



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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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

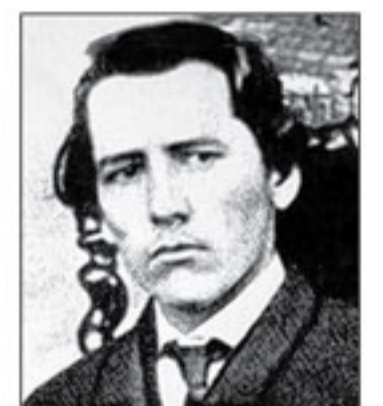
for the City of Glasgow from the creation of the NHS in 1948 until 1974. It was then held in archives.

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