

# Stones for the start



As you make your way from the start of the St Magnus Way, you are invited to pick up a stone or pebble from the surrounding area. Make sure it is not one that is too heavy. For stones play an important part on your journey.

There are the stones on which Magnus was laid to rest along the way, Mansie Stanes, most of which are no longer visible. There are other fine standing stones that adorn the route, reminding us of the ancient landscape and of our ancestors who have walked these islands over millennia.

As you reach your final destination you will be met by the 'fine stone minster' which is St Magnus Cathedral, built by Earl Rognvald from the beautiful red and yellow sandstone of these islands, an enduring memorial to Earl Magnus.

Your stone or your pebble may remind you of something you are carrying in your life. Something that may weigh heavily and that you hope will lighten on your pilgrimage. It is yours to carry. Or you may wish to think about it as something to discard on this journey, something you have no need for any longer. You may wish to throw it into the sea at some point on your journey.

Your stone or pebble might remind you of someone you have loved and lost, a physical memento of a loved one, in whose memory you have set yourself this challenge. Carry it with the same love and care with which you nurtured your loved one.

Your stone or pebble could be viewed as a companion on your way. It has been here far longer than you and has seen much more than you will ever see. Harness that experience and take in the sights, smells and sounds of the landscape of which it has long been part.

Finally, you may wish to use your stone or pebble as an aide memoire at the end of each section.

Hold it and use it to focus your reflections. What have you seen and heard, smelled and touched? What have you thought about as you walked.... Small things... big questions... niggling worrries... your future....your past... all of these are life's experiences to be held, just as you hold your stone or pebble.