



# 2013 MEDIA COVERAGE





Laura Boyd is to take part in the Moonwalk

## Laura streets ahead in bid to aid charity

SCOTTISH television presenter Laura Boyd will take part in a charity walk.

The showbiz correspondent at STV, who has battled leukemia, is doing The Scottish Moonwalk in Edinburgh as a thank-you to the charity which funded Maggie's Centre at Gartnavel, Glasgow, where she found support.

The walk on June 8, organised by Walk the Walk, raises money and awareness to improve the lives of cancer patients in Scotland.

It funded the centre at Gartnavel, which offers support to cancer patients, and the centre's running costs for the first three years.

Laura will wear a specially designed bra by Glasgow designer Cassandra Belanger, founder of The Stitchery, for the walk which sees thousands of people take part on the night-time walk wearing brightly decorated bras.

For more information about The MoonWalk Scotland, which offers four distances, from 6.6 miles, visit [www.walkthewalk.org](http://www.walkthewalk.org)

# Boost for historic Halls as £20m hotel a step nearer



## EXCLUSIVE By CATRIONA STEWART

PLANS to convert one of Glasgow's historic listed buildings into a £20million hotel have taken a step forward.

The owners of the A-listed Egyptian Halls in Union Street have been granted Listed Building Consent by the Scottish Government agency Historic Scotland.

And Accor Hotels has revised its proposals to create a four-star venue for the city centre, rather than the three-star originally planned.

Derek Souter, of owner USP & USI Ltd's Egyptian Halls Project, said: "This reappraisal, which we had always pushed for, vindicates our long-held belief that Union Street has significant development potential."

"According to Glasgow City Marketing Bureau, there is a need for an extra 17,000 hotel, guest house and bed-and-breakfast bedrooms in the city and surrounding area.

"So once the ground floor is funded, we can also begin to confirm other interested leisure developers whose plans

are on hold while we look for extra funding."

The Evening Times reported last August on the plans to convert the Alexander 'Greek' Thomson building into a 114-room three-star hotel.

The building has lain empty for 33 years, com-

**Q** We can see the development becoming a very desirable location

ing under threat of demolition in 2011.

However, a public campaign, backed by thousands of people, helped save the Halls.

Franchise Accor Hotels, managed by hotel operator Longrose Buccleuch, had initially planned to convert the

Derek Souter is delighted by consent approval

building to a mid-range IBIS or Mercure hotel. But now it wants to transform it into one of its upmarket M Hotels, making it one of only 45 worldwide.

Steve Wright, of Accor Hotels, said: "As planning has now been approved we can see the development becoming a very desirable location within Glasgow."

"Accor thinks the Egyptian Halls would make a perfect M Gallery." Planning permission was granted last December.

Funding for the hotel is secure but a further £10m is needed to refurbish the ground floor level of the Halls.

The owner said the lower level upgrade would rely on "substantial public subsidy", but Glasgow City Council said no funding was currently available.

However, it said the only remaining obstacle to beginning the refurbishment is agreeing public and private sector funding.

Mr Souter said talks were under way and should be concluded in the next two months.

Richard Heggie, planning consultant of TPS Planning, which is also involved in the scheme, said: "This is evidence Glasgow City Council's new and embryonic city centre strategy is beginning to work effectively."

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## CRAFT BEER EVENT



CITATION,  
GLASGOW  
SUNDAY,  
MARCH 24,  
2013  
AT 12.30PM

Come and raise a glass to some of Scotland's finest craft beers.

Ticket price includes arrival drink, lunch and tasting

Reserve tickets on  
0141 302 7407 or  
0141 302 7319

TICKETS:  
£30 PER  
PERSON



The Herald **sundayherald**

## NHS gavel gift has historic links with Africa

THE bicentenary of David Livingstone's birth was marked when his great-great grandson presented health bosses with a historic gavel.

It was carved from the wood of the tree where the heart of the medical missionary and explorer was buried after he died in Zambia in 1873.

Livingstone's descendant, Neil Wilson, presen-

ted it to the chairman of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Andrew Robertson.

Mr Wilson, of Bearsden, is paediatric orthopaedic surgeon at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children at Yorkhill.

The gavel has a long connection with the health service in Glasgow. It was used by the NHS Executive Council

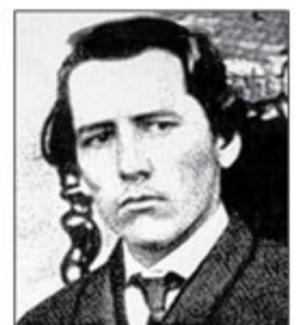
for the City of Glasgow from the creation of the NHS in 1948 until 1974. It was then held in archives.

Mr Wilson said: "To have such a tangible link is a great reminder that the events of the past live on."

Mr Robertson said: "Following David Livingstone's death Florence Nightingale de-

scribed him as 'the greatest man of the age' and it is indeed an honour to receive this gavel which will be put on display for our visitors to see.

"Given Livingstone's strong links to medicine in Glasgow, it is fitting for us to be responsible for the safekeeping of this most extraordinary of artefacts."



David Livingstone

## Alexander 'Greek' Thomson 1817–75

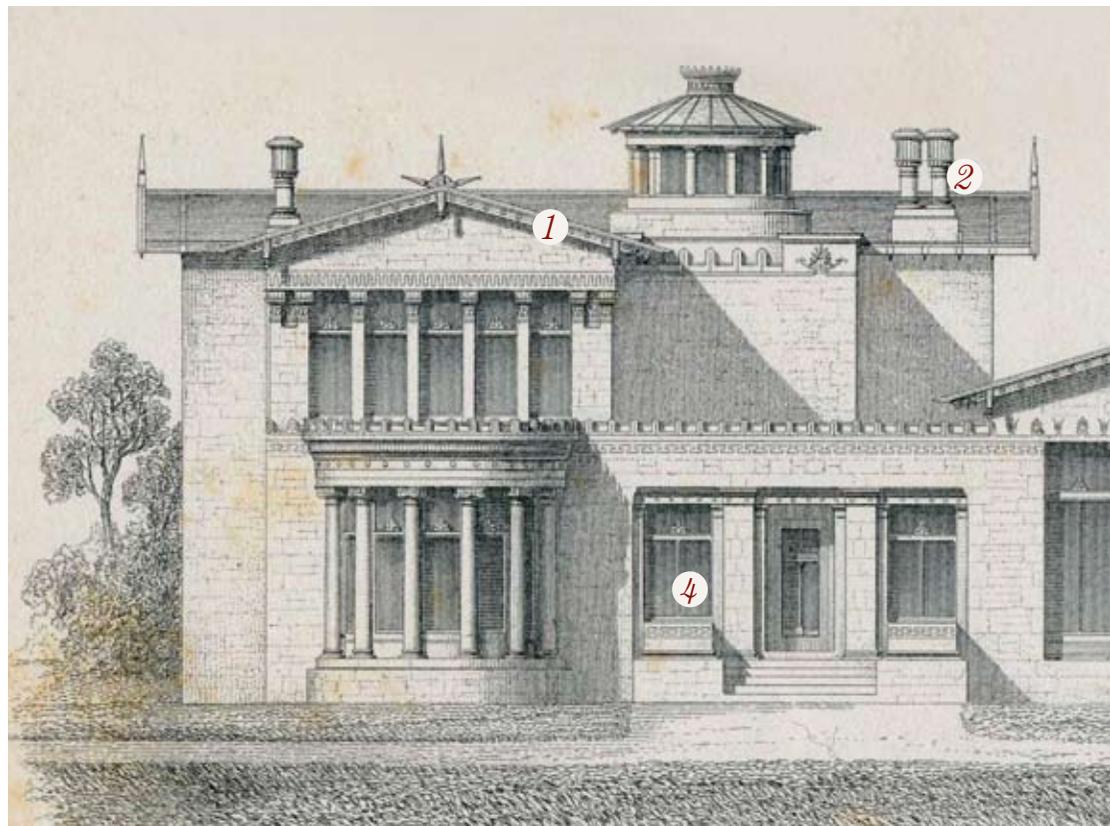


**'Thomson's predilection for abstract form was the outcome of an original mind'**

Sir Albert Richardson, 1914

Alexander Thomson was known as 'Greek' Thomson because of his tenacious commitment to an idiosyncratic interpretation of Ancient Greek architecture at a time when it was completely out of fashion and Victorian Gothic was dominant. An eloquent thinker as well as a practitioner, he came to believe that Greek architecture was an expression of God-given 'eternal laws', and Gothic was an irrational, unstable (Anglo-Saxon) style. However, he was no copyist, and believed that the Greek should be the starting point for a rational modern architecture. His work was never pure Greek, and Egyptian and other exotic influences may be detected, as well as that of the Prussian architect K. F. Schinkel. Practical and inventive, Thomson was happy to use cast iron and large sheets of glass with traditional stone masonry in his buildings.

Although his imagination ranged far and wide, he never travelled abroad, and all his surviving work is in or near Glasgow. He designed villas, terraces, commercial buildings and Presbyterian churches, in which it is possible to explore a recondite symbolism inspired by the apocalyptic paintings of John Martin. Thomson secured a reputation beyond Glasgow, too, due to the conspicuous originality of his architecture.



### Early career

Alexander Thomson was born in Balfron, Stirlingshire, some 15 miles north of Glasgow. He was the 17th of the 20 children of a book-keeper at a cotton-spinning mill and part of an extended family that included several Presbyterian missionaries. Thomson moved to Glasgow with his widowed mother in 1825, and, because of his aptitude for drawing, was articled to the Glasgow architect Robert Foote. For about 10 years, he worked for John Baird, a leading architect in the rapidly expanding city, becoming his chief draughtsman. Thomson set up in independent practice in 1848 with another John Baird (no relation), both architects having married two daughters of London architect Michael Angelo Nicholson. The partnership was amicably terminated in 1857, when Thomson's younger brother George joined the practice, until he left to be a missionary in the Cameroons. Thomson's final professional partner was Robert Turnbull.

### Villas

Baird & Thomson began by designing villas in the new suburbs of Glasgow and along the River Clyde; these were in a variety of styles, including Gothic and Romanesque. However, by the mid 1850s, Thomson had developed the refined and abstracted Grecian manner for which he is known. He was never a conventional Revivalist and he argued that the earlier promoters of the Greek Revival had failed 'because they could not see through the material into the laws upon which that

architecture rested. They failed to master their style, and so became its slaves'.

He seems to have been the first to apply Picturesque principles of composition to the Greek style in his villas, as at his unique Double Villa at Langside (1856–57) where two identical semi-detached houses face in opposite directions. Thomson's finest villa was Holmwood at Cathcart (1857–58), of which his first biographer, Thomas Gildard, wrote that: 'If architecture be poetry in stone-and-lime—



**Egyptian Halls, Union Street (1870–72), a sort of bazaar or shopping centre with an exhibition gallery, was Thomson's largest and most elaborate commercial building. The sculptural treatment of the columns articulating each floor is different, rising to an 'eaves gallery' below the enormous cornice**

## Holmwood House, Glasgow

### *What to look for*

Thomson's finest and most elaborate villa was built in 1857–58 in a rural site in Cathcart, for James Couper, a paper manufacturer. It is a Picturesque asymmetrical composition in Thomson's Greek style, with the projecting circular bay of the parlour balancing the large windows

of the dining room either side of the entrance. Inside, the staircase rises under a circular cupola, and most rooms were embellished with a scheme of painted decoration. The house is now owned by the National Trust for Scotland.

1 The low-pitched slate roof (not wholly practical in the west of Scotland), with generous eaves supported on cast-iron brackets, typical of Thomson's villas

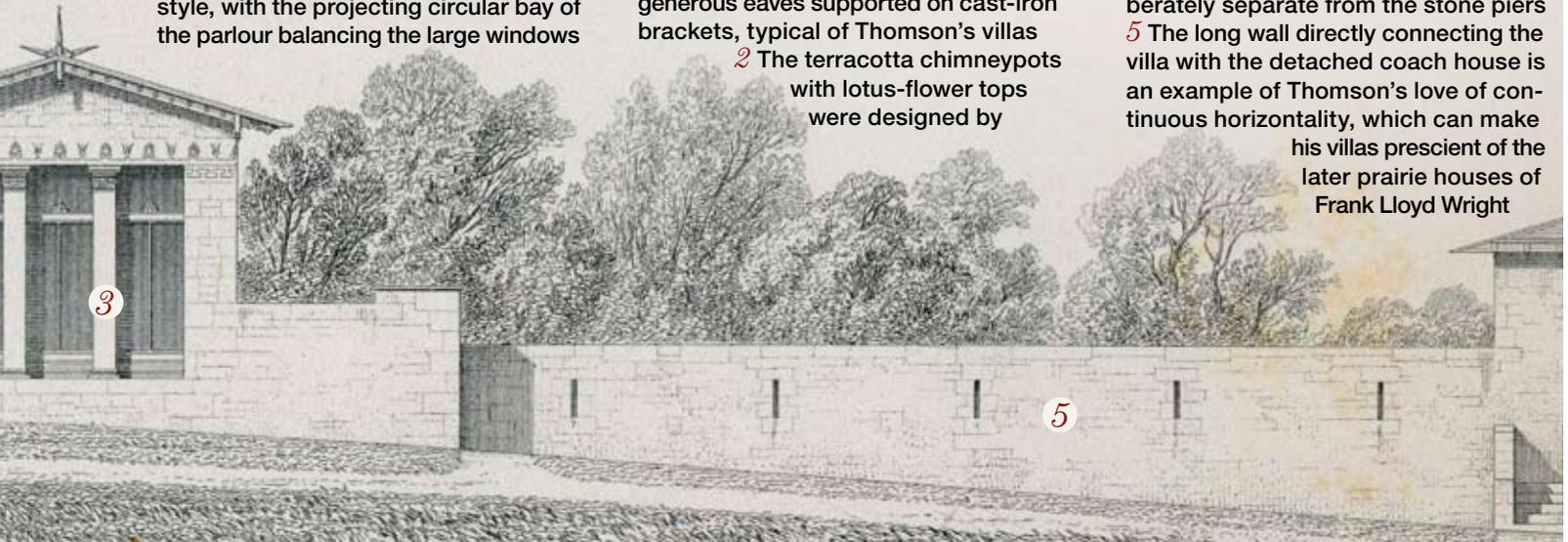
2 The terracotta chimneypots with lotus-flower tops were designed by

Thomson and specially made by the Garnkirk Fireclay Company

3 The square piers dividing the window openings are a simple abstracted form derived from Greek architecture, but much used by Schinkel in Berlin

4 The huge sash windows, which go up and down, are placed behind and deliberately separate from the stone piers

5 The long wall directly connecting the villa with the detached coach house is an example of Thomson's love of continuous horizontality, which can make his villas prescient of the later prairie houses of Frank Lloyd Wright



a great temple an epic—this exquisite little gem, at once Classic and Picturesque, is as complete, self-contained, and polished as a sonnet.' Thomson designed the furniture and fittings, too, plus the painted decoration.

### City architect

Thomson designed a number of impressive terraces in Glasgow, in which single houses were combined in various ways to make powerful unified compositions. The grandest was Great Western Terrace (1867–77), but, for the American historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Moray Place in Strathbungo (1859–61) was 'the finest of all nineteenth-century terraces... and one of the world's most superb pieces of design based on Greek precedent'. In this terrace—in which Thomson himself lived from 1861 until his death—the 'mysterious power of the horizontal element' is evident, achieved through Thomson's 'principle of repetition'. His façade treatment for Queen's Park Terrace (1856–60, dem.) influenced the design of Glasgow's blocks of tenements.

Thomson designed several commercial warehouses in Glasgow, in which cast-iron structures lay behind stone façades that incorporated large plate-glass windows. Their elevations are remarkable for the way in which he dissolved the wall plane into a sculptural, dynamic composition of columns, lintels and architraves. These were developments of the trabeated language of the Greeks and reflected his morbid suspicion of the arch, for, as he notoriously once said: 'Stonehenge is really

more scientifically constructed than York Minster.' His most elegant example is Grecian Buildings in Sauchiehall Street (1867–68).

### Churches

Thomson's largest buildings were churches. He designed great temples for United Presbyterian congregations, which Hitchcock considered to be 'three of the finest Romantic Classical churches in the world'. All had richly decorated interiors. The first was the Caledonia Road Church (1855–57, now a gutted ruin), where a raised-up temple portico was combined with an asymmetrically placed tower. The most inventive was the Queen's Park Church (1868–69), which was as much Egyptian as Greek in inspiration; its destruction by fire in 1943 was Scotland's worst architectural loss of the Second World War. The only intact survivor is the St Vincent Street Church (1857–59), with its unprecedented exotic steeple, like a modern interpretation of the Temple of Solomon, in which the galleries and clerestory are carried on shaped cast-iron columns, and plate-glass windows were applied directly to the masonry.

Thomson's contemporaries regretted that he was never awarded a commission for a public building commensurate with his talents. The decision of Glasgow University to give its new buildings to Gilbert Scott, without competition, provoked a searing, eloquent attack on the Gothic Revival from the architect, but Thomson's designs for the Albert Memorial and the South Kensington Museum

in London must have seemed unfashionable in England to the point of perversity. Only in Glasgow, perhaps, could his idiosyncratic approach and his exotic imagination flourish. Thomson was not well in his latter years, and, had he survived the severe winter of 1874–75, he planned to make his first trip abroad, to Italy, to try to recover his health. But this was not to be, and he was buried in the Southern Necropolis in Glasgow. 🐦



**The St Vincent Street Church of 1857–59 is Thomson's only surviving intact place of worship. The Ionic portico may be fairly conventional, but the steeple, rising to an exotic dome, is full of Old Testament allusions and the whole dramatic composition, on a sloping site, is without precedent**