were standing there all morning."

The other reporters, all male, then told Anne they were going to the pub and her job was to wait outside the house and let them know if she had seen anything.

In their absence, Makin emerged.

Anne, who knew him as her family's solicitor and friend, ran over to him and he said he needed to get a taxi to Euston.

He recognised her and she offered to drive him there.

En route Makin told her that Epstein had choked on his own vomit, but it remained unclear



**ANNE Robinson** chats with Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis at Sunday's event in Liverpool

whether it was an attempt to end his life or just carelessness

"He said he didn't know who would take over, but he imagined it would be his brother Clive," Anne added.

"I don't think that happened, but Rex thought at that time that Clive would make a play for it."

It was a major scoop for the *Mail* and secured Anne a job there, "without a doubt", she told the *Jewish Telegraph* later.

"When they asked me how much a week I wanted, I said £30, and the news editor said, 'no, we'll pay you £36'. I don't think that's ever happened since."

Anne said that when her parents died, she looked on Makin and his wife Shirley as her "Liverpool parents".

Rex died seven years ago, but Anne was reunited with Shirley at Sunday's event.

She recalled of Makin, who created the term 'Beatlemania': "If you argued a law case and said there was only circumstantial evidence, he would say there is only ever circumstantial evidence."

Recalling also the infamous case of toddler **James Bulger's** murder, she said: "Rex had been at it so long and so widely he was immediately sympathetic to the sort of home life those two [accused] boys had had and whether they had a choice in life over how they had behaved.

"He was very sensitive to that sort of thing and wasn't easily shocked.

"He didn't mind taking a view quite opposite to anyone else's. He was very, very courageous and very, very different to any other lawyer."

He once defended her over a speeding offence — "of course he was king of the castle of the lawyers in the whole of Lancashire".

"But," she added, "because it was me, he came to defend me and the prosecution had some very inexperienced girl because it was an open and shut case.

"I remember he kept saying to her 'can't you find your notes, you're all of a muddle? Are you confused?' He was very mischievous."