

# A YEAR OF INVESTMENT TRUST NEWSLETTER



*There is a certain rhythm to each year for subscribers to the newsletter, with special features built in to the calendar at certain times. With the newsletter our aim is to gradually educate and inform, and to build on existing knowledge incrementally as we continue, referring back to previous advice and commentary. For this reason we think of the annual subscription very much as a twelve-month cycle, with integral one-off elements as part of the journey. Here's an explanation of a typical year.*

Whether or not you are a believer in New Year's resolutions, the turn of the calendar year is for many a time of reflection and renewal, and it is no different for investments. This is a punctuation mark in time when the markets are quiet, providing an opportunity to consider whether existing holdings are performing as expected, or whether some portfolio changes may position you better for the year ahead. The **January** issue is a one-off special that mainly comprises a whistle-stop tour of the entire sector, looking at one, three, and five year performance tables to identify the leaders and laggards in their peer groups. Where there are surprises we will try to explain why, and give an opinion on whether to act. This wide-ranging issue gives us a chance to touch on a large number of trusts right across the sector, some of which we may not otherwise mention very often. It also sets us up nicely for the year, with a good context to understand everything that is currently happening or expected to happen during the eleven months ahead.



**February** reverts to the normal structure, with manager interviews, updated opinions from the barrage of information released at the start of the year, and news updates. We also report on the annual Winterflood investment trust conference, which has been a diary fixture for many years.



**March** is another landmark issue, in which we give a number of specific recommendations (although we do give buy, sell, and hold advice throughout the year). Whilst many investment newsletters give annual tips at the start of the year, ours are reserved for the ISA season. The idea is that subscribers can add these shares to their portfolios either at the end of the ISA season in March, or at the start of the next one in April. We review the performance of previous recommendations, with updated opinions, and then reveal our new picks.

The second quarter months of **April, May and June** are often busy periods for IPOs, which we cover in the newsletter, and we carry on with our usual business of gathering market intelligence, sifting stockbrokers' research, and meeting managers. We share the results of our market access with our subscribers, who would not otherwise be able to find this depth of research that is often reserved for market professionals.

At some point between April and July we also publish our annual **Statistical Supplement** – a little A5 booklet filled with performance tables that has proven very popular. It may be the only printed source of its kind now that most other paper-based publications have disappeared. This began as a marketing aid, intended to be a one-off snapshot of the market in 2015. Subscribers soon let us know how much they liked it though, and so we have produced it annually ever since. We know from the positive feedback that for many investors it is an invaluable help to which they can refer for a long time.



The quieter summer months of **July** and **August**, when we typically have fewer manager meetings, give us time to pause for breath and catch up with outstanding trusts we have been wanting to cover, or perhaps to look at specific sectors in more detail. The market does not stop for summer holidays, and nor do we.

Over the course of twelve months we usually comment on the majority of trusts that would be of interest to subscribers. We try to strike a balance between popular mainstream trusts that may be widely held, and more esoteric trusts that may not yet be on investors' radars. We include income and growth trusts, and both equity and alternative assets: the whole investment trust realm comes under our microscope.

Once **September** comes around, we are back into the full swing of the autumn IPO and secondary fund-raising season, and frequently a period of greater market volatility as well, meaning the **October** and **November** newsletters can be particularly useful for navigating additional volatility and assessing new opportunities.

The **December** newsletter includes a round-up of the winners from the main awards ceremonies that honour the best performing investment trusts, helping us to validate choices already made and ensure we have covered the sector's main winners. In the past as well we have provided subscribers with an annual PDF of the year's newsletters in one document, but now subscribers can find all back copies online, free of charge.



*That's a flavour of a typical year, if such a thing exists. The tune may have changed each year of publication since we began in 1996, but we can still keep a regular beat to ensure subscribers know what they will be receiving. Of course we also react to market events and circumstances, report on regulatory or legal changes, and try to keep subscribers up to date with all of the key influences on investment trust prices. There is always plenty to say, and whenever we have extra material, we post it on our members' website, included as part of the subscription.*



*This publication is a general guide only and does not contain any investment advice.*

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