



Shepherds and sheep from the Chester Mystery Plays company celebrate securing permission to perform.
 Pictures: NEIL KENDALL

CMP/8/20/56

Mystery players 'have permission to perform'

A MEDIEVAL ceremony in which the Lord Mayor of Chester gives permission for the Chester Mystery Plays to be performed has taken place.

Actors playing shepherds and sheep sang bawdy songs from the plays as they paraded through the streets to the amusement of shoppers and tourists.

Accompanied by a band of musicians, the actors set off from Eastgate and made their way past The Cross and up Northgate Street to Town Hall Square where they danced.

Shepherds, played by Douglas Cashin and Paul Williams, then requested permission from the Lord Mayor to perform the Bible stories.

Dressed in full regalia on the town hall steps, Lord Mayor Pamela Booher granted permission for the plays to be performed in June and July.

The traditional ceremony dates back to the 14th century and is known as the Reading of the Banns.

Performed every five years, the original Chester Mystery Plays were written in the 14th century by the Benedictine monks of the Abbey of St Werburgh, now Chester Cathedral.

They were originally performed by the Freemen and Guildsmen in the city streets but are being presented in the nave of the historic cathedral for the first time this year.

Award-winning theatre director and radio drama producer Peter Leslie Wild is directing the plays with original music by Matt Baker.



Douglas Cashin parades up Eastgate Street in shepherd guise.



Shepherds from the Chester Mystery Plays company Fraser Moir, Paul Williams and Alison Scott.

