

# Jesus on camera in mystery film

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A RARE drop of May sunshine and a field full of golden rapeseed means that filming for the 2013 production of the Chester Mystery Plays is now in the can.

The Ascension of Jesus was filmed last week in a Frodsham field by Andy Davies and his team from The Harlequin Project at the University of Chester with mystery plays director Peter Leslie Wild, choreographer Katherine Robinson and writer Stephanie Dale.

Stephanie has adapted the original 25 medieval Bible stories into a 21st century script which will be performed by a cast of 300 at Chester Cathedral from

## Pioneering project first movie produced in group's history

June 26-July 13. The plays are produced in Chester once every five years.

Peter said: "We are working in the magnificent nave for the first time ever which has meant we have been able to enhance some of the key moments of the story with film and graphics.

"One of the dramatic high points of the Chester Mystery Plays is the Ascension of Jesus, and it was important for us to find a truly spectacular way of depicting this."

This is the first time that film has been used in the Chester Mystery Plays' 700-year history.

Peter added: "The cathedral is a fantastic space and it is important for everyone in the audience to get a sense of the power of this amazing event.

"It was Stephanie's idea to film in a rape field. We wanted a bright, golden feel to the film, and we were incredibly lucky to have a perfect sunny evening for the shoot - the supernatural element of the Ascension lends it-

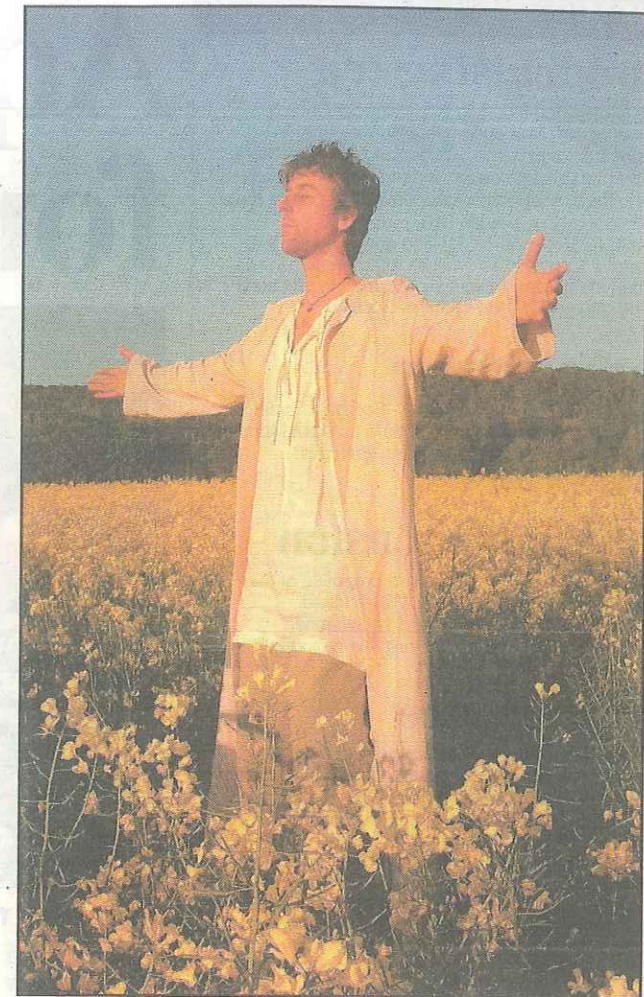
self perfectly to its use."

Peter added: "Designer Judith Croft has done a superb job of integrating the film screens into her wonderful set design and Andy has created something which I hope will stun the audience."

Five of the original 25 medieval plays, which were written by Benedictine monks at the Abbey of St Werburgh (now Chester Cathedral), will be represented through the medium of film: The Purification, The Temptation in the Desert, Cure of the Blind Man, Christ & the Leper Simon and The Ascension.

The first four were filmed in Chester city centre during April.

■ TICKETS for the Chester Mystery Plays are available from 01244 500959.



**HEAVENLY:** Jonathan Sharps, as Jesus in the Chester Mystery Plays, filming the Ascension scene in a Frodsham field. Picture by Gareth Rainsforth.