



ST CONAN'S
• K I R K •

Walter Douglas Campbell Facts

- Was the 8th child of Lord Campbell Blythswood who owned estates in Renfrew near Glasgow
- Bought Innischonain - St Conan's Isle, a small island, near Lochawe village
- Designed and built a house there on the island for his mother Caroline, sister Helen and himself
- His mother, aged 60, found travelling to church via boat and carriage too long and very uncomfortable
- She asked Walter to build a church nearby for her!
- Building started in 1881
- Walter was a clever architect with unusual ideas
- Where possible, Walter used local people to build the church. - some of the families of these workers (joiners) are still in Lochawe Village
- Some of the stone was brought from the hillside of Ben Cruachan. The granite boulders were split into blocks
- Walter was a great collector. Everything from ships' timbers to medieval windows were all used in the building



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- Walter put a sense of fun in the kirk with patterns, animals and birds around it (presentation available for download)
- The original building was a cross-shape. It was finished in 1886
- The family were friends with Queen Victoria and her children
- In particular, Walter was friends with Prince Leopold and Helen was friends with Princess Louise.
- Princess Louise married the eldest son of the Duke of Argyll in 1871 and took a great interest in the building
- Walter wrote several stories (one updated to make it easily read nowadays - available for download)
- Walter decided to extend the church to make it much bigger and more interesting. Work started in 1907
- One story is that an engineering friend said the pillars above the crypt were going to be too heavy. Walter built a scale model and passed a steamroller over it. It passed the test so you can see the pillars in the church today
- Walter died in 1914 - buried under St Bride's Chapel
- His sister Helen continued overseeing the work until she died in 1927. She is also buried under St Bride's chapel. Their nephew Archibald then continued. He is remembered in St Conval's chapel.