

# Donkey leads way ahead in mystery film

Snowfall backdrop to footage shot on Palm Sunday

by Jo Henwood

FILM stars were feeling the cold at St John the Evangelist Church in Alvanley on Sunday.

Lucius the donkey and Jonathan Sharps, who is playing Jesus in the forthcoming production of the Chester Mystery Plays, were filmed during the annual Palm Sunday service.

The short film, taken by members of The Harlequin Project at the University of Chester, will form part of a larger film for the production at Chester Cathedral later this year.

Lucius, who belongs to Doug and Meriel Cashin of Manley, is a regular at the Palm Sunday service, but has never before had to tackle four inches of snow to walk the short distance from the car park of the White Lion pub into the church.

The Rev Richard Tuckwell met Lucius and Jonathan in the car park, before filling Lucius's panniers with palm crosses.

Children and parishioners, many of whom had walked to the early morning service because of the snow drifts, then followed Jesus and the donkey up the short path to the church.

When they reached the church, Mr Tuckwell began the service by saying: "This is probably the coldest Palm Sunday we can remember!"

During the service, children were invited to come and look at the cross on Lucius's back, and Mr Tuckwell explained how it is meant to signify that they have been touched by the hand of God.

Lucius and Jonathan will be filmed again in Chester on Saturday, April 13, during the afternoon, which will represent Jesus's journey into Jerusalem.

■ This year's Chester Mystery Plays are at Chester Cathedral from June 26-July 13. Tickets are available from 01244 500959 or from [www.chestermysteryplays.com](http://www.chestermysteryplays.com).



**COLD START:** Rev Richard Tuckwell, Lucius and Jonathan Sharps in the car park of the White Lion pub before the Palm Sunday service at St John the Evangelist Church in Alvanley.



**CROSS TO BEAR:**

Hannah Green, of Newton, with Lucius and Jesus (played by Jonathan Sharps) at St John the Evangelist Church in Alvanley.



**SERVICE:**

Elena and Lucy Aiello, of Warwick, granddaughters of St John the Evangelist church warden Irene Moore, with Lucius and Jonathan Sharps.

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