



Top table... from left, Suzanne Collins, Dawn Gibbins and Ann-Marie Davies

Ballroom blitz raises charity stakes

Not even the rain could dampen the atmosphere at the charity gala evening hosted by Vauxhall, with more than 340 guests donning their finest threads to attend the first celebration of International Women's Day at the Wirral's plush Hillbark Hotel in mid-June.

Organised by the plant's Communications and HR teams and the unions, the aim of the event was to put International Women's Day on the agenda in the North West, as well as to raise funds for local charities working with women who have been affected by domestic violence or sexual abuse.

Brookside stars Suzanne Collins and Ann-Marie Davies lead the proceedings, while Veuve Cliquot Business Woman of the Year 2003, Dawn Gibbins, provided the keynote speech before



Belles of the ball... the organising committee

guests enjoyed the live entertainment.

Phil Millward, GM UK Employee Relations Director, said: "The evening was a great success which was unsurprising considering the outstanding support we had from local industry, trade union and government bodies. We succeeded in raising the profile of International Women's Day and look forward

to building momentum and publicity over future years."

The evening raised over £18,000 for Chester Women's Aid, Ellesmere Port Women's Service, Amadudu Women's Refuge and RASA.

■ For more information visit about International Women's Day, go to www.internationalwomensday.com

We all deserve a break



Ellesmere Port's Chris Gleeson looks forward to the summer shutdown

It's that time of year when most of the workforce, go traipsing around the world for another season of sun, sand, sangria... and sunburn.

For those of us left behind on these hallowed shores we hope the weather improves somewhat (it needs to). I'm staying put this year but I still hear the usual destinations talked about by my colleagues – Spain, Greece, Turkey and the usual suspects.

After a conversation with my mate Shaun about his holiday destination this year he convinced me where my partner and I should go next year – Lindos on the Greek isle of Rhodes. He's been there before and completely sold me on the idea.

Am I just a little bit envious of his plans? You bet I am!

But never mind, Southampton, London and a jaunt up a Welsh mountain will suffice during my three week break. I've got a waterproof coat, a thermos, a good pair of sturdy boots and a torch. Oh! And if we get lost in the capital maybe Liz will give us a cup of tea and point us in the right direction.

Joking aside, everyone deserves a break from the long slog of the past 12 months. What's more, the changes we've been through and the big changes to come will make exotic adventure even more tempting. Even the miserable few who never want to spend the money might be tempted.

Happy holidays!

