

Turn the Tide – Methods to unmud intertidal cultural heritage

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Session Description

Littoral cultural heritage lies at the intersection between underwater marine seascapes and inland coastal landscapes. The coastal environment of the North Sea area, with its extensive coastal plains and intensive human intervention throughout history, has become an important research hub for studying the interactions between humans and nature at the land-sea interface (e.g. Westerdahl 1992; Thoen et al 2013). However, the unique tidal dynamics and geomorphology of these littoral landscapes present significant challenges to archaeological research, both technically and interpretatively. For instance, Roman inland sites may reside in the permanently submerged subtidal zone, while medieval harbour infrastructure could be buried under meters of clay due to embankment processes. Even more challenging are the remaining intertidal areas, daily cycles of micro-erosion and sedimentation affect archaeological sites within active sedimentary environments. Unlike the more developed research methodologies for studying permanently submerged subtidal and embanked inland heritage, the intertidal zone still suffers from a persistent lack of appropriate archaeological research approaches.

This session aims to bring together diverse archaeological research methods and field investigations adapted to these dynamic and complex marine and estuarine landscapes worldwide. Contributions will range from traditional techniques, such as surface find

inventorying, borehole surveys and excavations, to innovative prospection methods, including tide-tailored remote sensing and geophysical survey techniques.

References

Westerdahl, C. (1992) "The Maritime Cultural Landscape" *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 21 (1) pp.5-14.

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Keywords

Intertidal Environments; Estuaries; Survey Methods; Geophysics; Surface Finds