

AMBERSIDE



Sunday Morning © Harry Morrison

About the organisation:

Amber Film and Photography Collective was formed to document working class and marginalised lives and landscapes in North East England. In 1977 it opened the Side Gallery with a commitment to celebrate the best in the wider tradition of humanist documentary photography. The Side Gallery is temporarily closed until further funding can be secured to enable reopening; meanwhile the excellent region-wide educational work of AmberSide carries on.

The Collection currently includes 20,000+ photographs, 100 films and 10,000 slides. In 2011 Amber Films and Photography Collective member Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen's photographs were inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World register as 'of outstanding national value and importance to the United Kingdom'.

Central to the cultural heritage of Newcastle and the North East for decades, the AmberSide Collection reflects the landscapes and lives of the region. It is a unique classic and contemporary documentary film & photographic collection, growing from the work that has been produced, commissioned and collected by Amber Film & Photography Collective from its beginnings in 1968.

The Amber Film and Photography Collective delivers exhibitions, screenings, and educational programmes with schools and communities and is constituted as a Community Interest Company. It is currently governed by a Board of Non-Executive Directors and has 2 FTE employees.

Managing Director (new role):

Laura Laffler (started 2015 and appointed as Executive Director 2018)

Laura holds an MA, Museum Studies (Merit) from the University of Leicester. Laura has various experience in fundraising, grant writing, non-profit management and museums. She is a specialist in large scale digitisation projects and database management (Amber and ERIC North East). She is also a heritage fundraising professional who has successfully raised funds for a variety of projects at TWAM and the Smithsonian Institution.

The role of Managing Director is a new role, expanding from previously being Archive Director/Co-Director.

Non-Executive Directors:

Ian Thilthorpe, Culture and Heritage Consultant, Newcastle. Ian worked for Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums for 20 years and was the Head of Museums; North & South Tyneside & Sunderland responsible for overall strategic & operational responsibility for all TWAM venues in North Tyneside (2), South Tyneside (2) & Sunderland (3). He is recently back from Australia where he was Exhibition Team Leader: New Museums Project for the Western Australia Museum. Ian is looking to move on from the Non-Executive due to family responsibilities.

Dr Phillip Roberts (Photography academic/Curator Bodleian Library, Oxford)
Currently The Bern and Ronny Schwartz Curator of Photography The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Previously was curator of the National Photographic Collections at the National Science and Media Museum, where he cared for a collection of around three million photographs and objects. He is a historian of photography and visual technology, holding two PhDs in philosophy and media history and has experience working with leading collections and major research projects across the museum and university sectors.

About the role:

We are in need of someone wanting to play a pivotal role in the strategic direction and governance of this unique resource of regional, national and international acclaim, and guide it to secure the continued development of this living collection. We would love help to share the message of the AmberSide Collection with businesses, communities and individuals.

Amber has a modest income is derived mostly from charitable sources and individual donors. This money supports the work of the CIC in caring for and sharing the Collection, and the AmberSide Trust CIO supports the CIC in its fundraising efforts. Until 2023, the CIC was a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England, but when we lost this funding, we had to close Side Gallery. We are currently in receipt of a large grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to support the education programme and waiting to hear about the outcome of further grants to secure a Resilience and Restructuring Project.

Our vision is for the AmberSide collection to be safeguarded as an archive of the lives and heritage of marginalised communities, for it to be widely accessible and a living resource developed in partnership with communities. This project will allow us to review, challenge and develop governance and business models for the partners in the application and seek new income streams to ensure we can achieve this future despite current funding uncertainties. The collection and the ongoing work of Amber are two exceptional resources. Without the specialist input that this project will bring to help us plan a future, the opportunity for them to continue contributing to the lives of people in the North East and beyond will be lost. The urgency of our project cannot be overstated – not just in terms of the heritage but also the community's voice and identity that will be silenced if we fail.

Last year we had a spectacularly successful crowdfunder the [#SaveSide Campaign](#) which raised over £65,000 in 12 days. I have attached a summary of the campaign.

If you would like to be part of our next chapter, we would be delighted to hear from you.

The advisors would be voluntary, unpaid, non-executive appointments. Time commitment is approximately equivalent to half a day per month for a Non-Executive Director.

We welcome support from people who can provide advice, guidance, challenge and scrutiny on the following:

- **Change Management**
- **Business Plan Development**
- **Commercial Income Growth**
- **Fundraising Diversification**
- **Structuring Growth**