



THE FRIENDS  
OF APHRODISIAS  
TRUST

23 November 2021

Dear Friend,

Despite another year overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Friends of Aphrodisias are alive and well with 34 members returning to the familiar surroundings of the Art Workers' Guild on Wednesday 19 May 2021 for a delayed AGM followed by the eagerly awaited Kenan Erim annual lecture by the Director of Excavations at Aphrodisias, Bert Smith. The meeting was simultaneously Zoomed to all those unable to come in person, amongst whom our President, His Excellency Ümit Yalçın, sent his regrets and was represented in person by Özgür Bora Özkul, Counsellor at the Turkish Embassy.

Sincerest thanks went to our two outgoing Trustees, Kevin Tebbit and Timothy Daunt, who for the last 27 years have loyally overseen the Trust's activities. Although not retiring for another year, more thanks went to Dick Wilkinson, who stepped down as Honorary Secretary after a skilful five years running the Trust; the Friends presented him with a token of thanks for taking up the reins following my accident in 2015.

Six new Trustees were unanimously elected: William Chubb to replace Dick as Honorary Secretary; Sandy Mosse to replace Kevin Tebbit as Honorary Treasurer; Renate Nahum, Gordon Robinson, Barnaby Rogerson and John Scott, whose knowledge, wisdom and energy will bring new life to the Trust.

Dick generously produced excellent wine and a glass was raised to Bert Smith for his ongoing support of the Friends and to Elspeth Dennison, Chief Steward of the Art Workers' Guild.

Next year's AGM followed by the 28th Kenan Erim annual lecture will be at **6:30pm on Wednesday 9 March 2022 in the Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, Bloomsbury WC1N 3AT** (please make a note of it in your 2022 diary!).

Honorary President: His Excellency The Turkish Ambassador

Chairman: Lady Daunt

Trustees: Mrs Renate Nahum, Mr Barnaby Rogerson, Dr Sandy Mosse (Honorary Treasurer), Mr Gordon Robinson,

Mr Richard Wilkinson, Lord John Scott, Mr William Chubb (Honorary Secretary)

Director of The Aphrodisias Excavations: Professor R.R.R. Smith

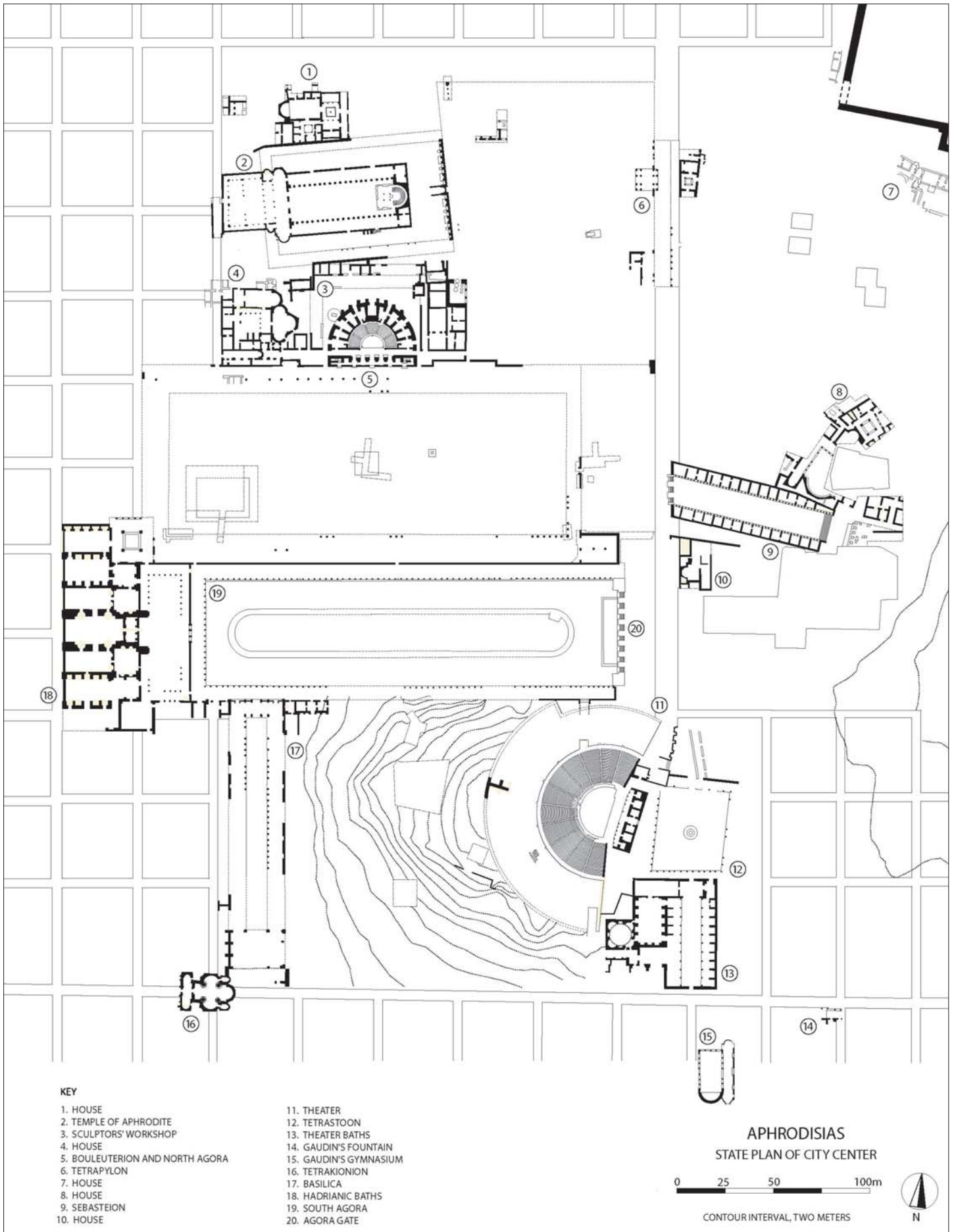
---

Registered Charity Number 293148

---

Brunswick House, 97 Knatchbull Road, London SE5 9QU  
Telephone: 020 7733 5192 | Email: willchubb@msn.com

# The 2021 season at Aphrodisias





August 2021 saw the worst ever wildfire season in Turkey's history. The terrible fires that raged across the country came close to the site at Aphrodisias. For several nights the hills above nearby Karacasu glowed red with the forest blaze. By day the sky was clouded over with smoke from the fires and fine ash rained down on the excavations. But no fire reached the valley floor on which Aphrodisias sits and the preventative measures taken by Bert and his team – tractor-drawn water tankers, fire hydrants, hoses and extinguishers – were fortunately not needed.

COVID-19 was another challenge. No students from the US or the UK were able to visit despite disinfection stations being set up and all team participants being vaccinated. A coalition of willing colleagues from the UK and the US was formed, and in the event a team of 40 archaeologists, architects, conservators and others produced an outstanding nine-week summer season. A significant number of local tourists visited the site throughout the summer.

The headline achievements were in the Basilica and the Tetrapylon Street, and good progress was made on the Sebasteion, the Place of Palms and with marble sarcophagi (the photo above shows the Basilica in the foreground with the Urban Park/Place of Palms behind). There were important new finds, the most dramatic being a new late antique philosopher bust.

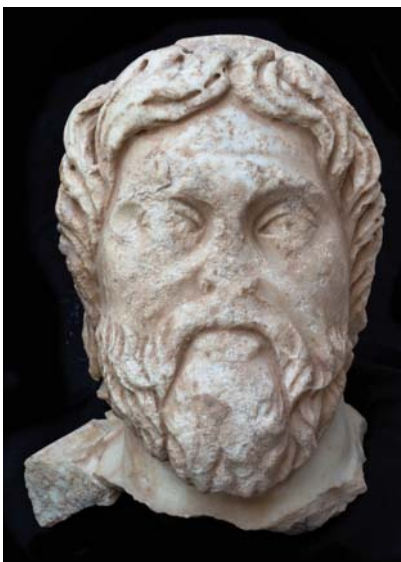
In the Basilica the excavation of the splendid mosaics (see photo to right) in the side aisles begun in 2018 was completed. The mosaics, which are dated in the AD 350s by the governor who paid for them, had a team of student architects document them in detailed scale drawings.





The Basilica also saw the construction of the first set of display panels with the text of the Edict of Maximum Prices of the Emperor Diocletian (AD 301) – in Latin, Turkish and English. The edict is an extraordinary list of 1,400 goods and services available in the empire – from chariots, lions and slaves to footwear and bath-attendants’ salaries. It was a forlorn attempt to curb rampant inflation. The new panels aligned on the side walls of the Basilica are a hugely impressive display of this fascinating document (see photo above).

In the Tetrapylon Street (see photo to right) work concentrated especially on the period around AD 600 and the subsequent life of the highly unusual Dark Age Complex. The colonnades of the late Roman street were built in the sixth century AD, and the team learned this year from masons’ marks that the street paving was a project of the same time. The street buildings were destroyed in a huge earthquake of c. AD 620, after which the Dark Age Complex grew up on top of the collapsed debris, during the seventh and eighth centuries (which must have been the *really* dark centuries). The structure is a remarkable three-unit complex of some ambition among more vernacular housing.



There were a significant number of striking finds from the Dark Age Complex, including an inscribed votive altar, fragments of wall mosaic, a lead seal of a church notary, a pilaster capital with a figure of a spinario (a peasant pulling a thorn from his foot) and a magnificent over-life-size portrait bust found reused under a seventh-century wall. It represents a long-haired bearded philosopher who wears the rolled headband of a priest (see photo to left). The bust was made c. AD 400 and so was in use for a comparatively short time before it was recycled into the wall foundation. It is a high-grade piece of work and a classic Aphrodisian survival.

Strong progress was also made on the conservation of the pool in the Place of Palms and a new project was begun on the Sebasteion Temple. There was much work on documentation and publication projects (more Aphrodisias volumes are on the way), and a handsome display of recently discovered marble sarcophagi was created in a new annexe to the Sarcophagus Park next to the museum.



The Aphrodisias 2021 team, on the Tetrapylon Street

A final major undertaking, to be ready for careful restoration and mounting by Cliveden Conservation starting next spring, was the moving from their depots to the site's Blue Depot of the mythological reliefs and marble statues that eventually will be displayed in the Aphrodisias Museum's planned new courtyard galleries. Restoration will follow the methods and procedures set in place by Trevor Proudfoot, the much-missed conservator/restorer of so much of the site and its sculptures that abound throughout Aphrodisias.

### Looking forward

For your 2022 diary, apart from the AGM and lecture, Bert, with his exemplary generosity, is inviting a party of Friends in late April to a private visit to the Ashmolean Museum's Cast Gallery followed by luncheon in Lincoln College (date to be confirmed). Other events are in the planning, but so far at **7pm on Tuesday 11 January in Daunt Books, 83 Marylebone High Street, London W1U 4QW, Dr Julia Lenaghan – in discussion with Professor Bert Smith – will speak on 'Working with the statues of Aphrodisias'.**

I do hope you will be able to join us in Daunt Books and the Art Workers' Guild as much as encourage anyone you know planning a visit to Aphrodisias this year to get in touch with William or to visit the website to find out about the possibilities of joining the Friends (<http://www.aphrodisias.org.uk/>). Don McCallum's photographs and Barnaby Rogerson's text on their visit to Aphrodisias will be appearing in the next issue of John Scott's *Cornucopia* magazine – they will be unmissable!

Should this be an encouragement to visit Aphrodisias and create a need for a place to stay, apart from the delightful six-room 'Geyre Pansiyon' within walking distance of the site owned by Mehmet of the Anatolia restaurant on the edge of the village, Gordon Robinson and his wife have opened a charming family-run hotel of well-appointed cabins set on the edge of a rural village between Muğla and the sea ([gordonarobinson@gmail.com](mailto:gordonarobinson@gmail.com)).

Many thanks as usual go to Bert Smith for involving us so closely in the seasonal work at Aphrodisias, to the Trustees for ensuring that the Friends is run with maximum efficiency and minimum administrative expenditure, to Gina Coulthard for all her help with the formatting and editing of this newsletter and other aspects of electronic communication. Email, in many ways less pleasant and user-friendly than paper, does save the Trust much time and money which can then be used for our proper objectives of supporting archaeological education and research. This explains the flutter of 'attachments' which we hope you have no trouble filling in.

Patricia Daunt  
Chairman of the Friends of Aphrodisias