

# The History of Maritime Archaeology: Using Oral Histories and Archives to Tell New Stories

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## Session Description

Whilst maritime archaeology has deep roots, it is still a relatively young discipline, with the majority of the pioneering excavations carried out in the last 50-60 years. As many of the individuals who contributed to the development of the field are still active, we have a unique opportunity to build a historically informed understanding of the development of maritime archaeology as a discipline, as a practice and as a profession.

Archives and oral histories are key components of this endeavour. The growing number of secure and accessible archives available, can help us gain a better appreciation of the evolution of ideas, practices, institutions, and individuals relating to maritime archaeology. Likewise, narratives of key individuals who have contributed to the field, can provide alternative insights through personal experiences and memories often absent from archival material. In this framework, it is pivotal to involve professionals but also those who have contributed from non-academic or non-archaeological backgrounds, to capture the multiple perspectives of the development of the discipline. In this context, not only male, but also female perspectives, often missing from the story, are pivotal for placing the history of the discipline in context and achieving a more holistic appreciation.

The aim of this session is to explore and share current initiatives which allow us to better comprehend the history of the discipline. The session also seeks to share creative ways to use maritime archaeological archives alongside oral histories, to tell new stories and better understand the incentives / drivers behind these pioneering projects. This will enable a more

reflective approach to explore the history of the development of the discipline, and offer exciting opportunities to engage new and diverse audiences and to re-interpret legacy data.

## **Keywords**

Archives; Oral Histories; Legacy Data