

Welcome to IMAS M&A Monthly – September 2011  
*Highlighting key deals and trends in the UK financial services industry*

## General Insurance

Lloyd's insurer **Omega** continued to attract attention from **Haverford**, **Canopus** and **Barbican** looking to merge or acquire a stake, whilst insurance group **Torus** confirmed its purchase of Lloyd's underwriting business **Broadgate**. **Ryan Specialty** completed the acquisition of specialist insurer Lloyd's insurer **Jubilee**.

US-based **McLarens Young International** announced the acquisition of **Airclaims**, the aerospace claims management and consultancy business from **LDC** and **CIGNA** agreed to acquire white-label insurance service business **FirstAssist** from **Barclays Private Equity**. **LDC** also exited their investment in loss adjuster **Davies** in a £60m private equity deal with **Electra Partners**.

Other players continuing to make infill acquisitions included **Tawa**, the UK-listed run-off acquirer, as well as **CCV** (two deals). **Tawa** also played a role in the consortium, alongside **Paraline** and **Skuld**, that is to acquire **Whittington** with management becoming equity investors.

Finally, **IMAS** advised AIM-listed insurance broker **Cobra** on the disposal of its broking operations in Caterham and Alton to **Aston Scott** for up to £8.2m.

## Investment Related

**Punter Southall** acquired **Brewin Dolphin's** corporate pensions arm whilst **Investec** confirmed a £230m share-based recommended offer for **Evolution**, the asset manager and investment bank and the **London Metal Exchange** has received several approaches. However, volatile market conditions continue to impact deal activity with James Hay parent **IFG** and **Bregal Capital** citing this reason for discontinuing discussions.

IFAs also remain active with **Paradigm** to become a shareholder in wrap platform **Nucleus**, **Gaea Partnership** merging with charity fund manager **Castlefield** and further infill acquisitions for **Perspective Financial**, **Jones Sheridan** and **SG Wealth Management**.

Private equity has also been active with **Cognetas** rejecting **Charterhouse's** approach to acquire its portfolio and **Axa Private Equity** up for sale.

## Lending

The **Co-Op Group**, **Sun Capital** and **NBNK** continue to assess bids for **Lloyds Bank's** branch disposal including the C&G and Intelligent Finance brands plus a share of UK current accounts. **NBNK** and **Sun Capital** are also understood to have looked at the UK assets of **National Australia Bank** (Clydesdale & Yorkshire Banks) ahead of final bids for Lloyds. The FSA has now approved the **Yorkshire** and **Norwich & Peterborough** building society merger to complete on 1 November 2011.

**Cyrus Capital** (formerly Och-Ziff Friedheim) acquired a majority stake in UK contingency collection services business **Sigma Financial Group** and **Bluestone Group** acquired debt collection agency **Close Credit Management**. **Vårde Partners** have acquired non-standard credit card provider **SAV Credit** from **Palamon / Morgan Stanley / Electra** and are also an investor in debt purchaser **Experto Credite** which acquired the UK credit management operations of **Intrum Justitia**.

## Support Services (Financial)

**Wells Fargo** is to acquire **LaCrosse Global Fund Services**, the hedge fund administration business, from **Cargill** whilst the **London Stock Exchange** looks set to acquire **LCH.Clearnet**. Dublin-based trading technology business **Frontier FX** was also acquired by **FXDD Malta**.

Private equity also continued its activity with **Reed Elsevier** agreeing to acquire **Investcorp's** US-based financial services data solutions business **Acuity**, **Carlyle's** acquisition of trading monitoring software business **ITRS** and **Equiniti** (owned by **Advent**) acquiring the Corporate and Employee Services dealing division from **NatWest** Stockbrokers.