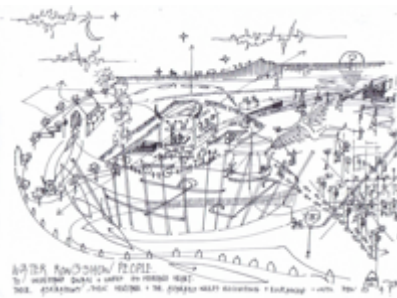


## Appendix B: Fair Glasgow: Strand 2 “The Showfloat” By Architect - Andrew McAvoy RIAS + JJR Stringfellow – Showman.

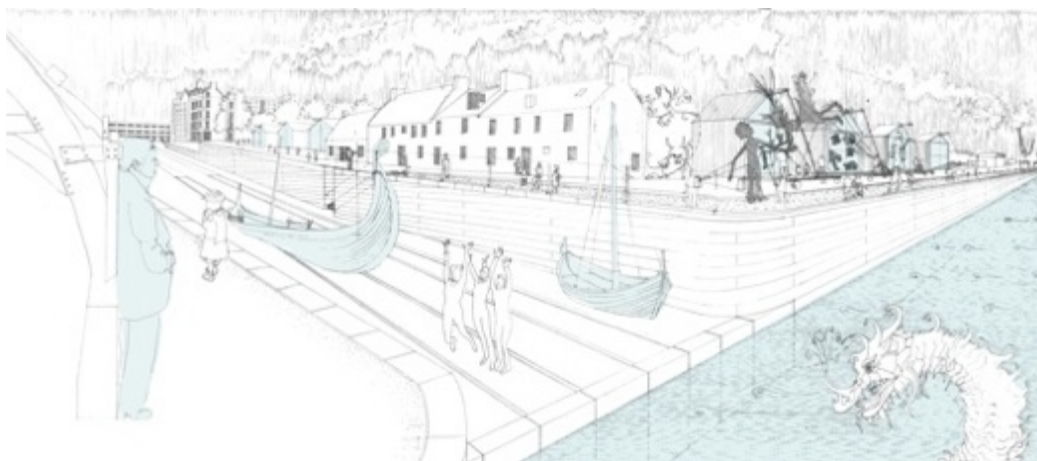
### SECTION A – Some Explanation on the Ghosting Process.

TAKING APPARATUS FROM THE LAST PROJECT AND GIFTING IT TO THIS PROJECT – Namely a small building called “The Ghost Of Water Row” that distilled the missing architecture down to a simple form. The Ghost appeared as part of the previous HLF Funded – “Govan Fairway” project, the building having evolved from engagement in the specific geography at Water Row: the place and the people, whether extant, missing or misrepresented.

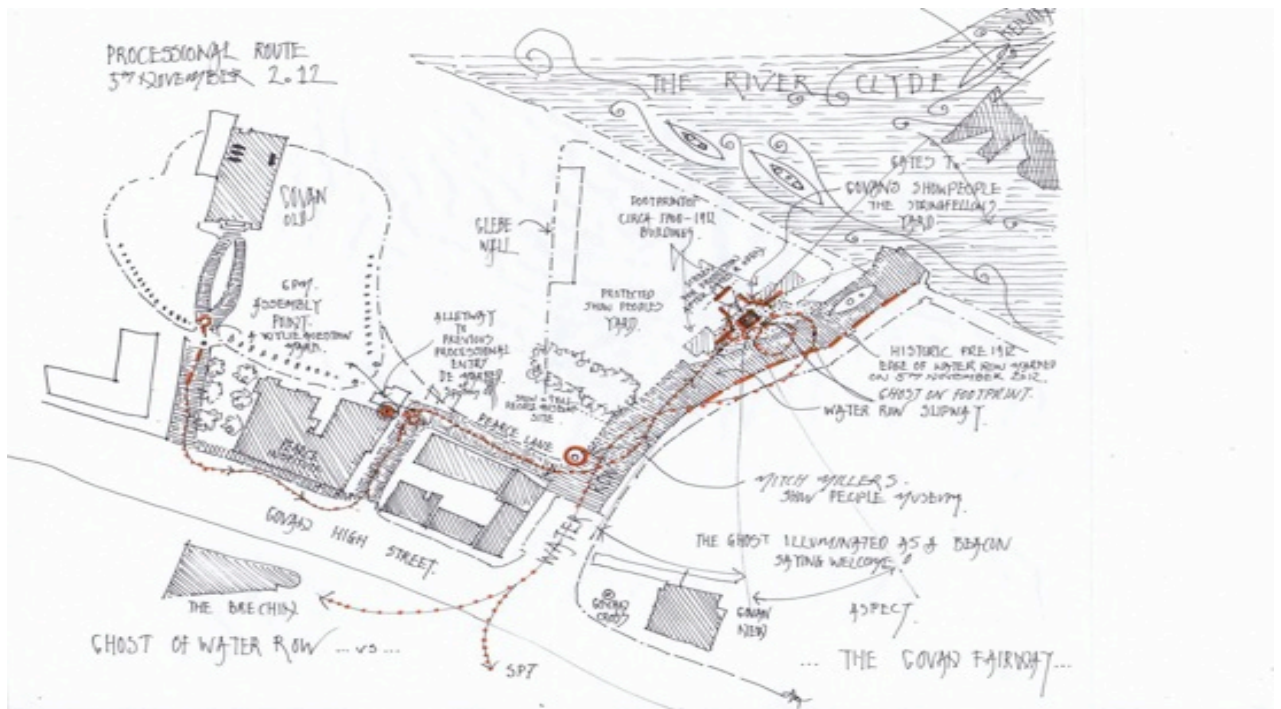
Where did the ghost that would later be used on the *Showfloat* come from? Who was it representing? – Weavers? Shipbuilders? Showpeople?



Weavers Cottages and Ferry Inn at Water Row circa 1900

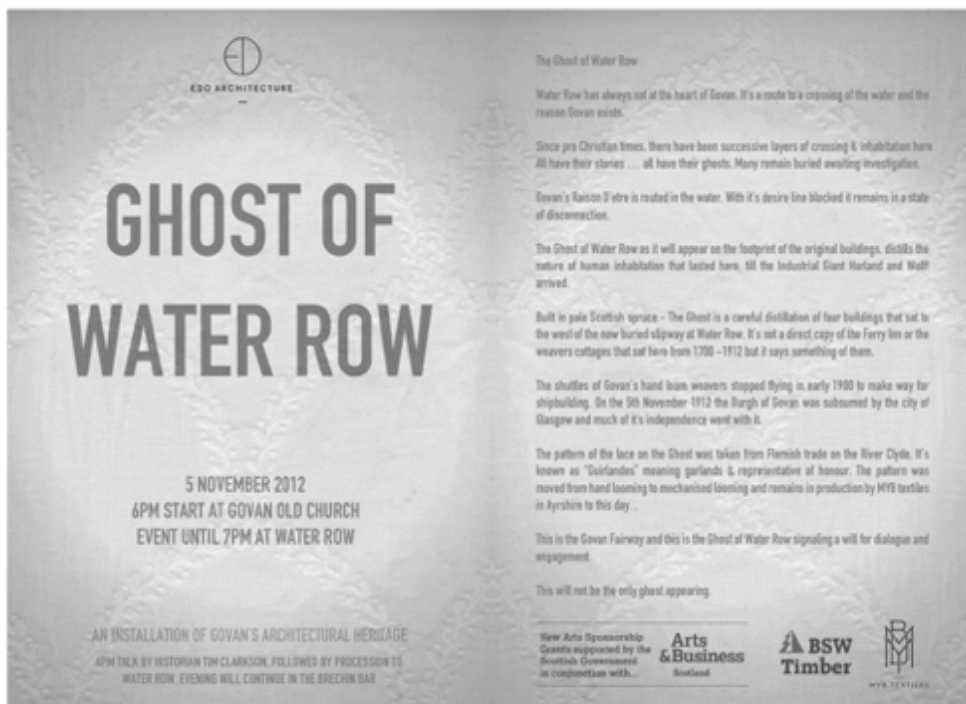


April 2012 – Re-imagining the landscape with the cottages and the Ferry Inn, ghosted back in place: *Showpeople's* emerging presence imagined.  
Perspective drawing by Architect - Andrew McAvoy RIAS



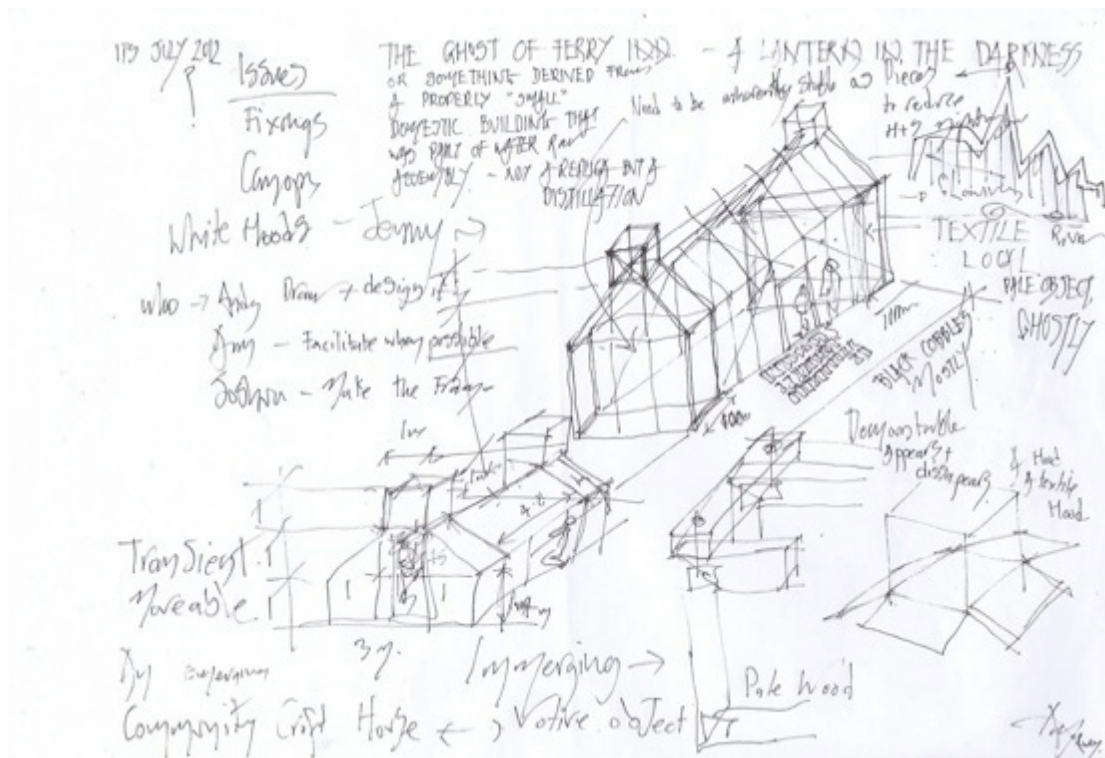
With Fablevision, we conjure a 100 year centenary of the consumption of Govan by Glasgow and a route map is agreed.

Ghost of Water Row – 5th November 2012

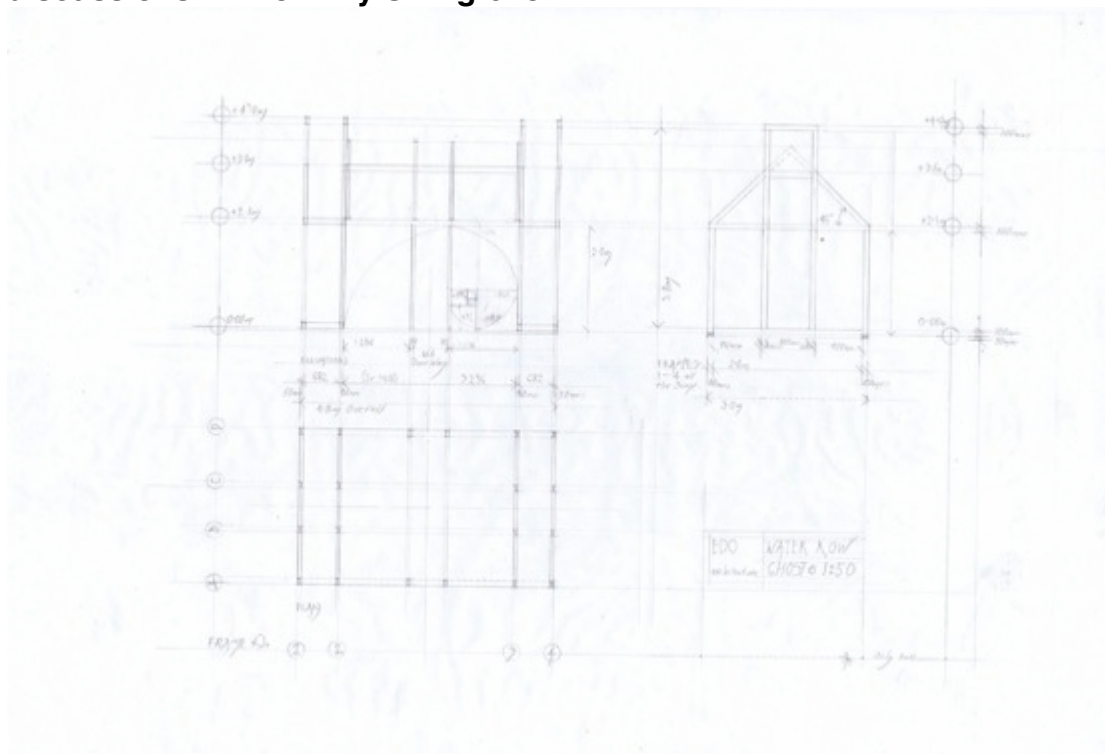


Event Flier for 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012 Event - Words by A McAvoy  
Textiles by MYB textiles graphics by Ann Nisbet





July 2012 - First sketch of "Ghost of Water Row" idea informed by discussions with Jimmy Stringfellow.



July 2012 - Stick drawing of skeletal frame for manufacture



**Manufacturing the skeleton in pale Scottish spruce in Studio Garden**



**Skeleton of Ghost , self built ready for taking to Govan with carpenter Joshua Brown and Volunteers Peter McCluskey, James Pearson + Mathew Samuel**



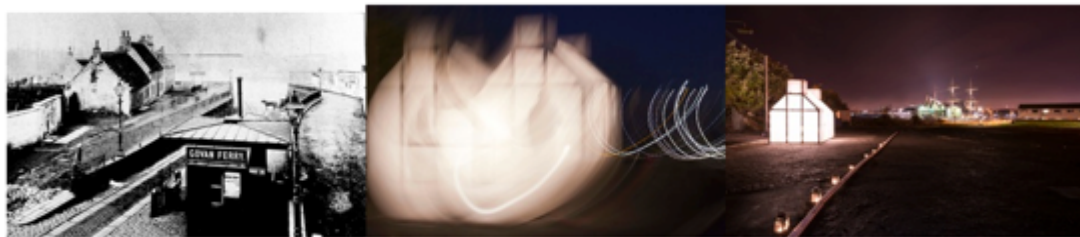
**The Ghost of Water Row appears at the final event for the HLF “Govan Fairway”, talking for all cultures under threat.**



**The procession happened and on completion, the Govan Fairway film about *Showpeople* was projected in and around the Ghost of Water Row 200 attendees were given some insight as to the fragility of certain cultures.**



  
 EDO ARCHITECTURE



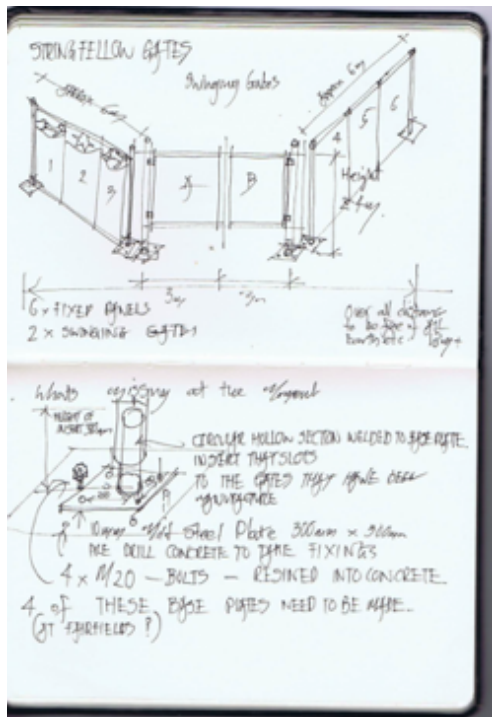
The Ghost of Water Row as presented to RIAS Awards panel and now shortlisted - In homage to George Wylie and his questioning of : blind marches, capital sums, Big Bum Steers

A **votive deposit** or **votive offering** is one or more objects displayed or deposited, without the intention of recovery or use. Some offerings have apparently been made in anticipation of the achievement of a particular wish, but in Western cultures from which documentary evidence survives it has been more typical to wait until the wish has been fulfilled before making the offering

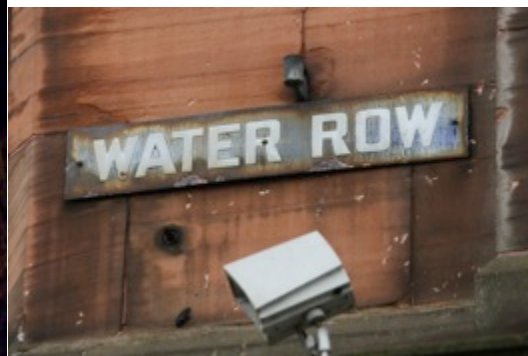
**The Ghost of Water Row as a ‘Votive Object’ and in its initial form appeared twice at Govan in the dark and won an RIAS award for contributions to Scottish Architecture in 2013 as a result.**

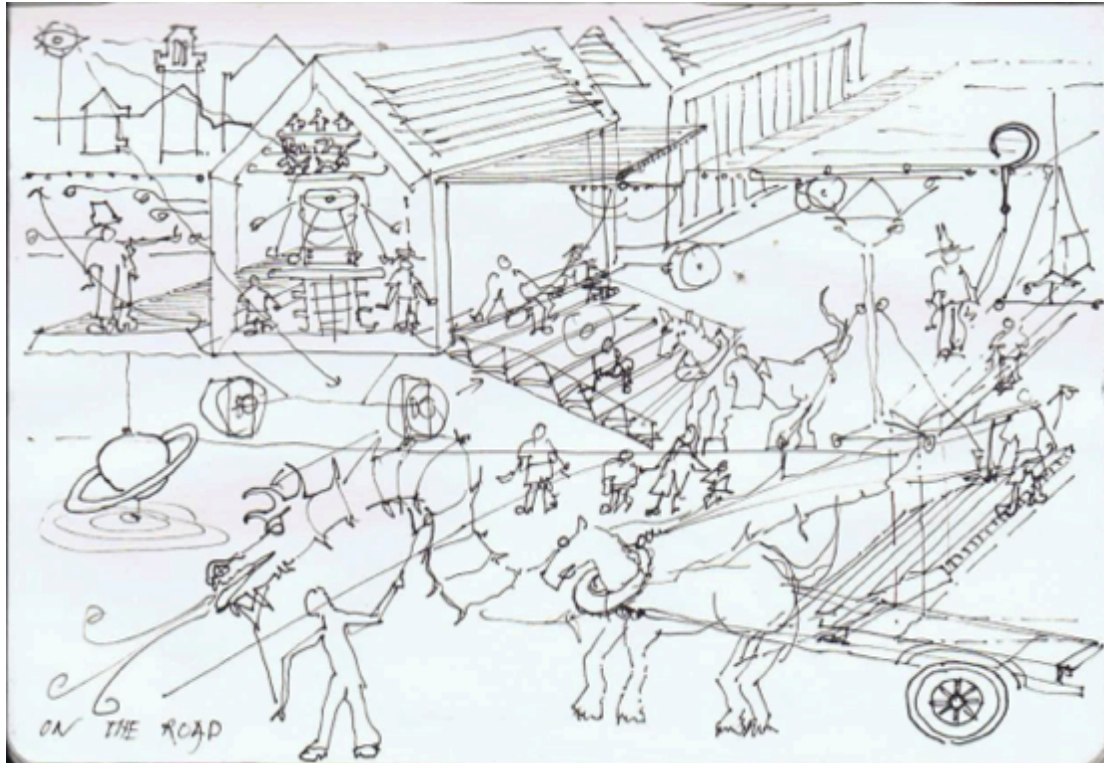
**It raised many questions, one major one was, “What are the rights of two families to remain in their Showman’s yards at Water Row?”**





Andy gave some initial advice on the fixing of Tam McGarvey's gates that celebrate the *Showpeople* history at Govan and which replaced centuries of access gates to industrial yards at Water Row. The installation of these gates was the climax of the "Govan Fairway" project and signaled the start of Fair Glasgow .





A regular Friday night catch up with Jimmy Stringfellow started to raise the subject of displaying some other *Showpeople* heritage at Water Row and taking it out to deliver a message about cultures under threat. The question of mobility began then.



Ghost and Gates and the route to Govan Old Church are discussed.



## SECTION B – THE “FAIR GLASGOW” PROJECT MAY 2013 – MARCH 2014

The Ghost of Water Row, having been designed by Andy in a shared former Practice – Edo architecture, was gifted to the Showpeople Community + the project.

The Showfloat initiative was undertaken and delivered by Andy McAvoy RIAS + members of Govan’s Fairground Community Group, specifically James and John Stringfellow with help from Gerard Weston

### STEP 1 – PREPARATION FOR A TRIAL RUN AT MOBILITY VIA THE GOVAN FAIR PROCESSION





A Young member of the Johnston family of *Showpeople* partakes in some "Bird Flying" on the Float in the Govan Fair procession.

# FAIR GLASGOW & THE GOVAN FAIR

Govan has provided a home and yard to Showmen and Show women for centuries. Govan Historically has also provided a Fairground destination of National importance. A seasonal ground where the best of that Cultural offering, from all over the country could be experienced. Each year as the procession prepared to move through the streets of Govan – Elder Park and the surrounding streets would be filled with rides, showmen, amusements and theatrics.

Where did that go ? ... Where is that Waltzer where I first kissed my husband ... you may ask !

As the Fair comes round this year the Govan fair Committee is welcoming some of that; particularly Scottish, Glaswegian and Govan specific, colour, tradition and excitement once again.

Various people from the Show people Community will be bringing out (in kind) their apparatus to re-enliven that tradition this year:

Let the fun begin!



24

**These are some initial words written by Andy McAvoy for the Govan Fair programme to signal the start of the FAIR GLASGOW Project and to voice an expression of will for the Fair to come back to Govan.**



11

**Step 2 - Finding a better, more suitable low loading trailer and remaking the 'House' for a new mobile use.**

**The real start of the Fair Glasgow project began with attendance in the annual Govan Fair Procession and the new Elder Park Fun Day. This piloted the idea of the Ghost house on its trailer being able to travel some distance.**



**STEP 3 - First test run after painting and strengthening.**



**Arriving in Elder Park:**

**The first attempt at the Showfloat with a single Waltzer car appears at Elder Park Fun day on the Saturday after the Govan Fair Procession.**



**Just a question mark to create some intrigue: starting debate about cultures on wheels and things under threat.**



**It's a 'Lacey' affair ...for some members of the public.**



**Positioning**



**What's on the move here ? Feeding imaginations by just being there.**

**STEP 4 - Following the success of Elder Park Fun Day and the questions Raised, it was noticed that we had created a *Showfloat*. It was then made stronger and fit for a wider road trip: in fact made ready as a safe framework for the young volunteers. The heavy, dangerous work is completed by the Stringfellow family in their Old Govan Yard.**



**Machining parts from old Fairground rides and up cycling**

**STEP 5 Experimenting with fabric: making and fitting the first waterproof cover for the Autumn season and mobility.**  
Thanks to “Make Works’ radio cast by Fi Scott, Andy found “Montrose Rope and Sail” and the 100 year tradition of providing bespoke covers or ‘Tilts’ became apparent.

Sampling transparency, stitching and a bespoke water proof skin emerges via close work with the stitchers there: an amazing firm that has charted the fortunes of the fairground community over many generations. They fully entered the spirit of the Project and provided what the volunteers could safely work with.



The young volunteer *Showpeople* in one of the Water Row yards taking ownership of their ‘Tilt’ and their engagement tool: painting, fitting and familiarising.  
August 2013





**STEP 6 - Following on from the success of the Ghost of Water Row event and project, and the award from RIAS for that. The new assemblage of the *Ghost/Showfloat* and its emerging story was then presented to The Andrew Doolan Awards Committee.**

**Jimmy Stringfellow here, explaining the *Showfloat* to “The Andrew Doolan” Awards Panel – Chairman Professor Andrew Macmillan + Indira Van t Klooster of A10 magazine.**

**Jimmy is emphasising that it was just about to start its tour of the summer fairs and gather information about a culture under threat.**

**Indira is quick to point out that:- in Amsterdam... fairs are state sponsored and endorsed. Public entertainment licenses, unheard of and *Showpeople* treated with respect for their ongoing contribution to society.**

**The *Showfloat* was commended as one of the best 5 contributions to architecture in 2013**

**This strand of the project was given a wider audience via the embedded architectural narrative: houses and displacement, culture and dissonance, all inhabitation is transient ....some more than others. The *Showpeople* at Water Row adopted the tool and embellished it with their own story .**

The Launch of the Showfloat in July 2013 ready for departure to the summer Fairs. The Showfloat is checked for health and safety and certified by engineer Doctor Wan Chea.



It sits once more on the footprint of the Weavers Cottages and the location of the now concealed Govan Fairway Gates. Someone somewhere missed the heritage of access and this was highlighted to the international Awards Jury ..... They were dumfounded.



The Doolan Awards Committee are given a look at the *Showfloat* in transit . Here outside the Pearce Institute, with her cover on, talking displacement.



Issues to do with juxtaposition of the Govan yard and the public realm were highlighted by putting the RIAS Award plaque for GOWR and some of the original lace fabric that wrapped it up on the gates. The story of the site and the various layers of inhabitation was then told in situ.



Quote – JJR STRINGFELLOW – “We are not animals we are Human beings“



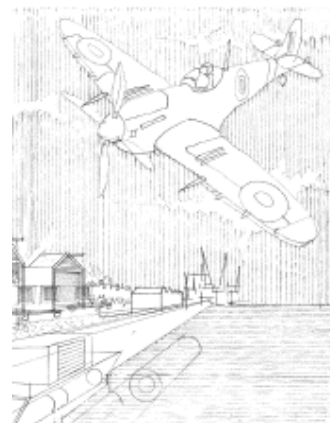
**Some further visioning about how the project might turn out was prepared - providing information for the volunteers to take on the Road Trip**

**STEP 7 - Young Volunteers learned filming techniques from Fablevision. Louisa Taylor provides ease and reassurance.**



**LEARNING PROCESS IN GOVAN YARDS WITH LOUISA TAYLOR**

## STEP 8 - THE VOLUNTEERS TAKE THEIR FLOAT TO THE SUMMER FAIRS



## FITTING THE TILT AT IRVINE MARYMASS FAIR

**STEP 9 Young *Showpeople* gaining confidence to be the Interviewer and the Interviewed: inviting other people in and asking questions ..**



**Young people from other cultures are questioned about what they know about Fairground culture.**



**Examples of better represented culture are taken out for discussion: for example - Jane's Carousel NYC being one.**

**Intergenerational questioning – where is “Our Heritage” going ?**



**In the *Showfloat* at Irvine Marymass Fair.**



**Status of Showpeople internationally is discussed ..  
Jane’s carousel – Tangible Cultural heritage.  
Do people commonly understand what the fairground community have  
contributed?**





**Showfloat with Heritage artifacts – 60s Speed Bikes**



**Largs Seafront - Showfloat as talking point**



**Largs – Horse Fair with Carousels + Swing Boats circa 1900**



**Largs - Showfloat amidst 21<sup>st</sup> century Fair**

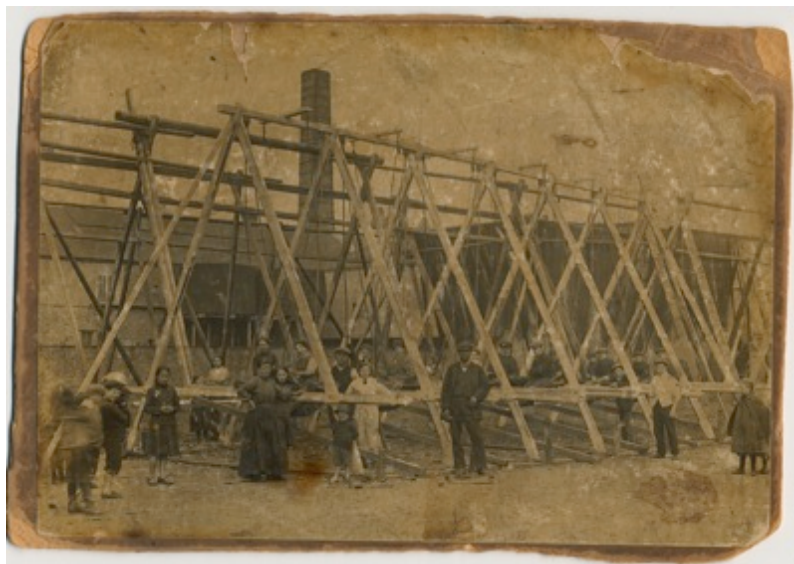
**STEP 10 - The camera Rolls and the Volunteers themselves are interviewed.**



**Late at night and after a long day in and around one of their summer fairs, the volunteers start to express their hopes and fears.**



**END OF SUMMER RELIQUARY sits at Largs and ignites memories of waltzers ...and visiting Fairs now lost.**



**Talking Points - Swing Boat manufacture at Govan – Image provided by JJR Stringfellow**  
**The public approach to view such images and contribute to the debate.**  
**Where did that Fair go, what happened to that Swing Boat?**

**STEP 11- Govan Cross Church and some missing critical dialogue was highlighted. The Fair Glasgow Working Group was invited to view what the Road trip had uncovered.**

**STEP 12 — *Showfloat* reappearance at Govan Xmas Lights festival to highlight the Road trip and the upcoming event at Riverside Museum**



**After a projection of some seasonal relevance – “It's a Wonderful Life” by Chris O’Kane of Vistamorph. ... what next ?**





The *Showfloat* then joined the procession to Elder Park where a Winter Festival was underway.





**PUTTING THE *SHOWFLOAT* IN THE MIX OF LOCAL CELEBRATIONS**



**STEP 13 The Scottish Section of The Showman's Guild of Great Britain Annual lunch.**

**Chairman Alex James Colquhoun and his committee invited 200 people from a spectrum of backgrounds across the city of Glasgow.**

**At this lunch Government agencies, politicians, industrialists, educators are informed of the importance of the Fairground Community and what it has achieved in the last year.**

**Lifetime achievement awards are granted.**

**Fair Glasgow is explained to those gathered.**





The young volunteer *Showpeople* who agreed to take part in the Road Trip and others, that have helped over the preceding year, have their own Thorntree Primary school children and volunteers on Fair Glasgow. Giovanna and Wallace Burns were in attendance.

Their teachers, Mrs Horn and Mrs Heggie were awarded for their efforts in supporting children from Showpeople families.

Giovanna was quick to introduce Andy to the teachers and discourse was struck up. By the end of the lunch we were invited to bring the Showfloat to Thorntree primary School.



**STEP 14 – THORNTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL VISIT WITH *Showfloat*.  
12<sup>th</sup> Of December 2013**

**Thorntree primary has 10% of its school attendees from Showman's Yards and the debate was lively.**



**The *Showfloat* is positioned outside the School gates and made ready for a days work.**

During a half hour slide show - 60 primary six children were told the story, thus far, of the *Showfloat*. They also learned the history of Showman's yards and *Showpeople* in Govan.

It was followed by a question and answer session.



Jimmy StringFellow and Andy McAvoy explain about the Govan Fair and how the *Showfloat* was made ready to take part in that years procession. Explanations were made about why floats, shows and Fairs are important traditions that need work to keep them alive.

They are introduced to the idea that some Fairs are under threat and may not be there to enjoy in the future.



Surprised *pupils* and..... silence



Giovanna tells her class about her experiences with the *Showfloat* over the previous year. She explains how the volunteers helped to make it, where they took it and what happened.



Depute Head Justine Horn shepherds her *pupils* to the float in batches of 8, as Giovanna prepares the *Showfloat*.



The children were then interviewed in groups of 8 inside the *Showfloat* and spent 15 – 20 minutes answering and asking questions.

**Topics - Fairground culture, yards, families, differences, rides, traveling, chalets, wagons. Perceptions were challenged – child to child. The conversations were thoughtful and filmed.**



**A genuine sense of enquiry increased as the day went on**



**Talk of differences between types of houses: life the same!**



**An elder listens and reflected later that when he was a child such a divide did not exist, yet this school shows great hope for change.**



**Explaining that times are hard for their parents and the Fairgrounds are less common; enjoyment of travel and wishing there was more of it.**

## Lunchtime at Thorntree Primary



The project team had lunch in the school Hall.  
Conversations and explanations were ongoing with a wider age group.

Jimmy explains about *Showpeople* to some Primary 1 children





**Parents from neighbouring yards and local residents, popped in to enquire and tell their stories.**



**Son of Karl Pinder – Fairground artist pops up.**



**As the camera rolls, questions and answers continue and cultural misconceptions are discussed. Have you been to a Showman's yard? They ask. They Talk. They Invite.**





**Fablevision volunteers record and learn of something they were not aware of.**



**Thorntree ia a better aware school ....than many.**



**Many things were asked and clarified by appearing with this in a diverse array of places.**

**The *Showfloat* was only furniture and shelter and aided some discussion ... some clarity?**

**The content lies in the record made, in and around the making of the *Showfloat*, the Road trip and all that was encountered during that.**

**THE END .**

**See Website, Blog, Film etc.**

This appendix was written by Architect Andy McAvoy

