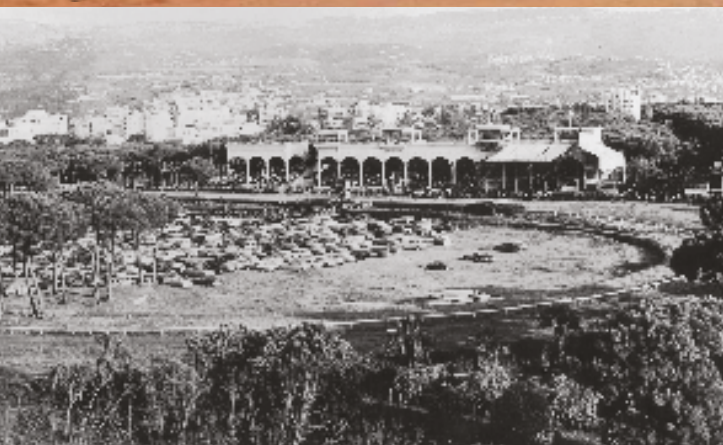


The Levantine Arabian Racing Club and the Beirut Hippodrome



DESIGN



The Levantine Arabian Racing Club (LARC) has presented its new concept in Beirut. Mr. Diaa Karaali, director of Al Dawla stud is the organizer. He comes from Lebanon, but has spent many years in Australia, to come back home now with a part of his Arabian horses. His center of attraction is the hippodrome in Beirut, which urgently needs support and new racehorses in training. Their concept of a new racing club, Levantine Arabian Racing Club (LARC), which aims to promote the integration of WAHO registered racehorses at the track, is interesting and could be successful. At the WAHO Conference from October 8-14 in Aman, Jordan, Mr. Diaa Karaali will present his concept. (Savier)



Map of Beirut with Hippodrome during the war (1975-1990).



The racecourse in Beirut during the fifties.

INTRODUCTION

The Levantine Arabian Racing Club (LARC) at the Beirut Hippodrome is being closely modelled on the former Heritage Arabian Racing Club (HARC), which was formed at the instigation of His Highness Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in 2015.

Like its predecessor, The Levantine Arabian Racing Club, is being proposed in order to deal with the concern over the disappearance of a specific type of Arabian horse; namely a good, sound, versatile horse that is registered as an Arabian and recognisable as one; yet not just the modern show horse, nor the 'superfast' selectively bred race-horse.

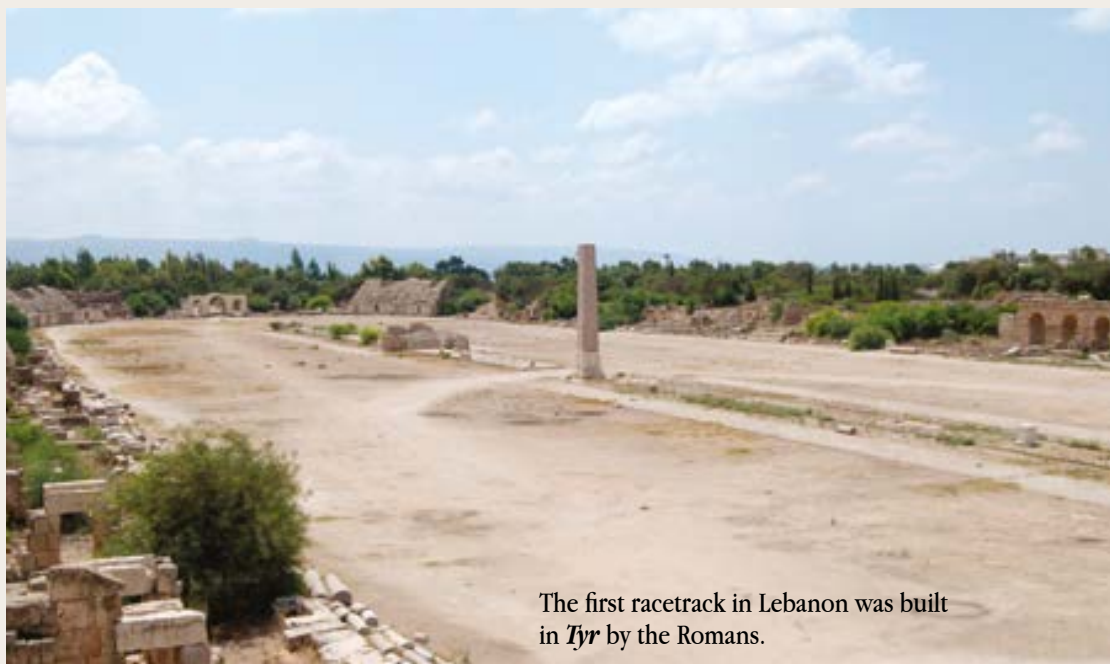
While we don't discourage the modern Arabian endeavour of breeding for exotic beauty and speed, we are, however, concerned with preserving as wide a gene pool as possible, which means caring about and making a place for the old and traditional lines which are disappearing or being disproportionately mixed with imported bloodlines through the use of shipped and frozen semen.

Unfortunately, as it is noticed worldwide, as soon as the 'superfast' horses are imported they tend to dominate the racing and destroy the local market and in the end the racing starts to die as local breeders who want to stay in the business of racing a certain type of Arabian give up. This is painfully obvious in such countries as the USA and the UK where despite high quality racing and greatly improved prize money, the numbers of Arabian horses racing continue to decline.

By being influenced by the Polish and Russian traditions of using racing as part of the selection process for breeding, LARC, in our assessment, would help the Beirut race track recover and lead on two fronts:

It would help maintain a certain style and stamp of horse that has been historically known in the Levant, i.e. the Eastern Mediterranean region of Western Asia, especially in the greater Syrian desert and along the northern and eastern Lebanese hinterland and in the more arable valleys of the eastern and western banks of the Jordan River.

Another reason LARC would be appealing locally, i.e. in the Levant, as well as in such countries as Australia and Brazil is that in those countries and regions racing is considered as a potential market for the Arabian that they are currently breeding, many of which eventually go into endurance; racing can bring added value if the horse has had a sound successful racing career.



The first racetrack in Lebanon was built in *Tyr* by the Romans.



Beirut and his Hippodrome today.

LARC MISSION STATEMENT

LARC is today in the initial stage of inviting WAHO breeders and horse owners registered in Lebanon, as a first step, in order to formulate a Proposal that closely follows the following mission statement (modelled on HARC):

"The aim of LARC is to help ensure, through racing, the long-term future of the purebred Arabian horse, where original, classic characteristics, in the broadest terms, are valued along with the breed hallmarks of athletic ability, soundness and versatility."

Membership and contribution into LARC will soon be welcomed from all countries which are interested in supporting this Lebanese initiative and where we would ask that each country be represented through two nominated delegates, one from its recognised racing organisation and one from amongst the breeders or owners.

The criteria for inclusion as a LARC horse is one of the most difficult matters and contrarian to some of those coming from a strictly racing background where only speed matters, but we hope that they would accept that what we are attempting to do is for the long term good of the Arabian horse that we are passionate about. We would ask them to respect our criteria just as we respect those for whom speed is paramount. We fully accept the WAHO definition, and we are aware that talk of the issue of purity in the Arabian still affects racing at the highest levels, however this is something LARC is not determined or even qualified to enter into.

Our LARC definition, like that of HARC, was developed because the study of race times and observation over a century and half of average race times for given distances remained more or less constant whether in the USA, Russia, Poland, Egypt or even going back to India in 19th century. However, over the last 30 years or so, these times have been routinely broken not by few seconds but 7, 8 and even up to 10 seconds by the highly successful descendants of selectively bred stallions and mares. Excessive speed, especially without any attention to certain basic breeding characteristics goes against the philosophy of LARC, and therefore the lines of these 'superfast' horses where the greatly increased speeds were or are consistently produced through a horse's descendants are excluded.

We reserve the right to add further horses should we feel it is necessary. No mares have so far been specifically excluded because when we looked at a number of exceptionally fast mares it appears that their descendants are excluded through the stallions they have been bred to. Finally, I would like to point out that our 'selective' idea of exclusion is not new, I give the example of Egypt in the early parts of the last century where the selection of Arabians for racing was based on height and tail carriage.

LARC RACEHORSE DEFINITION

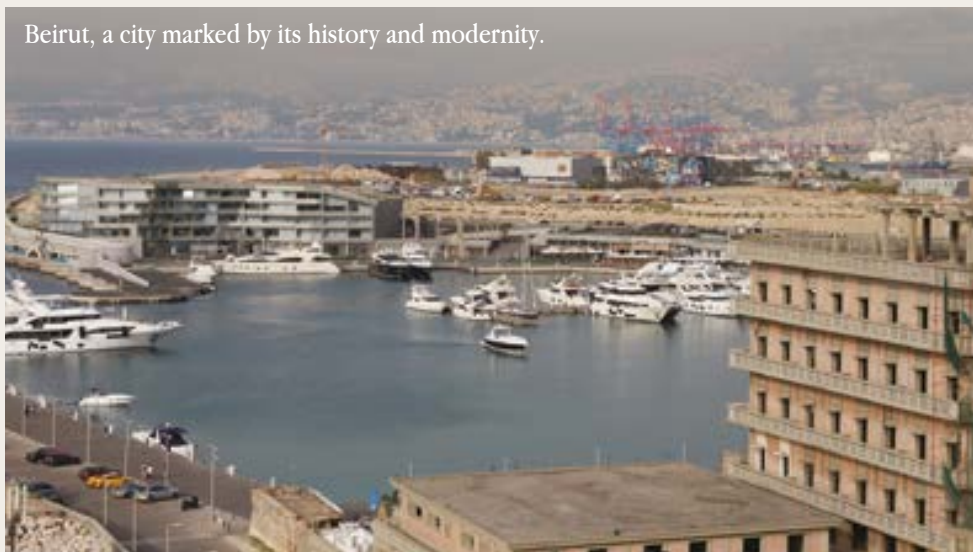
"In order to preserve the classic characteristics of the purebred Arabian horse, it has been agreed that a Levantine Arabian Racing Club (LARC) racehorse is any purebred Arabian registered in any WAHO accepted studbook but it must not contain the blood of the following stallions in any generation of its pedigree; the excluded stallions are (1) AMER, (2) BAROUD III, (3) BURNING SAND, (4) DRAGON, (5) ST LAURENT and (6) TIWAIQ."

LARC also reserves the right to add other horses if considered necessary after formal approval by the Club committee. I trust from all that has been said above that it can be understood that the LARC definition has no bearing on WAHO. As far as IFAHR (The International Federation of Arabian Horse Racing Authorities) is concerned we like to think that in due course we can come under that umbrella, offering another layer to the IFAHR racing fabric. The LARC races maybe a little slower but there is no reason why they should be any less professional than any other type of racing.

Most Arabian breeding societies promote the Arabian as a versatile horse, and they encourage individuals to try all equestrian sports. If you take dressage or show jumping for example, no one expects an Arabian to be a world champion, but it does not mean owners should not be able to enjoy taking part in those sports within their own group. The Arabian is not the fastest horse in the world so our belief is that Arabian racing should be available at many levels to suit the variety within the breed and in different parts of the world.



Beirut, a city marked by its history and modernity.



In recent years, in addition to the races, the Hippodrome also hosted Arabian Horse Shows.

The Levantine Arabian Racing Club plans to support such racing at the Beirut Hippodrome and to protect it from adverse competition from outside its racehorse definition. LARC also intends to be an international forum for like-minded breeders and horse owners from the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, the Americas, Australia and beyond who would be encouraged to send their WAHO Arabians to Beirut for race training.

We hope that we are not too late to revive interest in those countries, such as Lebanon, where Arabian racing is in decline and that we can bring back serious breeders of all types of Arabian horses.



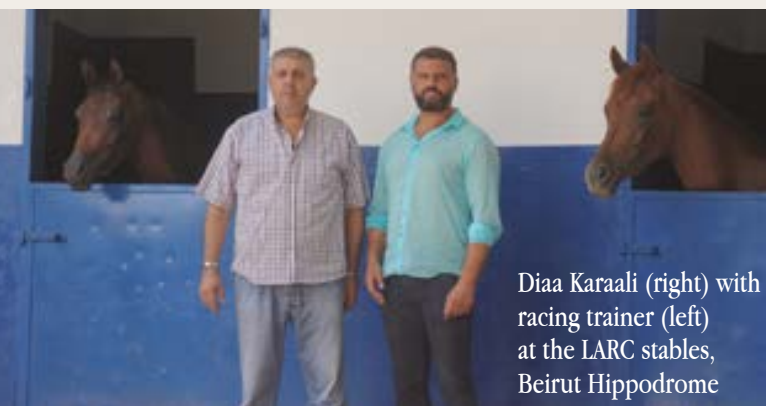




Diaa Karaali (founder of LARC) with two AL Dawla Arabians bred mares in training at the Beirut Hippodrome



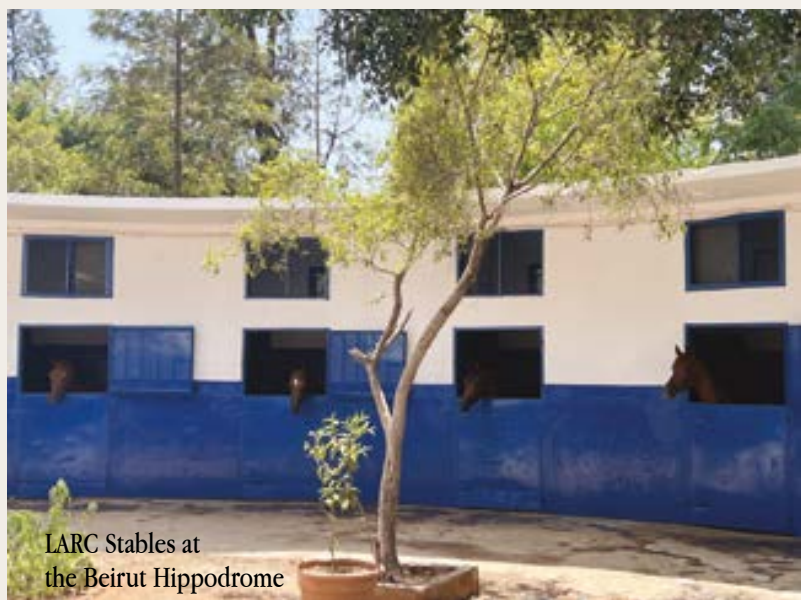
Heirmas Al Dawla
three year old colt in race training at LARC



Diaa Karaali (right) with racing trainer (left) at the LARC stables, Beirut Hippodrome



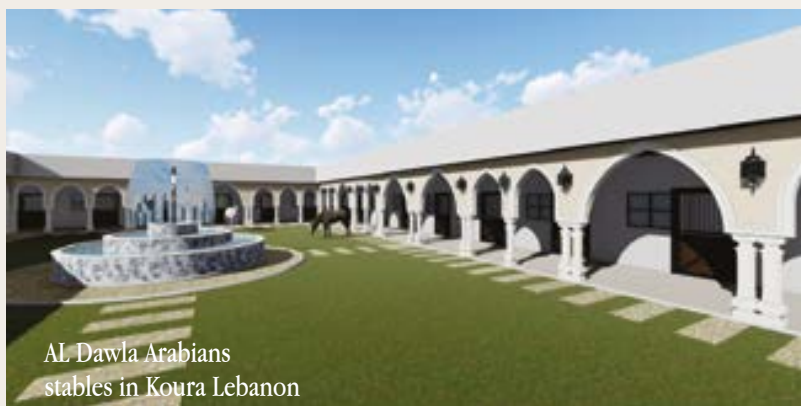
Madeena Al Dawla
by RHR Heir of Marwan
in training at the Beirut Hippodrome



LARC Stables at
the Beirut Hippodrome



The Grand entrance
to Al Dawla Arabians - Lebanon



AL Dawla Arabians
stables in Koura Lebanon



AL DAWLA ARABIANS: FROM AUSTRALIA TO LEBANON

"Organising horseracing in Lebanon for WAHO registered horses has been an organic growth to our story with the Arabian horse. We have dedicated, with the assistance of SPARCA, at least thirty boxes in the Beirut Hippodrome to launch an important and valuable project at the Beirut racetrack."

We feel that an emotional and a practical enlightenment has driven us to connect with the wider world out of Australia, whereby the Arabian horse can lead us on a historical journey that can give hope to future generations of horse lovers in both Australia and Lebanon. Being close to the international horse shows in Europe and the Middle East and seeing the high demand for the WAHO horse abroad has definitely been an added encouragement with our mega task.

The Beirut Hippodrome initiative would be an excellent opportunity for breeders from all over the world who want to support the Arabian horse and the Beirut racetrack. This can help increase the international attractiveness of the WAHO horse. In recent years, ECAHO shows for WAHO registered horses have also been held at the Beirut Hippodrome.

For us, the ideal Arabian horse remains one that can do both, win a race and perform successfully in a show class - similar to what the Janov Podlaski State Stud does in Poland.

Horse racing results at Poland's state stud, which are recorded on the show horse pedigrees are restricted to the specific lines that are bred by the stud and that do not include any of the 'superfast' WAHO stallions that are used outside their stud farms. Such a program has been very successful and it has functioned coherently with their shows, their racetrack and with their endurance competitions, not to overlook the show jumping capabilities of these same horse lines.

Lebanon was once part of Al Sham or Greater Syria, and it had the finest purebred Arabians that were exported by Lady Ann to Crabbet Park in the United Kingdom. During the mid-1900's purebred Arabian horses were bred particularly for racing in the Beirut Racetrack but ironically enough these lines are today not recognised by WAHO and therefore valueless to the outside world.

In recent history, there have been various political and financial decisions made in Lebanon that have led to the mixing of the Arabian lines with particular lines that WAHO does not recognise as purebred Arabians.

Geographically and historically, however, Lebanon is situated as a perfect place for East-West linking to take place, and what more than the Beirut Hippodrome can one aspire to use as a starting point for Lebanon to regain its influential position as an international leader in the domain of Arabian horse events for both Europe and the Gulf countries.

In early 2022, more than 20 mares and several young colts made the long trek from Sydney Australia to Beirut in Lebanon without any incidents, and they are now all happy and settling into their new environment at the newly purpose built mega stud in the ancient village of Kfar Qabel in North Lebanon along the pristine banks of the Qadisha River.

Amongst the pedigree lines of the transported Arabians are Egyptian, Polish, Spanish and those Crabbet lines that initially came to Australia from Al Sham via the United Kingdom, the founding country of WAHO. We want to share these special lines with the world from Beirut Lebanon.

With this major relocation of our best Arabians to Lebanon, we believe that today we represent the cream lines of the Australian and British breeding programs over the last 100 years."

Diaa Karaali, Director*, Al Dawla Arabians (Lebanon)

*We welcome enquiries and comments through info@aldawla.com

HORSES AND LEBANON HAVE BELONGED TOGETHER FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS

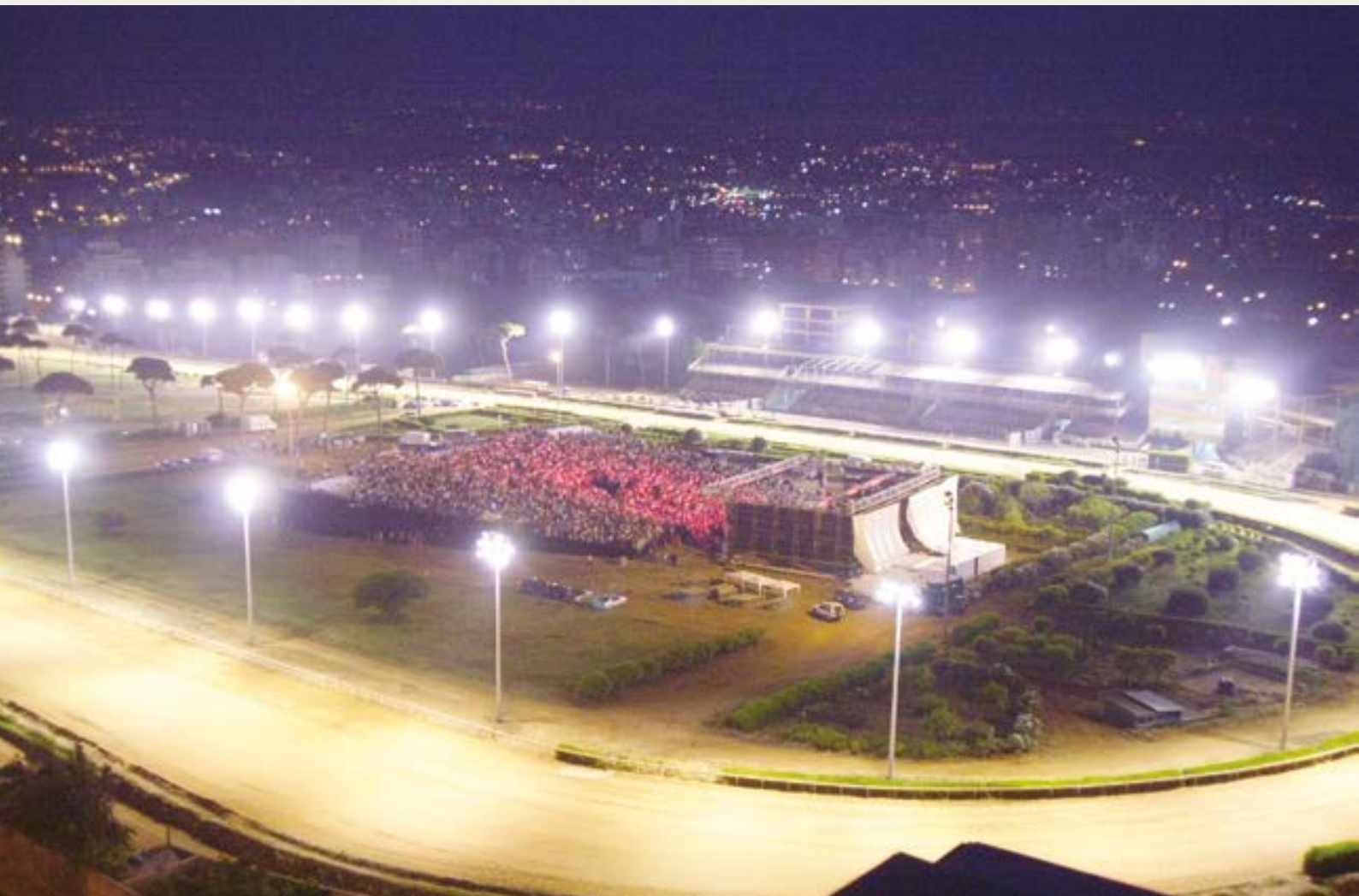
Probably it is not widely known that the historical relationship between horse breeding and Lebanon goes back thousands of years.

Horse breeding reached Lebanon through the Greeks, who were already masters of chivalry centuries before Christ. Moreover, Lebanon has the first hippodrome in Middle East which was built during the Roman Empire era, ca. 2000 years ago, in Tyre city, south of Lebanon, and it is the only one of its kind preserved and considered today as a UNESCO World Heritage.

In 1916, during the time of Ottoman occupation in Lebanon, the present racecourse was built in the Beirut Park right in the central city's district. Forty years later, the Hippodrome of Beirut considered one of the most prestigious and busiest racetracks in the world. The racing days were considered as an international occasion that gathers business and entertainment.

In the 60s, so many horses were sent to run in the Hippodrome of Beirut twice a week, with up to 20 horses taking part at each race. Then the civil war came (from 1975-1990), which changed the scene in Middle East dramatically, and throw the Hippodrome of Beirut to a dark time ended with a big crisis. But Beirut did not give up.

Today, after many more existential crises and wars, the Hippodrome is trying to resume its operations in order to give horses and staff a chance to survive and to preserve this historic place for culture and horse lovers, not only from Beirut but from all over the world. (Savier)





AUSTRALIAN HORSE LOVERS AT BEIRUT HIPPODROME OVER 100 YEARS AGO

The connection between Lebanon and its famous racetrack in Beirut and Australia, is already older than 100 years. As early as 1918, Australian soldiers in Beirut bet on the horses of the racecourse and took part in the social life of the Parc du Beyrouth. Today, Australia again plays a role in supporting the racecourse in Beirut.

Below are three events held at the Beirut Hippodrome between 1918 and 1941, and which have been photographed by Australian camera lenses.

1918 A view of the Beirut racecourse. Australian soldiers and locals stand around the track in 1918 when Beirut was still officially part of the Ottoman Empire.

24 August 1941 The 7th Division of the Australian Imperial Force attend a race meeting event at the Beirut Hippodrome. The men were photographed placing a bet at the race meeting. There were no bookmakers. All bets were on the totalisator, where the total amount of registered bets were divided among those who won. Instead of backing one particular horse bettors backed an owner. If an owner has several horses in the race, as is often the case, the chances of collecting are higher. Stable betting was general throughout the Middle East, particularly in Beirut.

24 August 1941 After admiring the horses and discussing the "Carts" for the next round, (Right) Australian soldiers appear to be helping the jockey to ride the winner. They seem to have been on a "Winner" when photographed.

22 November 1941 The Beirut Hippodrome grandstand was filled with crowds including Australian, English, French and Indian troops, as well as, local civilians who attended the Allied Gymkhana and race meeting; light-heartedly dubbed the "**Melbourne Cup**". The event was held in aid of British and French hospitals.

Horses were paraded first and then held in the saddling paddock before the each race. The main competitors holding the elimination rounds and competing as riders were the men of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps.





Captain H. Hunt, a well-known cricketer and sportsman, was also in attendance as a rider, as well as, Captain W. Payne of the Dragoons, and a well-known English steeplechase rider (photographed). The only women competitor in the race meeting was Lieutenant Miss K. Tathan Warter of the Harsfield Spears Unit.

The parade before the start of the "Melbourne Cup" at the Allied Gymkhana and race meeting. (Right) Captain W. Payne of the Dragoons on his mount at the race meeting.

