# Brother John’s bus pass pilgrimage revives historic Hospital of St Cross



Brother John, an 85-year-old Anglican monk, has embarked on an extraordinary journey across Britain, utilising only his concessionary bus pass. A respected bookbinder residing at the historic Hospital of St Cross in Winchester, he aims to raise awareness and funds for this storied almshouse, which can trace its roots back nearly 900 years. His adventure commenced on May 1 and will culminate in Winchester on June 17, encapsulating the essence of a mission intertwined with both community engagement and historical significance.

His recent stop at Chepstow bus station provided an opportunity for him to connect with fellow travellers. As he shares his journey, he highlights the importance of almshouses, which have become increasingly obscure in contemporary society. "We have had difficulty finding people to come here," Brother John remarked, expressing his hope to rekindle interest in the hospital. The Hospital of St Cross, England's oldest existing almshouse, was established between 1132 and 1136 by Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester. Today, it provides accommodation for 25 elderly men, known as "The Brothers," and continues the tradition of offering the 'Wayfarer's Dole'—a small cup of ale and a piece of bread—to anyone who visits.

Scattered across Britain, Brother John’s travels encompass an eclectic mix of cities, towns, and countryside. His journey has seen him traverse the southern coast of England, up through the eastern counties, and into Scotland, followed by a comprehensive exploration of Wales before returning to Winchester. “I am travelling Monday to Friday and spending weekends resting, writing my weekly reports and catching up with friends,” he explained, illustrating his balanced approach to the pilgrimage.

Despite the typical restrictions on the concessionary bus pass, Brother John has graciously received special permission from various coach operators to travel throughout Wales for free. He encourages anyone considering a similar fundraising endeavour to secure the necessary approvals in advance. His initiative not only champions an often-overlooked charity but also fosters dialogue among locals about the purpose and history of almshouses, which are integral to the UK's charitable landscape.

As the journey continues, passengers encountering Brother John are encouraged to engage with him, rather than be alarmed by the sight of an elderly monk kindly inquiring about their day. This unique outreach adds an element of warmth and connection to public travel, reminding us of the importance of community and support, particularly for charitable institutions like the Hospital of St Cross, which has weathered centuries of change while maintaining its mission of aiding those in need.

Through his travels, Brother John embodies the spirit of charity and connection, a wandering figure bringing forth stories of history and humanity, emphasising the vital role that traditional institutions play in modern society.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25226179.travelling-monk-brother-john-makes-stop-chepstow/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25226179.travelling-monk-brother-john-makes-stop-chepstow/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25226179.travelling-monk-brother-john-makes-stop-chepstow/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospital_of_St_Cross), [[4]](https://www.britainexpress.com/counties/hampshire/winchester/st-cross.htm)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25226179.travelling-monk-brother-john-makes-stop-chepstow/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.historichouses.org/house/the-hospital-of-st-cross-and-almhouse-of-noble-poverty/history/), [[6]](https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/church/hospital-of-st-cross-winchester), [[7]](https://hospitalofstcross.co.uk/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25226179.travelling-monk-brother-john-makes-stop-chepstow/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25226179.travelling-monk-brother-john-makes-stop-chepstow/?ref=rss> - An 85-year-old Anglican monk, Brother John, embarked on a bus journey across Britain using his concessionary bus pass. Starting from Winchester on May 1, he aims to raise awareness and funds for the Hospital of St Cross in Winchester, England's oldest surviving almshouse. His route includes cities, towns, and villages along the coast, concluding in Winchester on June 17. Along the way, he engages with local communities to share the mission of the hospital, which has been providing support to the elderly for centuries.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospital_of_St_Cross> - The Hospital of St Cross, located in Winchester, Hampshire, England, is a Grade I listed almshouse founded between 1132 and 1136 by Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester. It is considered England's oldest and most perfect almshouse. The hospital provides accommodation for 25 elderly men, known as 'The Brothers', and continues the tradition of offering the 'Wayfarer's Dole'—a small horn cup of ale and a piece of bread—to visitors. The site includes a medieval church, halls, and gardens, many of which are open to the public.
4. <https://www.britainexpress.com/counties/hampshire/winchester/st-cross.htm> - St Cross Hospital, officially known as The Hospital of St Cross and Almshouse of Noble Poverty, was founded by Bishop Henry of Blois in 1132, making it the oldest almshouse in England still in use for its original purpose. The hospital was established to provide accommodation for 13 poor men who were too ill to work and to feed 100 men at the gates each day. The church, built with stone from as far away as Caen, is an excellent example of late Norman architecture and is open to the public.
5. <https://www.historichouses.org/house/the-hospital-of-st-cross-and-almhouse-of-noble-poverty/history/> - The Hospital of St Cross, founded between 1132 and 1136 by Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, is said to be England's oldest charitable institution. It was established to support thirteen poor men who were unable to work and to feed one hundred men at the gates each day. The hospital has survived historical events such as the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the English Civil War, maintaining its charitable mission over the centuries. The site includes a medieval hall, kitchen, and gardens, many of which are open to the public.
6. <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/church/hospital-of-st-cross-winchester> - The Hospital of St Cross, founded by Henry of Blois between 1132 and 1136, is considered England's oldest charitable institution. It was created to house and support 13 poor men, known as Brothers, and to feed a further 100 men at its gates each day. The hospital is renowned for its stunning Norman church, built with stone from as far afield as Caen, and its tranquil gardens. Visitors are welcome to explore the site, which includes the church, halls, and gardens, and to request the 'Wayfarer's Dole'—a small horn cup of ale and a piece of bread.
7. <https://hospitalofstcross.co.uk/> - The Hospital of St Cross and Almshouse of Noble Poverty, located in Winchester, Hampshire, is one of England's oldest continuing almshouses. Founded between 1132 and 1136 by Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, the hospital provides accommodation for 25 elderly men, known as 'The Brothers', and continues the tradition of offering the 'Wayfarer's Dole' to visitors. The site includes a medieval church, halls, and gardens, many of which are open to the public. The hospital also hosts events and offers facilities for weddings and private events.