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# Holy procession

by Jo Henwood

## University team shoot Mystery Plays cast in Biblical film



**FACE TO FACE:** Jonathan Sharps as Jesus meets Lucifer (Francis Tucker). Picture by Neil Kendall

CHESTER city centre took on Biblical proportions last weekend as shoppers found themselves transported back in time 2000 years.

The cast of the Chester Mystery Plays were making a film of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem which will feature in the five-yearly production this summer at Chester Cathedral. This is the first time that film has ever been used in the mystery plays.

Shot by Andy Davies of The Harlequin Project at the University of Chester, with multimedia graduates Dave Carter and Gareth Rainsforth, action started with Jesus, played by Jonathan Sharps of Guilden Sutton, entering the city via the Eastgate on a donkey.

Lucius the donkey belongs to Doug and Meriel Cashin, of Manley, and regularly makes an appearance at the Palm Sunday service at St John's Church in Alvanley.

Jesus, dressed in Biblical style clothes, 'healed' a blind man, played by David Gardiner, outside the Rococo chocolate shop at the Chester Grosvenor Hotel before meeting a temptress at a telephone box on Eastgate Street.

On Sunday, Jesus and his disciples continued up St Werburgh Street where Jesus came face to face with Lucifer, played by Liverpool actor Francis Tucker, in modern dress. Filming finished at Chester Cathedral, where the

plays will be performed in June and July this year.

Director Peter Leslie Wild said: "The filming went extremely well. The cast has been brilliant because, as everyone knows, filming can be a slow process with a lot of hanging around."

"It was a wonderful opportunity for us, as passers-by were really interested in what was going on. We were grateful for mainly fine weather and I was delighted to meet people who have already booked tickets."

"There were some really interesting and exciting moments during the two days of filming and all credit has to go to Andy and his crew."

The Chester Mystery Plays, which tell the Bible stories, were originally written in the 14th century by Benedictine monks at the Abbey of St Werburgh (now Chester Cathedral). They were banned in the 16th century and were revived in 1951 to celebrate the Festival of Britain.

■ The 2013 production of the Chester Mystery Plays will be in the nave of Chester Cathedral from June 26 - July 13. Tickets are available by telephone from 01244 500959 or from [www.chester-mysteryplays.com](http://www.chester-mysteryplays.com).



**RIDING HIGH:** Jonathan Sharps as Jesus enters Chester on Lucius the donkey, from Manley. Picture by Neil Kendall



**BIBLICAL:** Clare Vickers as mother Mary and Deborah Ashton as Mary Salome.



**DIRECTOR'S CUT:** Andy Davies, of the Harlequin Project (right) talks to cast members Cassian Wheeler, Mark Lloyd and Cat Stobbs during filming. Picture by Neil Kendall.