



Pendine Park news

The newsletter of the Pendine Park care organisation

Issue 15



"The harp is such a beautiful instrument and when it's played by one of the best musicians in the world it's something different again"

Residents in tune with world class musicians

Our talented care home residents teamed up with world class musicians to perform at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.

The melodious group collaborated in a musical workshop with Jenny Pearson, a freelance singer and tutor, and pianist Annette Bryn Parri, who have both worked with Welsh National Opera.

Youngsters from schools across North Wales and Shropshire who were visiting the festival on its iconic Children's Day were invited into the session arranged by Pendine Park as we were sponsoring the whole day.

They joined in enthusiastically with the energetic song and movement sessions staged in the eisteddfod friends meeting area.

Annette and Jenny, who has also worked as a music tutor with celebrity choirs Only Boys Aloud and Only Kids Aloud, had already done a number of similar workshops at Pendine Park, bringing the enjoyment of music to people living with dementia.

The workshops and the special event at the eisteddfod are part of Pendine Park's pioneering enrichment programme, which enhances the experience of residents and also plays a key role in personal training and staff development.

At the eisteddfod session 14 residents from, all of Pendine's care homes, lined up to join the youngsters in warm-up movement exercises and a sing-along, clapping and swaying in time to the music and beating out the rhythm using maracas and tambourines.

Around 20 Pendine staff were on hand to make sure that the morning ran smoothly.

Resident Christine Jones, 71, said: "We've all had a lot fun and I've really enjoyed myself."



ABOVE: Jenny Pearson with staff, residents and youngsters from Meadows Primary school in Oswestry

RIGHT: Resident Sue Mullally joins in the fun.

LEFT: Staff get into the swing.



Success at the double

We are celebrating an awards double for our commitment to enriching people's lives through the arts.

Pendine Park, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, was named Business of the Year at the prestigious Arts and Business Cymru Awards.

The award was presented by acclaimed Welsh actress Sian Phillips during a glittering ceremony at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff.

Proprietor Mario Kreft MBE also picked up the Arts, Business and Health award in recognition of the firm's partnerships with the arts to support the mental and emotional wellbeing of its clients and staff.

There too was Mario's wife, Gill, who has been a key figure behind Pendine Park's success, and Sarah Edwards who became the first artist in residence in a Welsh care home when she was appointed around 20 years ago.

This was the third time for Pendine Park to be honoured by Arts and Business Cymru.

Wrexham AM Lesley Griffiths, who was also at the prize-giving ceremony, said: "Pendine Park is a shining light in the world of social care and I am delighted they have been rightly declared Business of the Year.

"Their commitment to the arts is truly magnificent and has raised the bar for the rest of the social care sector.

"The vision for Pendine Park's inspirational use of the arts comes directly from Mario and Gill and is enriching people's lives on a daily basis.

"Of course, their success would not have been possible without the dedication of their talented team, including the artist in residence Sarah Edwards, who have turned their vision into a life-enhancing reality."

We have seven specialist care homes in Wrexham, dedicating

individual homes to areas including dementia, brain injury and nursing care.

Pendine Park also operates a domiciliary care company and a training company, and all told employs more than 600 people.

That figure is set to increase later this year when we are due to open a new £7 million centre of excellence for dementia care that's being built on the site of the former Bryn Seiont community hospital in Caernarfon, in Gwynedd.

Ultimately, the bilingual Bryn Seiont Newydd centre will create 100 new jobs and provide respite and day care in addition to the 71 beds for the people living there.

There are also plans to build 16 companion living apartments as part of a second phase of the development.

We have developed partnerships with the renowned Hallé orchestra, Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod and North Wales International Music Festival, which have demonstrated the company's commitment to investing in the creative arts and providing more people with access to experience the arts across North Wales.

Collaborating with the Hallé, we provide music activity to our care home residents while training staff to facilitate arts sessions as therapeutic activity.

Our partnership with the orchestra also includes music workshops, involving residents of the care homes and pupils from local schools, culminating in a performance at Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod's Children's Day.

Pendine Park has doubled

its sponsorship of the North Wales International Music Festival.

Mario said: "We are delighted that Pendine Park has been honoured by Arts and Business Cymru.

"The awards are the ideal 30th anniversary present for Pendine Park. None of what we have achieved would have been possible without the fantastic contribution of my wife Gill whose expertise, energy and creativity have provided the foundation for everything we have done.

"We are passionate about enhancing the quality of life for our residents and our domiciliary care clients through our enrichment programme which wholeheartedly embraces the arts as a means of reaching out to people."

Rachel Jones, chief executive of A&B Cymru, said:

"Pendine Park is a fantastic company which has a clear focus and a genuine commitment to the arts.

"The company continually demonstrates the positive impact that the arts can have on business and I

hope its partnerships inspire

many more companies to embrace the creative sector."



Stars come out to shine with Pendine



We've got some big news for next year's Llangollen International Eisteddfod.

As part of our ongoing support of the festival, we will be helping to develop their Children's Day and sponsoring the opening concert starring the classical singing sensation, Katherine Jenkins OBE. According to the talented mezzo soprano, she's delighted to be returning to the iconic festival for the first time since her last appearance in 2010.

She will be treating the audience at the opening night of the 2016 Eisteddfod to a concert version of Georges Bizet's opera, Carmen, the tale of the downfall of Don José, a naïve soldier seduced by the fiery Gypsy.

It will be the first opportunity fans of Jenkins will have to hear her sing all of Carmen's operatic arias in one performance.

This year we supported the concert starring tenor Alfie Boe, Welsh singer Sophie Evans, classical saxophonist Amy Dickson along with Jonathan Antoine, the classically trained tenor who rose to fame on Britain's Got Talent.

The sell-out concert was a wonderful occasion and three members of our enrichment team, artist in residence Sarah Edwards, Tracey Green and Olivia Thomas even got to meet Alfie before the concert began.

Pendine Park proprietor Mario Kreft MBE said: "We were absolutely delighted to have the opportunity to sponsor a magical night of musical entertainment and it was a great way of celebrating our 30th anniversary.

"I am sure next year's concert featuring Katherine Jenkins is going to be an equally special night."



LEFT: Alfie Boe meets Pendine staff, from left, Tracey Green, Olivia Thomas and artist in residence Sarah Edwards

Ex-royal harpist and opera superstar delight residents



Bryn Terfel joins in with Bodlonde residents



Betty Coggins watches Hannah perform



Our amazed residents in Wrexham were treated to a stunning performance by former royal harpist Hannah Stone and opera superstar Bryn Terfel.

Hannah, who's previously played for the likes of American president Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, was joined on a visit to Pendine Park by the world-famous bass baritone.

We are sponsoring a concert starring Hannah at the North Wales International Music Festival in St Asaph at the end of September.

As part of the arrangement, Hannah agreed to come and see our award-winning music therapy in action - and to put on a concert for residents.

She was unexpectedly accompanied by Bryn who was sporting a magnificent beard, grown for the role of Reb Tevye in Grange Park Opera's production of Fiddler on the Roof.

On their arrival at our Bodlondeb dementia care centre, Hannah and Bryn were greeted by staff and residents who sang Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau, the Welsh national anthem – and it didn't take long for Bryn to join in.

The couple also happily posed for pictures and signed autographs.

According to Swansea-born Hannah, 28, the music therapy she saw at Bodlondeb was "fantastic".

She said: "To hear that these enrichment sessions are a daily occurrence is amazing.

"You can see how much enjoyment it brings to residents by the smiles on their faces."

Bryn was equally impressed and revealed: "My mother

taught at a school for disabled people in Caernarfon so I was involved with music therapy at an age when perhaps I didn't really appreciate its benefits.

"However, the session we witnessed today was wonderful and clearly residents were having a great time."

Hannah and Bryn later travelled across town to our Hillbury care home where Hannah, who was appointed the official harpist to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in 2011, treated residents, staff and invited pupils from Victoria Primary School's choir and orchestra group, to an hour-long concert of harp music.

She played music as varied as the Oscar winning, *The Way You Look Tonight* from *Singin' in the Rain*, a 1936 Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers film, to classical tango and rumba pieces by harp composer Carlos Salzedo, along with hits from musicals including *South Pacific*, *The Sound of Music* and *Carousel*.

Then Bryn joined in and sang Mahalia Jackson's, *If I Can Help Somebody*, which ended with rapturous applause from a clearly delighted audience.

Retired steelworker Jack Simons, 83, the husband of Hillbury resident Brenda, 84, said: "Absolutely fantastic, it made the hairs on the back of our necks stand up.

"The harp is such a beautiful instrument and when it's played by one of the best musicians in the world it's something different again.

"Who would have thought that just a few people could get to enjoy a harpist like Hannah Stone and a world famous singer like Bryn Terfel here in a care home in Wrexham? It's been amazing."

Hillbury manager Cindy Clutton said: "It's amazing to see

people of the calibre of Hannah Stone and Bryn Terfel performing here.

"You can see how the residents are relaxed and how much they are enjoying what has been a stunning and beautiful performance."

Sarah Edwards, Pendine Park's artist in residence, told Hannah, Bryn and the audience: "Music is at the heart of everything we do at Pendine. It inspires residents and staff. "Since 2008 I have been privileged to work on a project with musicians from the Hallé orchestra and Welsh National Opera and, along with the rest of the team, have witnessed the benefits music can bring to a person's quality of life.

"We are currently training more staff as part of our enrichment programme to give them confidence to build on their skills and to feel empowered to lead their own music workshop, set up a choir or simply remember to put on a person's favourite radio station.

It was an "unforgettable experience" for Pendine Park proprietor Mario Kreft MBE and his wife, Gill, who are also celebrating after the organisation was named Business of the Year at the Arts and Business Cymru Awards where they also won the Arts, Business and Health award in recognition of the firm's partnerships with the arts to support the mental and emotional wellbeing of its clients and staff.

Mario said: "For Hannah to agree to perform for us was wonderful and her performance was truly extraordinary.

"It's has been a day to remember and I'm sure everyone has thoroughly enjoyed meeting both Hannah and Bryn in such a relaxed and intimate setting."



Bryn and Hannah with Gill and Mario Kreft



Bryn Seiont will be a huge asset to Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has hailed our new centre of excellence for dementia care in Caernarfon as a huge asset for Wales. The comments from Sarah Rochira followed a visit to the site of Canolfan Bryn Seiont Newydd.

Ms Rochira also officially opened Pendine Park's new recruitment and information office in High Street in the town centre.

She said: "What I've been so impressed with at Pendine Park is the enrichment programme and particularly the focus on the arts, still ensuring that people with dementia are engaging, using their skills and their talents.

"Enrichment is an active based approach, seeing someone with dementia as a huge asset, still with knowledge and personality.

"Bryn Seiont Newydd will be a huge asset to Wales and make a big difference to the lives of older people with dementia. It's a place that people would actually call home.

"It was a real privilege to come today. It might be half built but I can absolutely see the aspiration and the values behind it and I'm very much looking forward to coming back when it opens."

Pendine Park proprietor Mario Kreft MBE said: "We really value the Commissioner's input in championing the rights of older people who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

"We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for our residents through our enrichment programme which wholeheartedly embraces the arts as means of reaching out to people."



Mario Kreft, Proprietor of Pendine Park care homes with Sarah Rochira Older People's Commissioner for Wales with from left, Helen Maiello and Gwynfor Jones from Pendine, Sam Davies, Siop Gofal Bryn Seiont and Daisy Cole Director of Wellbeing and Empowerment at Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales.

£7m dementia centre is a “benchmark” for UK



Martin Green with Mario Kreft at the Bryn Seiont site in Caernarfon.

A dementia champion appointed by Prime Minister David Cameron has described our new centre of excellence in North Wales as a “benchmark” for the rest of the UK.

Professor Martin Green was “blown away” by what he saw during a visit to the construction site where the centre is being built to provide state-of-the-art dementia care services.

He was given a guided tour of the building by Mario Kreft MBE, the proprietor of the Pendine Park Care organisation.

The centre is being built on the site of the former Bryn Seiont community hospital and will create more than 100 new jobs.

It’s hoped the bilingual centre will open in October and will also provide respite and day care in addition to the 71 beds for the people living there.

There are also plans to build 16 companion care apartments as part of a second phase of the development.

Professor Green, who is also Chief Executive of Care England, said: “I’m really impressed with this facility. In fact I come from the Department of Health in England to look at this because I think this will set a new benchmark for dementia and indeed for older people’s care.

“I’m really impressed with the building but I’m also really impressed with the philosophy of personalisation which underpins the way in which this service is going to develop in the future.

“Dementia is our biggest challenge though I think what we have to do is we have to redefine how we support people with dementia.

“We have to make sure that their services are often very personalised and that we maintain their autonomy, their control and their dignity at all times but that we do that in a safe and caring environment and I think this new facility will deliver all that.

Mario, who is also the chair of Care Forum Wales, was delighted Prof Green had taken the time to visit

the site and see for himself how the new centre was taking shape.

He said: “Bryn Seiont Newydd is going to be very much about dementia care but also taking into account those people with special mental health needs because, sadly, dementia does not come on its own.

“We’re going to have a whole range of services ranging from residential and nursing services on a 24/7 basis right through to day care respite services.

“We’re also going to be offering services to those families who need their loved ones being supported during the evening and night time so they can remain as carers during the day.

“We’re very encouraged with the recruitment process - we’re looking for what we call Pendine kind of people. We’re looking for special people.

“We have one of the most bespoke training programmes probably in existence today.

“The people we recruit will have to make sure they

adopt and believe in the Pendine values.

“Our values are essentially providing the best possible care, and care for people in their own language because obviously this is a bilingual centre which is hugely important for people with dementia.

“We want Bryn Seiont Newydd to have great care and that’s what drives our enrichment programme, our training programme and our philosophy.

“The arts will play an important part of life in Bryn Seiont as they do at all our other homes and we are keen to support community based arts initiatives.

“We have had an artist in residence for more than 20 years and we are involved in long running partnerships with both the world-renowned Hallé orchestra and Welsh National Opera.

“With that in mind, we have sponsored a series of monthly programme of concerts called TONIC at Galeri in Caernarfon, offering older people an opportunity to enjoy the arts.”

Bereaved mum enlists choir's help



Sam Davies, (right) pictured with conductor Bill Evans and Iola Lloyd Owen

A choir burst into song to help a bereaved mum raise money for the hospital that treated her daughter who died tragically young aged just 40.

Cantorion Porth-yr-Aur organised a concert sponsored by the Pendine Park care organisation to raise funds for the Renal Unit at Ysbyty Gwynedd hospital at Theatr Seilo, Caernarfon.

Elliw Llwyd Owen, 40, the daughter of choir member Iola Lloyd Owen and her husband Geraint, had been receiving dialysis at the Renal Unit for eight years after her kidneys failed.

Sadly, she passed away in February after suffering a cardiac arrest.

Iola, who has two other daughters, Ffon, 42, and Awen, 36, and ran the Welsh shop, Siop y Pentan, in Caernarfon for 15 years before she retired, said: "The dialysis kept Elliw alive for eight years longer than she would have otherwise.

"Her condition deteriorated as the years went by. It made her very tired and that meant she was at home a

lot of the time because she couldn't go out like everyone else.

"She went for dialysis at the Renal unit at Ysbyty Gwynedd three times a week and it would take four or five hours at a time."

Cantorion Porth-yr-Aur chairman Sam Davies, 64, is an information officer at Pendine Park's recruitment and information office, Siop Gofal, in High Street in the town centre.

Sam said: "We wanted to raise as much money as possible for the Renal Unit. It's an important cause because at Ysbyty Gwynedd they give a local service to people who are suffering.

"The £250 donation from Pendine Park covered the cost of putting the concert together."

Pendine Park spokesman Gwynfor Jones added: "I was touched to hear about how the Renal Unit at Ysbyty Gwynedd helped Iola's daughter Elliw before she tragically passed away, and it's incredibly important that the unit receives the support it deserves."

Couple celebrate 60th anniversary in Royal fashion

A caring couple celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in right royal style - with a telegram from the Queen.

Bill Davies, 83, and Mary Hazel Davies, 82, marked the auspicious occasion with a party our Highfield care home in Wrexham, where Mary is a resident.

Retired joiner Bill, who lives in Penycae visits her every single day. He said: "We've had a very happy life together.

"It's wonderful to have a telegram from the Queen because it's a big milestone. It's hard to believe that we've been married for so long.

"I think our marriage lasted because we're both pretty even-tempered. We never fly off the handle and we get on really well.

"We also have a lot in common. For example we both enjoy reading. She read a lot of detective novels and woman's books and I would read more factual and history books."

Susie Owen, activities coordinator at Highfield care home at Pendine Park, said: "Bill and Mary are lovely, and I'd like to congratulate them on their 60th wedding anniversary. Bill comes in to see her every day, and if anyone deserves a telegram from the Queen they do.

Bill added: "I wasn't sure what to do so Susie helped me with the application for the telegram. I sent off for it and got a reply saying that it would arrive on the anniversary.

"I think Pendine Park is very good, and Mary being here gives me peace of mind because I know that she is in good hands.

"The staff are caring. They can't help you enough and are always asking how you are and if you want a cup of tea. I couldn't praise them more highly.

Bill and Mary married in 1955 when Dreamboat by Alma Cogan was the number one song in the UK charts, and Anthony Eden was Prime Minister.

Bill said: "On the wedding day my brother Norman was meant to be best man, but there was trouble on the road, so in the end Mary's cousin Dudley stepped in to do it. We just got on with it."

The couple have two daughters, Karen, and Amanda, as well as three grandchildren, Andrew, Hannah, and Iwan.

Bill, who is originally from the town of Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria, was introduced to Mary through her cousin Dudley.

He said: "We hit it off straight away. I love everything about her - her looks and her personality. She was quiet but she definitely knew her own mind."



Carers with hearts of gold

Two care practitioners with hearts of gold have been honoured for their dedication.

Co-operative Funeral Care asked care home managers in Wrexham to nominate staff they believed went above and beyond the call of duty in their daily care of residents.

Senior care practitioner Ruthmar Gaitana and care practitioner Danielle Edwards, who work at our Highfield care home were put forward for the inaugural awards by their manager Tracey Smith.

Tracey said: "Ruthmar gives 110% all of the time and in all she does. She goes above and beyond what is required to ensure our residents receive the very best care possible.

"We operate the gold standard framework for palliative care in Highfield House and Ruthmar has been a key member of staff in implementing the values amongst her colleagues. Ruthmar deserves to be recognised for all her hard work.

"Danielle has been praised by her colleagues for the way she deals with end-of-life care. She always ensures the little important things are remembered.

"For example, when a resident sadly passed away, Danielle ensured she was dressed in the clothes they had wanted to be dressed in and she placed a flower in the deceased resident's hand and ensured their choice of music was played softly in the background before relatives visited."

"Both Ruthmar and Danielle have hearts of gold. They are important members of my team and I'm delighted with their efforts and hard work. They are excellent care practitioners who always ensure those they look after receive only the very possible best care."

Natasha Abel, a funeral arranger with Co-operative Funeral Care, in Gwersyllt, near Wrexham, presented Ruthmar and Danielle with their certificates of commendation along with a bottle of bubbly and chocolates.

She said: "With carers such as Ruthmar and Danielle it isn't a job it's a passion and a love of caring that inspires them."

A delighted Danielle, 23, said: "I love my job and don't want to work anywhere else. It's just so rewarding looking after someone that can't do things for themselves.

Ruthmar, 40, added: "There is a bond between carer and resident and we have a close working relationship with a fantastic team of colleagues.

"I know it's our actions and how we treat and care for them that allows that sense of contentment."



Ruthmar Gaitana, right and Danielle Edwards, left from Pendine Park, receive their certificates from Natasha Abel from Co-operative Funeralcare.

Caring Sabrina appointed as an Ambassador to inspire unemployed young people

A caring young woman who turned her life around on an employment scheme is going inspire others to follow in her footsteps.

Sabrina Rafferty, 19, from Gwersyllt, a care practitioner at our Hillbury House care home has become a Young Ambassador for The Prince's Trust.

She started working at Pendine Park after completing The 'Truth about Youth – Who Cares?' programme, funded by The Co-operative Foundation.

The course was run by The Prince's Trust in partnership with Pendine Park's training arm, Smartcare.

Sabrina is one of 14 young people aged between 18 and 25 who gained experience and qualifications in the care industry with the aim of helping them onto the first rung of the employment ladder. She is one of four who were given jobs at Pendine Park.

According to Sabrina, The Prince's Trust course has made a huge difference to her life.

She said: "It's been an amazing experience. It's like a big family here, and it's helped me to see my future, which is working in social care.

"I'm looking forward to meeting other young people as a Young Ambassador for The Prince's Trust and telling them my story because a lot of them will be in situation similar to the one that I was in. I'm excited about it."



Sabrina Rafferty, who works at Hillbury, will become a Prince's Trust Ambassador and is pictured with Philippa Davies from The Prince's Trust.

Resident given pamper session by beauty queen

An 86-year-old resident was given a pamper session by a beauty queen.

Ex hairdresser Miriam Hodson, 86, a resident of Hillbury care home at Pendine Park care organisation, was pampered by Miss Conwy and Denbighshire, Kerie Reveley, at the Bora Bora salon in Prestatyn.

Miriam worked at Phillips Hair Dressing in Hightown, near Liverpool, which was owned by her dad, James Phillips. She then moved to the Estee Lauder counter at Browns of Chester.

Glamorous Miriam said: "This is a new experience for me because I'm so used to doing it myself. It's very pleasant. It's a really lovely day out.

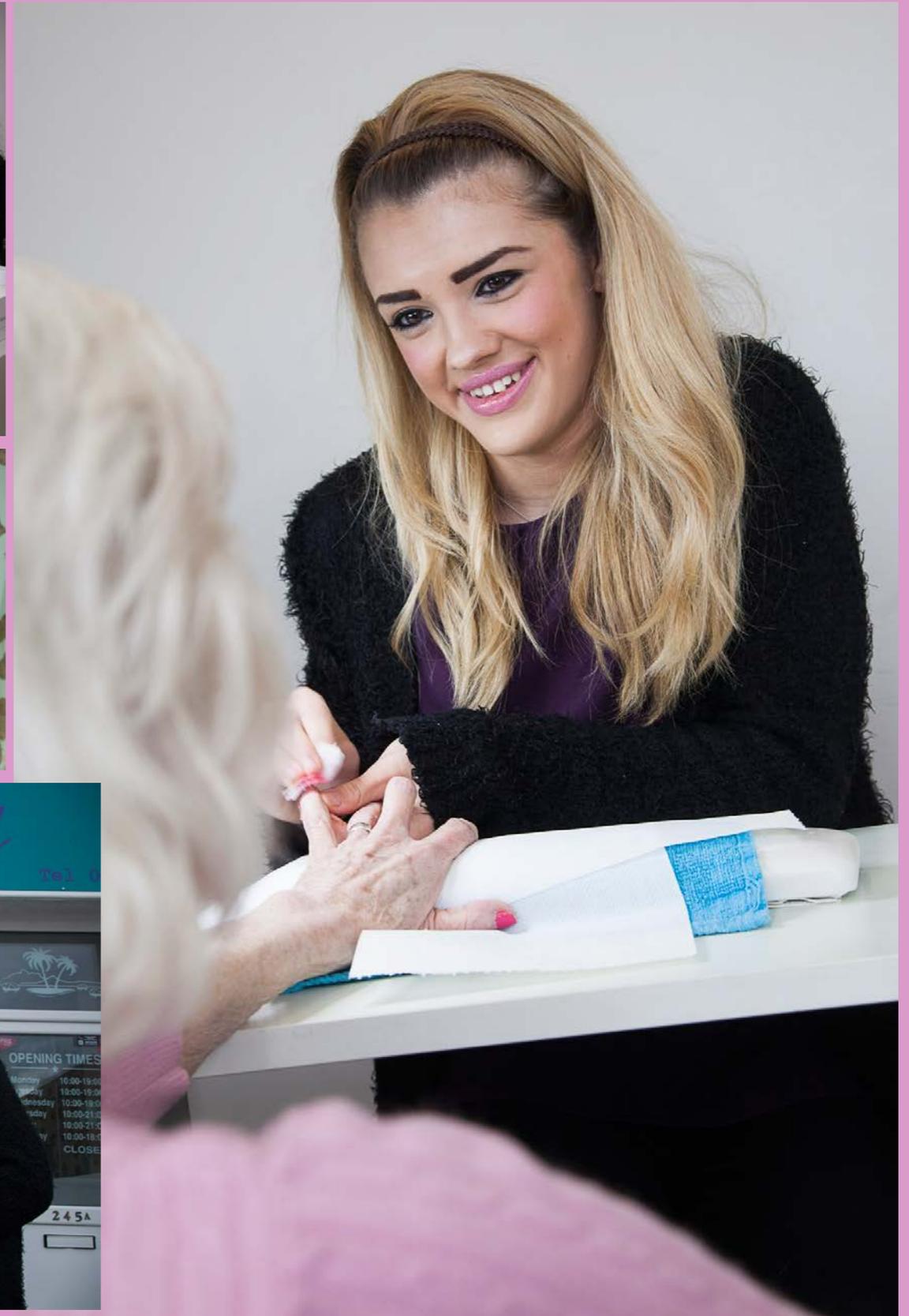
"I used to be a hair dresser. I did hair, make up, and skin care. I had a nice chat with Kerie, and a cup of tea. It was very sociable.

Kerie 22, from Prestatyn is a beautician at Bora Bora salon and was sponsored by Pendine Park to compete at the Miss Wales 2015 Grand Final.

She said: "We had a lovely conversation. We had lots to talk about because she did hair and beauty before. I picked up some tips.

"Beauty treatments are very important to elderly people. It's something therapeutic. When you do someone's nails it's very personal and you get to know them and create a bond.

Olivia Thomas, activities and wellbeing coordinator at Pendine Park said: "It's lovely for Miriam to have somebody pampering her. Because she worked in hair and beauty she always did these kind of things herself.



From left, Anita Moran and Olivia Thomas with Miriam Hudson and Kerie Reveley.

Top manager appointed to run our new centre of excellence for dementia in Caernarfon

We have appointed a manager to run our new centre of excellence for people with dementia - and hundreds of others have applied for jobs there..

Experienced care home manager Sandra Evans, 36 was inspired to apply for the position at Canolfan Bryn Seiont Newydd in Caernarfon after caring for her grandmother who has the cruel condition.

The centre is being built on the site of the former Bryn Seiont community hospital and is due to open in the autumn, creating 100 new jobs in the town.

We have been flooded with job applications from people wanting to work there.

Mother-of-three Sandra, 36, from Llanddaniel, on Anglesey, looked after her grandmother, Eleanor Burrows, 89, for several years.

She said: "The fact that I cared for my grandmother inspired me to want to care for people with dementia.

"What attracted me to Bryn Seiont was the enrichment programme using the arts in all its forms to improve the quality of life for our residents. It's going to be an integral part of what we do.

"The residents at Bryn Seiont are going to be cared for in the same way that I would want my grandmother to be cared for. I want the residents to have the very best care, to be treated with respect, dignity and for them to feel fulfilled."

The new bilingual centre and 16 extra care apartments to enable couples to stay together and people to stay independent will provide "world class" facilities.

Sandra, a former pupil of Ysgol David Hughes school earned an NVQ Level 2 in care at Coleg Menai college in Bangor before becoming a care assistant with Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council.

She then worked as a health care assistant with district nurses, helping GPs with home visits in the Caernarfon area. During that time she earned an NVQ Level 3 in care and a Level 4 Diploma.

After that she became deputy head of Plas Pengwaith Home for the Elderly in Llanberis, before becoming manager of Cartrefle care home in Llanrwst.

Sandra added: "When I looked up what Mario and Gill had done at Pendine Park I was blown away with what they're doing with their enrichment programme.

"I want people who live in Bryn Seiont to be able to live a happy and fulfilled life.

"There's enough living space for people to be able to walk about. There are secure gardens for residents to enjoy being outdoors and to take part in gardening activities."

Pendine Park proprietor Mario Kreft MBE said: "I am confident we have a manager in Sandra who can really make a difference to people's lives."



Caring Sue rubs shoulders with The Queen



A woman who organises a major awards ceremony that recognises inspirational care got to rub shoulders with The Queen.

According to Sue Thomas, mingling at a party at Buckingham Palace was an unforgettable experience.

It was a reward for all her hard work with the prestigious Wales Care Awards which honour the skill and dedication of people who work in social care.

The mum of three began work at Pendine Park as an admin clerk more than a decade ago and five years ago was promoted to personal assistant to proprietor Mario Kreft MBE.

And as part of her duties Sue took on the role of chief administrator for Care Forum Wales, a not-for-profit organisation set up to help health and care providers provide the best outcomes for those who need social care.

She was nominated for the honour by Wrexham AM Lesley Griffiths.

Sue said: "It was a lovely day and a great day out. It's one of those things you will never forget. It's definitely something to tell the grandkids about.

"I got quite close to The Queen. I was about a foot away from her and I could hear her chatting to people. She made people feel welcome

"It made you feel special. I got to meet some wonderful people. For example I met four World War Two veterans. They were so excited to be there.

"I went with my husband Darren. He had a great day, and he feels very proud. We both really enjoyed it. We were there for about three hours, but the time just flew.

"It's a real honour and I represented everyone connected with

Care Forum Wales as well as Pendine Park Care Organisation."

The annual Care Forum Wales Care Awards take a great deal of organising and Sue says it's a rolling programme as she starts work on the next as soon as the last one finishes.

She said: "Care Forum Wales works hard to raise the profile and celebrate the hard work and dedication of the social care workforce.

"The winners all receive either a gold, silver or bronze award. It's a wonderful occasion which, quite rightly, celebrates the excellent work that often goes un-noticed by the general public.

Wrexham AM Lesley Griffiths said: "Pendine Park is a fantastic organisation and a leading social care provider in our community.

"Sue personifies the excellent care and expertise the organisation provides and is a shining example of the exceptional people who care for the most vulnerable in our society."