

BY DANIEL BEN-DAVID

► LIVERPOOL'S OLDEST synagogue - and one of the UK's most historic - has marked its 150th anniversary by launching a programme to celebrate the city's rich Jewish heritage and history.

Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation's Heritage Season opened during a grand civic event this Sunday at the renowned St George's Hall, presented by legendary television personality and journalist Anne Robinson.

Civic and political representatives from the entire Liverpool City Region, including the metro mayor and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, took part, and Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis gave an address at the event, which also featured classical music performances.

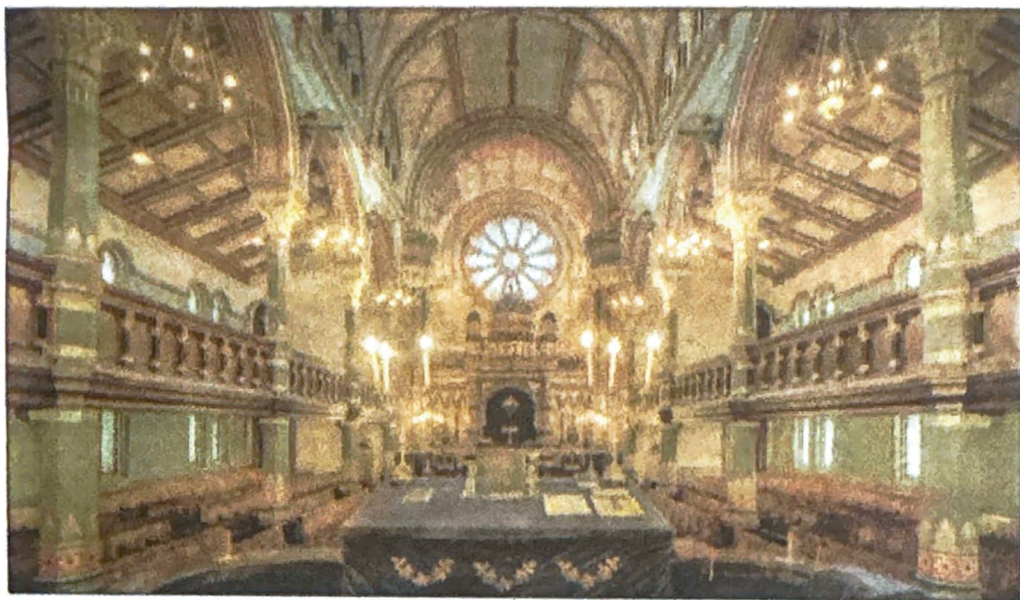
The event marked the launch of six months of events, ceremonies, concerts, lectures, performances, talks, tours and walks to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the building.

Also known as Princes Road Synagogue and featuring prominently on a stamp released for the coronation of HM King Charles III, the shul was founded in 1874 and built in an eye-catching Gothic and Moorish Revival style.

Robin Makin, who coordinated the programme, told the JC: "I am delighted that the first of a series of magnificent events were enjoyed by so many people and am looking forward to further events in the season."

He added: "It's really important at this stage to recognise the great heritage that emanated from Princes Road Synagogue."

The series of events commenced on Monday with an enhanced weekday Shacharit service celebrating 150 years of prayer, followed by an illustrative talk



Raising the roof: Princes Road Synagogue launched its anniversary celebrations with music and speeches

Liverpool's oldest synagogue celebrates its 150th in style

by Rabbi Eliyahu E Rubinstein, exploring the themes of "Awe and Splendour in Judaism", particularly in the context of the historic shul. The next talk will be on Monday, September 16.

The Weakest Link and *Countdown* presenter Anne Robinson revealed how her journalistic career had been launched after she got the scoop on the death of the Beatles' manager Brian Epstein when she gave a lift to Rex Makin, the solicitor handling the legalities, who had had his bar mitzvah at Princes Road Synagogue.

Robinson said: "I am thrilled this truly inspiring season of events is now launched. It is a great privilege to be

giving a hand in promoting the fabulous programme."

Dame Louise Ellman and historian and author Simon Sebag Montefiore also spoke, and the Chief Rabbi later unveiled a plaque at the site of the first synagogue in Liverpool, which is now a shopping centre.

Liverpool is home to one of the oldest Jewish communities in Britain, with Jewish traders settling there in the 18th century. Today, the Jewish community numbers around 2,000.

For details of Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation's Heritage Season, go to: princesroad.org/loh-heritage-season

PHOTO MICHAEL D BECKWITH/WIKIPEDIA