



■ Jesus (Jonathan Sharps) enters Chester via the Eastgate on Lucius the donkey, flanked by Peter (Cassian Wheeler, left), Thomas (Bob Manger, right) and the rest of the disciples.

Biblical film actors mix with shoppers

SHOPPERS in Chester were transported back in time as they found themselves on the set of an historic film for this summer's Chester Mystery Plays.

Jesus, played by Jonathan Sharps of Guilden Sutton, entered the city through the Eastgate on a donkey.

Dressed in Biblical style clothes, Jesus then 'healed' a blind man,

played by David Gardiner, outside the Chester Grosvenor Hotel.

He and his disciples then progressed up St Werburgh Street, where they encountered Lucifer, played by Liverpool actor Francis Tucker. Filming finished at Chester Cathedral, where the five-yearly production will be performed in June and July. The film, which was shot by Andy Davies of The Harlequin Project at the University of Chester, will

feature in the summer production.

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.

They were banned in the 16th century and were revived in 1951 to celebrate the Festival of Britain.

CMP/5/20/46



■ Clare Vickers as Jesus's mother Mary and Deborah Ashton as Mary Salome.



■ Jesus (Jonathan Sharps), 'heals' blind man David Gardiner during the Chester Mystery Plays film.



■ Left: Andy Davies, of the Harlequin Project, talks to cast members Cassian Wheeler, Mark Lloyd and Cat Stobbs during filming.



■ Above: Jesus (Jonathan Sharps), on Lucius the donkey.

■ Left: Francis Tucker as Lucifer in the Chester Mystery Plays film. Pictures by Neil Kendall.

