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## Client events on the horizon

### What lies beyond the End of the Pier Fairground?

The horizon, of course, and, for Incasso LLP clients, it's full of exciting possibilities.

Once again the Gentlemen's Club – held earlier this year in Leeds – beckons with a Best of British Race Night on January 25. After a drinks reception and a dinner with a Best of

British theme, there will be the opportunity to lay fun bets on a series of horse and greyhound races. The most successful punter will win a prize. Going to the dogs has never sounded so appealing!

A couple of months later there will be a Salsa Night for our famous Ladies Evening on March 22 when Salsa teachers will help you to step in the right direction.

Strictly Come Dancing, it isn't, but a delicious Mediterranean meal accompanied by Sangria will make it a hugely enjoyable night!

To secure your invitation to either event – both to be held at the Queen's Hotel in Leeds – please call Jessica Peacock on 0845 404 1907 or e-mail [jpeacock@incasso.co.uk](mailto:jpeacock@incasso.co.uk)

## The seer at the end of the pier

Our client event, the End of the Pier Fairground, was a great success with Angela, the resident clairvoyant, proving particularly popular.

There was a queue for her crystal ball-gazing, palm reading and Tarot Card readings – but, with her skills, she could no doubt have seen it coming!

Among the other attractions were a coconut shy, hoop-la, hook-a-duck, a shooting rifle stall, candyfloss and hot dogs.

The rifle stall proved as popular with the men as the clairvoyant proved with the women. But, at least according to some of the 100 or so guests, the women proved better shots than the men – and even

Angela couldn't have foreseen that.

All the fun of the fair – held at the Queen's Hotel in Leeds – was recorded by a caricaturist who gave guests sketches of themselves to take home, along with happy (if, in some cases, slightly blurred) memories of a great night.



The End of the Pier – on dry land in Leeds!



Roll up! Roll up!



The beer on the Pier.

*Have a good one!*

A Merry Christmas to all our readers. We wish you all a peaceful festive season and prosperous 2007.

If you have any comments on Angles, or would like us to cover a particular topic, please contact Jessica Peacock on 0845 404 1907 or e-mail [jpeacock@incasso.co.uk](mailto:jpeacock@incasso.co.uk).



# angles

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## Top of the league



For the first time, Incasso LLP has moved up to the top of the debt recovery league in Yorkshire.

It was ranked first equal in the region in the latest edition of the authoritative publication, Chambers and Partners UK Guide.

Chambers commented: "The market spoke favourably of this practice's excellent recovery rates, 'professional and honest' outlook and 'accessibility' in dealing with each stage of the debt recovery process. The 40-strong team is divided in three to provide services in trace, legal and collections, including recourse to insolvency procedures and winding-up orders.

"Incasso offers a sophisticated online Internet instruction service and individually tailored consultancy

sessions that were 'so good', according to one client, 'the firm's training was immediately recommended to senior management'.

"In the past twelve months, the firm has increased its fees turnover by more than a third through growing its client base and receiving additional instructions from existing clients."

Chambers also noted that Incasso is retained by several local authorities including Blackpool Council, Salford City Council and Wakefield District Council.

Commercial clients named by Chambers included Q-Park; CD Bramall; DHL; Driver Hire; Caversham Finance and Royal & SunAlliance.

At the same time, fee income, which in April 2006 smashed through the £2m barrier for the first time, has been growing strongly.

In the six months to the end of October, turnover had risen to £1.2m, an increase of almost 30% on the same period the previous year. The organisation is well on track to meet its target of £2.4m by April 2007.

Ron Lack, Incasso LLP's Department Manager, said: "It's very gratifying to see Chambers acknowledging our success and also to see our fee income growing so quickly. To have come so far from virtually nothing 11 years ago is absolutely fantastic. We are now reaping the rewards of all our hard work over the years.

"Chambers' recognition demonstrates that our brand and reputation are both really well established in the market place and that we are seen as a major player in the sector.

"It shows that we really have differentiated ourselves by adding significant value to our clients in a variety of ways."

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## Are your enforcement methods restricted?

New statistics from the Court Service shows that creditors are increasingly using Charging Orders as an enforcement method, and a way of seeking to recover unpaid accounts.

"There is a clear trend towards the greater use of Charging Orders and Orders for Sale, not just by commercial organisations but also local government departments. We have seen a noticeable increase in our clients using this enforcement method, with recent interest from financial organisations, utilities and telecommunications companies" said Mark Taylor, Business Development Manager of Incasso LLP.

"But they shouldn't be seen as the only or even the best method of enforcement for creditors. We are always careful to evaluate a variety of options for our clients to consider. This is where our experience in being aware of the pros and cons of different methods is particularly valuable."

Mark pointed out that charging orders in general had risen in the UK from around 35,000 in 2003 to almost 66,000 in two years.

In the current climate of rising house prices and mounting consumer debt, securing debt through the charging order process is becoming increasingly popular.

The increase in figures shows that creditors are seeking to target relevant assets, and if necessary apply to courts for an order for sale. An enforcement method that targets a debtor's main, if not only asset makes perfect sense for creditors.

In the past Charging Orders were simply viewed as a way to secure a charge on property, resulting in instalments and the balance being paid when the property was sold. Our recent experience shows that debtors are more willing to enter into arrangements at an earlier stage or make payment to prevent a restriction being registered.

## Gone – but not forgotten

Not every employee departs from a business leaving a trail of goodwill in their wake.

Some leave only a trail of debt and, if you're unlucky, it could be you who is left picking up the bill.

It might be balances due under staff loans for cars or course fees which they are reluctant to repay. It might be some company property which the employee has failed to return or an overpayment of wages or salary.

Either way, doing nothing could leave a hole in your pocket. It may also give a signal to existing employees that it's O.K. to leave owing your organisation money because no recovery action will be taken.

But is it worth pursuing that rogue employee who is now gone – but not forgotten?

Clearly, it depends on the circumstances of each particular case. If the employee is now unemployed and receiving benefits, recovery action is not advisable.



In other circumstances, it is. We are happy to discuss such cases with you and, to offer you a fixed fee service so your liability for legal costs is known at the outset.

We also offer other services to HR and payroll professionals including:

- **Collections** – a pre-legal recovery service, chasing for payment by letter and telephone, based on pre-agreed collections flow-paths

- **Legal Recovery** – using the County Court Claims Production Centre, which enables us to offer guaranteed turnaround times and discounts on court fees
- **Insolvency Service** – using insolvency procedures such as bankruptcy and winding up proceedings as effective debt recovery tools
- **Consultancy Service** – for an independent review of your business practices or for help with specific credit management or debt recovery problems
- **Outsourcing** – for clients who do not have sufficient resources to deal with credit control and debt recovery themselves
- **Trace** – for locating debtors who have left their last known address and carrying out enquiries to confirm their employment or financial status.

## How Kirklees learned to please



Four years ago Kirklees Council was the worst in West Yorkshire at collecting council tax. Today it is the best, with its collection rate standing at a record 96.43%.

Such a turnaround, achieved with assistance from Incasso LLP, has now received national recognition from the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) which awarded Kirklees a 'Highly Commended' certificate in its Revenues Team of the Year awards.

Staff working for the Revenues and Benefits service and the council's

contact centre, Kirklees Direct, also won the IRRV's 'Excellence in Customer Care' award.

Cllr David Hall, Kirklees Cabinet member responsible for the Revenues and Benefits service, said: "Our double achievement at the IRRV Team of the Year finals is excellent news. It demonstrates that the professional experts recognise Kirklees Council's Revenues and Benefits service and Kirklees Direct to be amongst the best in the country."

"We are always working to improve our service still further and I am delighted that the hard work from our staff has been recognised."

## Early success for ledger collect-out service

A specialist service launched by Incasso LLP earlier this year, aimed at collecting the debts of companies which have gone into administration, has enjoyed early success.

The service is used by banks and other financial institutions, (also their advisors and insolvency practitioners) who have offered their own invoice discounting or factoring facilities to the companies concerned.

In one case, where the company in administration had a debtor ledger of £780,000, the bank believed it was realistic to recover around £300,000. With the help of Incasso LLP's ledger collect-out service, some £500,000 was recovered.

"This is not an isolated example. There have been other cases where we have exceeded the expectations of the client at what is a very sensitive time for the companies in administration," said Laura Geall, Collections Manager.

"We visit the companies and obtain their debtor ledger paperwork. Wherever possible, we also upload their ledger electronically.

"We then begin chasing the debts, starting with a letter to debtors outlining what has happened and how we have been appointed to collect the outstanding money.

"That letter has proved very effective in encouraging people to pay the full balance, including invoices which may not be due for immediate payment.

Getting through to the finals with two teams has been a real morale booster for the whole service."

To reach the finals, service staff produced a report to highlight improvements undertaken over the past 12 months, together with those planned in future. After being short-listed, they provided a presentation and display to the IRRV awards panel who recently visited Kirklees.

The awards panel looked for organisations which were raising standards of service to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction, excellence in service delivery and a customer focused service.

Graham Beckett, Acting Head of Revenues and Benefits at Kirklees, added: "Part of the credit for our commendation in the awards must go to Incasso LLP with whom we have been working in partnership for several years."

"They have helped us raise a significant amount of revenue in the past and long may it continue. Together, we have achieved year-on-year improvements in our council tax collection performance."

Incasso LLP has been particularly active in assisting the council at bankruptcy petition and charging order hearings, and handling cases beyond that point.

"The letter explains very clearly why we are involved and where payment needs to be made.

"Our focus is to collect as much cash as we can, as quickly and as efficiently as possible, without being distracted by disputes."

All monies received are paid into the dedicated account of the client, providing real-time recovery reports.

"Simply put, we take full control of the recovery process, removing the hassle from the client," added Laura.

**To find out more about the service, please call Laura Geall on 0845 404 1903.**