

Sanwa portfolio sold

The European aviation portfolio of *Sanwa* which was booked out of London – with a par value of circa £900m – was bought last week by the, *Banca Italiana Commerciale*. Ian Hosier, head of structured finance at *Sanwa*, will be joining the Italian bank later in the spring. It is expected that Hosier will make the move once all the documentation and transfers have been undertaken. As much as possible will have to be transferred by the Japanese bank's end of financial year on March 31, as stipulated in the deal by *Sanwa*.

When Hosier moves across he will become head of the bank's aviation team, see *People & Markets this issue*. Until that time the transfer is being looked after by Nicola Higham at BCI. Higham, ex-IBJ, joined the bank's structured finance two weeks ago in expectation of the bank buying the portfolio. The structured finance team at BCI of which the aviation team is a part, under Dr Richard Adams, has direct reporting lines into the bank's head office in Milan.

It is clear that BCI intends to enter the aviation financing market as a fully fledged arranger and that the team will be beefed up in the coming months to that end. However, what is not clear at this stage is whether or not the bank will choose to securitise the portfolio it has just bought.

There still remains at *Sanwa* a circa £250m aircraft portfolio that was booked out of North America. This was an optional part of the deal (TF127, p6) and although not part of the current agreement between BCI and *Sanwa*, the Italian bank has not ruled out a buy at a later stage. But this portion is still up for sale and it remains to be seen where it will end up.

Clifford Chance and White & Case advised *Sanwa* on the sale of the portfolio. Allen & Overy acted for the Tokyo and London offices of BCI in the transaction.