

Memories of famous market, traders

and shoppers to be revived in film



THE BARRAS MOVIE



By MARIANNE HALAVAGE
TWO Glasgow film-makers are leading an East End community project to create a movie about the history of the Barras Market. Alan Knight and Abigail Howkins, of Diversity Films, started a series of informative workshops for 20 budding Tim Burtons this week. This will culminate in a documentary in September, *The Barras Story*. It will include interviews with market-goers and stall

holders down the ages, and old film footage and photographs. The period to be covered is from 1921, when it was set up by Maggie McIver, to the 1990s, when it was still going strong. As well as the history, participants in the project will learn to develop, direct, film, edit and produce a documentary. Mr Knight came up with the idea while sorting through his old photos of Glasgow. Those of the Barras in the 1980s jumped out and gave a real sense of its vibrant atmosphere. Mr Knight and Ms Howkins

believe now is a good time for the project, given the current dreadful state of the market. Since the 1990s, the *Evening Times* has been reporting that criminal gangs are peddling contraband and counterfeit goods there. While traders have been in talks with city council officials about regeneration, nothing is confirmed. It may even shut. Ms Howkins said: "People fear the market might be coming to the end of its days - or it could be regenerated - so this is a good time to make

a project about it. We will celebrate a part of Glasgow's heritage."
SHE added: "We will collate lots of archive footage and talk to people across the years who shopped there or had a stall. We will capture the Barras story and remind people it had an important place in East End culture." "It was a very vibrant place at one point. If it was redeveloped, maybe it could be that again." Mr Knight worked as a film

editor for many years. He won the Best Documentary award at the Roma Documentary Festival in May 2007 for his 52-minute film *Back To Sarajevo*, a study of the Bosnian capital 40 years after the war. Ms Howkins is a co-founding director of Diversity Films. She has won awards as a producer and film-maker, and lives in the West End. The Barras project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and run by Diversity Films in partnership with the People's Palace museum, Glasgow.

film Theatre has also given its support. The film will be screened at the People's Palace alongside a photo exhibition, and will tour five community venues around the city. There are opportunities for anyone interested to get involved. Film production runs from May to August. The project screens in September. To take part, send an e-mail to sarah@diversityfilms.org.uk or call Diversity Films on 0141 357 7298.



Abigail Howkins and Alan Knight are making the film, which will bring memories of Barras characters like those above