

SESSION TITLE: Bridging the gap: towards an agenda for European post-medieval archaeology

ORGANISER: Paul Belford (*UK*)

CO-ORGANISER: Gerhard Ermischer (*Germany*), Jonathan Finch (*UK*)

SESSION PROPOSAL:

The archaeology of the modern age is a relatively new discipline within European archaeology, and in many areas its significance has yet to be fully acknowledged. The archaeology of the last 500 years is extremely exciting, including several key themes which inform European identities today – processes of religious reformation and counter-reformation; agricultural modernisation and landscape change; industrialisation and urbanisation; slavery and globalisation.

This period was one when lasting relationships within Europe, and relationships between modern Europe and the rest of the world were forged. It was a period of unprecedented travel, exchange of ideas, innovations, and technology, as well as a period of extraordinary cultural and creative output. It was also a period when the material conditions of ordinary people changed beyond recognition. Traditional ways of life were radically changed by industrialization and urbanization, and poverty took on new forms within these new environments. The material nature of the period is of unprecedented importance since the evidence is so rich, and yet paradoxically our failure to recognize its significance on a European scale puts it at increasing risk. Archaeologists also have a powerful voice in the study of twentieth century upheavals, from the two World Wars and the Holocaust, to post-Soviet changes in! eastern Europe.

This session will explore the very different ways in which the study of post-medieval and industrial archaeology is undertaken in Europe, and will seek ways in which we can develop a coherent international research framework for the period.

PLEASE CONTACT:

Paul Belford

Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

UK

T: +44 1952 435 946

E: paul.belford@ironbridge.org.uk