



# KZN Children's Hospital

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## 15 July 2010...

Just a little over a month ago we celebrated the launch of the KZN Children's Hospital Restoration Project.

Wow—to think that a few small steps (adult-ones) have allowed this beautiful old building to start breathing again. I think many of us who have an “attachment” to the old building started breathing again ourselves!

Those ‘few small steps’ have, however, not come easy. It has taken guts and persistence in keeping on doing what is correct in a world that is often seen as greedy and self-serving. It could be likened to the advert of a famous alcoholic beverage that has the logo of the “Striding Man” — that we just *keep walking!*



It is after all about continuing a legacy that is as much an icon on our most famous beach front as it is in the role this Hospital has played in the lives of both children that had been treated there and the staff that dedicated their lives to looking after the wellbeing of children.

As adults we most certainly have a responsibility towards our children and this was strongly emphasized at the Launch, and I quote from a press release:

“The healthy growth and development of children is crucial to the future of this province and country. Health and wellbeing are an integral part of the child's right to life, survival and development. The principle of human rights is universal and each child, including the adolescent, is entitled to fundamental rights and freedom. Our government's mandate is universal, as enshrined in our Constitution. It calls for equity: the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, and political belief, economic or social condition” says the MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo

...and yes, we will *keep walking* this exciting road to Restoration!



# The Launch



**HEALTH**  
KwaZulu-Natal

KwaZulu-Natal  
**CHILDREN'S**  
**HOSPITAL**  
Integrated Children's Wellness Centre

## KZN Children's Hospital gets the Kiss of Life

It was a beautiful winters day in Durban. People were starting to gather and prepare. The final touch-ups to the big bandage that had been wrapped around the building were being done. The sound system had been rigged up; the children's group where practising their song that they were going to perform and whilst the refreshments and registration tables were being set up we had the pleasure of listening to the sound of excitement. In the glorious sunshine, the music setting the ambiance and the growing anticipation for the event to get underway, we all started to gather.



Invited guests started to arrive—such excitement—seeing people you hadn't seen for ages. It was hugs all around. The chatter was just glorious. Then everyone was traipsing outside to see and appreciate the artwork of the children from the Room 13 project, including the display of photographs of old.

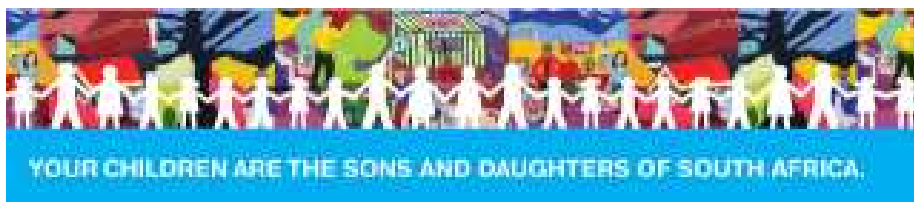


There was a delightful opportunity to take a photograph of Prof Bill Winship looking at himself, in front of an image of him standing on the front lawn of the Children's Hospital way back in 1971.

Just looking at these photographs strikes a cord deep within one's being.

Where are all the children—especially the sick ones?

The need for this project cannot be underestimated. We, as a society, need to protect the rights of our children—they are after all—our future. There is no doubt, children need us just as much as we need them!



## The History...Opening of the Children's Hospital, 1931, Durban

### Historical

Children were formerly accommodated in a ward in the general hospital, but there was neither sufficient space, nor was the ward suitable for children. In 1923 Mrs. O. Siedle, then a member of the Town Council, conceived the idea of erecting a separate Children's Hospital to be attached to the main Hospital, but the financial situation was such that there was no prospect of getting the necessary money granted from the ordinary official funds.

Mrs. Siedle then approached the problem from a new angle in so far as Durban was concerned, the fact of the Hospital being a government institution having prevented the public from being asked to contribute towards any capital outlay.



She was instrumental in getting the Town Council to give a grant of 3½ acres of land adjacent to the General Hospital, and the Provincial Government purchased an additional ½ acre of private land necessary to round off the block and, after sounding the Provincial Government authorities, then brought forward in the Town Council a resolution that the Town Council should contribute one-third of the cost of building a new Children's Hospital up to a maximum contribution of £ 4,000, provided that the Provincial Government agreed to contribute one-third and the public the remaining third.



After both official bodies had agreed in principle to the scheme, Mrs. Siedle set about her task of raising £ 14,000, which was an unusually formidable one for the reason stated above.

A Committee was appointed consisting of representatives from the Provincial Government, Durban Corporation, medical profession and the general public to supervise the collection of funds, and Mrs. Siedle acted as chairwoman of this Committee. The actual collection of funds was, however, carried out entirely by Mrs. Siedle, who was not content with raising the £ 14,000 necessary but collected over £ 23,000, the balance above the £ 14,000 being utilized for special equipment.

Subscriptions were received from all classes of the community and not the least appreciated were the many small subscriptions from children themselves. The actual cost of building the Hospital amounted to £51,312 and the equipment to another sum approximately £18,000.

**Continued on page 4**

The Provincial Government has appreciated so much the aid rendered by Mrs. Siedle, the Corporation, and the public that it decided to erect the tablet in commemoration, which Her Excellency Lady Clarendon has very kindly agreed to unveil.

The building was planned by Mr Cleland, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department of the Union, who took a real and definite interest in every detail appertaining to the construction of the Hospital.

The contract was carried out by Messrs. W. Cornelius & Sons. Thanks to the public subscriptions certain unusual features were introduced and these were included not merely for ornamental purposes but to make the wards as cheerful and interesting as possible to the little patients, it being now generally recognised that the psychological effect of such surroundings plays an important part in hastening children's recovery.

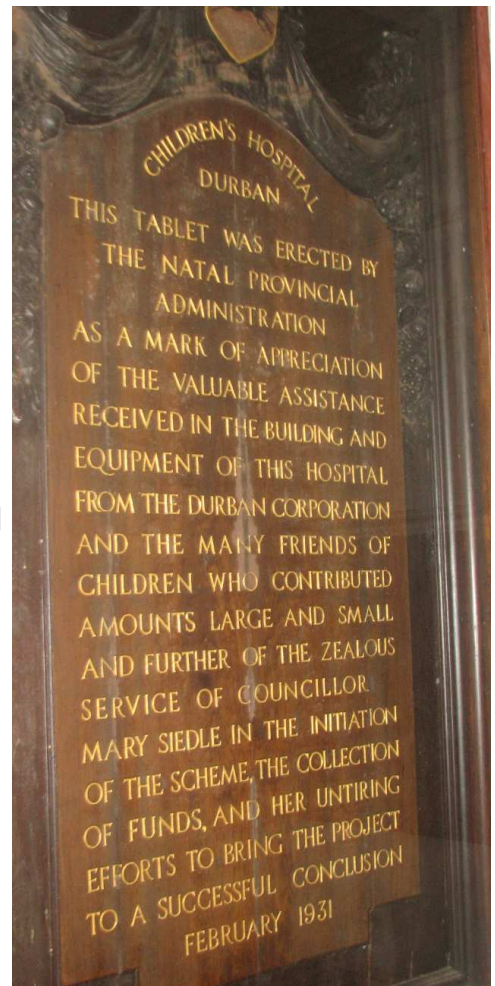
Valuable assistance was given in laying out the grounds by Mr. Bruce of the Natal Education Department, although it is very difficult to get shrubs and plants to grow owing to the strong winds which prevail at times. Tennis courts have been provided for the use of the Nursing Staff.

The Hospital has been planned for extensions at a later stage if necessary, and for that reason the kitchen, theatres, etc, were made larger than would have actually sufficed for the present accommodation. Sixty-six patients can be accommodated at present.

There are six large wards in the Hospital, and each of the four main wards has two small wards attached in which special cases can be nursed apart from the rest. In addition a special ward was built on the cubicle system with the object of isolating children on admission and thus preventing the risk of infectious cases getting access to the main wards while in the incubation period, i.e., before definite symptoms of the disease became apparent.

Another ward was planned with the idea of accommodating badly nourished children for a few days of dietetic treatment, and two small rooms were provided to accommodate the mothers so that they could be taught how to carry on after treatment.

The four main wards which front the sea have ample balcony space, and these are provided with special folding doors which can be thrown entirely open on calm days, thus allowing the children to be treated practically in the open-air.



The bath is heated by hot water pipes and is modelled on one in use at Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, England, where it has proved a most effective therapeutic agent.

An extra Cardiographic outfit is provided and is worked by one of the physicians; this is utilized for adult patients from the main hospital as well as for children and has proved extremely useful.

A Continuous Flow Bath is provided in a special room. The water is kept at a constant temperature by special thermostatic valves and a warning whistle or buzzer sounds should the water fall or rise above certain degrees of temperature. It is interesting to note that this idea was taken from baths in use during the war for septic wounds at the South African Military Hospital, Richmond.

A central Milk Laboratory has been provided, modeled on that of the Children's Hospital, Toronto. Various equipment has been provided for cleaning and sterilizing bottles, together with appliances for testing milk and cream, and the intricate feeds can be made up under the care of a sister especially trained for the purpose.

There are two theatres, together with the necessary accessory rooms. The main theatre is lined with Vitrolite and provided with a Zeiss Panthophos Light which gives excellent and shadeless illumination. They are provided with all the latest equipment and are in all respects completely up-to-date.

The lockers and other surgical equipment are made of 'nickeloid', a stainless material, as it is found that enamel will not stand up to the sea air.

An open-air sunbath has been fixed up so that debilitated children can have the benefit of direct sun-rays. The exposures have to be very carefully graduated, but if this can be done, the benefits have been very marked in the case of debilitated and weakly children.

### **Historical and Descriptive Brochure, issued at the Opening of the Children's Hospital, 1931, Durban**

Thank you to Mr Richard Siedle for sharing this brochure with us.  
The picture below is where the pool once was!



# Photographs of the Launch



# And More Photographs



# More Photographs...









**HEALTH**  
KwaZulu-Natal

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# Thoughts...



## Notes from the Editor:

Dear Colleagues and Friends

What a privilege it is to share this unfolding story with you. It may seem that nothing has happened since the launch in the middle of July, but to be sure, many things have continued to happen in the background.

We must also always understand that dreams can only be realised effectively when the proper attention is given to it. Responsibilities need to be assigned and building materials ordered...amongst many other processes that do take time and effort. So thank you to all those working towards making this project a reality!

Dare I say it...Dreams DO come true!

Till next time...

Sue

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