

WAHO Conference, Oman, 2009

By Liz Salmon
In native dress!



All Photos taken
by Phil Crabill

The 2009 WAHO Conference was held on January 30th to February 5th by invitation of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said. From the moment we arrived in Muscat—the Capitol of Oman, we were treated as very special VIPs. We were ushered through immigration and customs and driven to our hotel the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort right on the beach.



23-horse hitch exhibition

We arrived on Saturday morning from attending the show in Riyadh, so we had time to settle and survey our surroundings. The next day, all of us except the registrars went on one of the Sultan's private ships for a cruise and lunch. This was wonderful and the food provided by the Royal kitchens was amazing. That evening, we had a welcome cocktail party and dinner with traditional music and dancing at the hotel.

Monday morning saw the start of the Conference with an opening address by the WAHO President Dr. Hans Nagel. Apologies of absence were read out and the Executive Committee were introduced. Vice President Peter Pond (Australia) Federico Blum (Uruguay), Secretary David Angold (UK) Treasurer



4-horse hitch exhibition

Sami Suleiman Al Nohait (Saudi Arabia), Mrs. Valerie Bunting (UK), Mrs. Claudia Carabello De Quentin (Argentina), Mrs. Annette Hedley (UK), Robert Fauls (USA), Xavier Giubert (France), Basil Jordan (Syria), Mrs. Isabella Pawelec-Zawadzka (Poland), Dr. Marec Trela (Poland) and Dr. Ibrahim Zaghoul (Egypt).

We then had a moment's silence for those WAHO members who had passed away since the last Conference and the Treasurer's report was read out. The financial report was read and reappointing the accountants was passed. The acceptance of new countries was next with Yemen being voted as a member of WAHO. Australia was approved to be able to register horses from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. A great presentation with a documentary film produced by Gerhard Skorianz entitled The Royal Cavalry in Oman's New Dawn was enthusiastically received. We all had headphones to listen to translations from Arabic speakers if necessary. Reports from all the member countries then took place for the rest of the day.



Exhibition by ladies of the desert riding their Arabian horses.

The Conference was in session for the morning only on Tuesday. It started out with a talk on the history of WAHO entitled 'What is WAHO' given by Federico Blum and where the original USA registry (old AHRA [Arabian Horse Registry of America], now AHA [Arabian Horse Association] Registry) was welcomed back after a thirteen-year absence.



Desert tribes gathering to show the world their horses.

All the registrars had had a meeting on Sunday and the Chairman Kees Mol had given some advice and suggestions, as he has been involved with registrations for many years. Several recommendations were given. Micro chipping and code recommendations for all horses. The strain to be added, a booklet of markings and for English to remain the official language. Stud books can be put on discs or to carry on printing stud books which is much more expensive. It was advised that stud books should be available on line too. It was also stated that export certificates and passports were compulsory for all horses.

There were several excellent guest speakers on hand, Dr. Hamood Al Degashi on 'The intimate Relationship of the Arab people and Arabian Horse.' Mr. Hamad Al Belushi on 'The History of Arabian Horses in the Sultanate of Oman.' Finally, Mr. Salim Hamad Al Mahrooqi on "The Untold Story -History of horses in Arabia."



Exhibition of the skill of these riders!

After lunch we departed for the races and an absolutely stunning display of Horsemanship by the Royal Cavalry at Madinat Al Adiya in Seeb. From there we went to the Al Felaj Fort and afterwards for a traditional Omani Folklore show with dinner .



Working on long lines!



Riding Roman Style!

Wednesday was another full day of Conference starting out with another film of “The 2008 World Young Horse Endurance Championships in Compiègne, France.” Bob Fauls and Howard Pike followed with an illustrated presentation of the new Arabian Horse Galleries being constructed by the Purebred Arabian Trust at the Kentucky Horse Park’s International Museum of the Horse.

Guest speaker Dr. Ross William's DVM was next with a talk on “Practical Safe Nutritional Programs for The Arabian: Realistic ways to reduce colic and laminitis: climate and nutrition interactions: the senior horse and metabolic disorders.” which interested many people.

I always enjoy listening to Cynthia Culbertson and this talk with slides was on “A Gift from the Desert: the Art, History and Culture of the Arabian Horse.” An illustrated presentation on the 2010 Exhibition at the Kentucky Horse Park. Jo Franklin showed an extract from her specially commissioned documentary for the “Gift from the Desert”.

Finally, the details were revealed on the next Conference to be held in Qatar, and any other business. A very generous gift of \$100,000 was given by Oman for the World Data Base of registered horses. This will be wonderful for all breeders. In his closing speech Dr Nagel stressed the importance of promoting the breed in the one performance division at which they excel—that of endurance.

That evening we had the Gala dinner with Music from the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra, which was a splendid affair. The Omani’s had certainly excelled all expectations and put on this Conference with such hospitality and enthusiasm.

The next day all participants were treated to a full day tour in the Al Batinah Region, starting with the historic Nakhal and Rustaq Forts, where we were treated to more dancing and singing and observing handicrafts being made. After lunch at the Al Nahda Resort Hotel, we went to the Wadi Al Abiad Sands for a parade of private owners and their horses followed by a traditional Bedouin dinner.

I know that we all looking forward to Qatar in two years time, and we sincerely thank Oman for the tremendous effort they made for us, and for the gifts they so generously gave all participants to remind us of our trip.



Oman Royal Academy