

Third Quarter Report

September 2021

- Dollar Fund
- Real Return Fund
- Absolute Return Fund
- Capital Gearing Portfolio Fund

Third Quarter Report



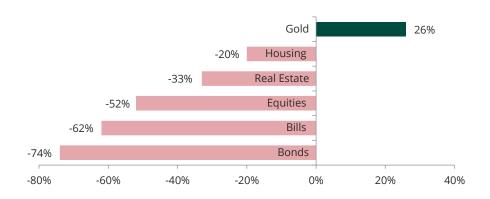
General Commentary

September 2021

Dimson & Marsh's rather dismal statistics (see chart below) on the historic returns in a large number of markets over 111 years suggest that elevated inflation is unhelpful to the prospective returns in almost all asset classes. That includes so-called hard assets which are often represented as a place to hide. Why is it that the impact of inflation is so negative?

The first and most important reason is that nominal interest rates rise. Take UK house prices, among the most resilient of asset classes. Currently the average house price is a little over 8x average earnings. At existing mortgage rates that is sustainable, with first time buyers in March 2021 paying about 1/3 of their net income in mortgage payments; with a 2-year fixed rate at 1.56%, at 90% LTV. Since then the rate has actually fallen to 1.20% which explains why prices continue to be so buoyant even in the face of subsidy withdrawals. If inflation rises and the Bank of England is forced to raise rates, then affordability deteriorates pretty fast. Even doubling the 2-year fixed rate to 2.4%, hardly a high rate historically, puts a significant pressure on household finances. So even if real interest rates fall, the equilibrium price for housing also falls, possibly even in nominal terms if both inflation and nominal rates rise.

Regression of annual real return vs. same year inflation 1900-2011 ¹



One characteristic of that process that has broader significance is that liabilities of the same maturity have shorter duration if the interest rate rises. So, a borrower at a 10% coupon when inflation is 10% can be thought of as paying no real interest rate but having to repay 10% of the capital value of the loan each year over on a long-term loan. The shortening of duration, as inflation rises, increases refinancing risk and increases the fragility of highly indebted markets, including equities.

Perhaps more relevant to equities is the tendency of both corporate managers and investors to think in nominal rather real terms. Famously, Warren Buffett asserted that in the inflation of the 1970's the (nominal) return on equity did not rise. Subsequent studies suggest that that was an exaggeration, but ROE's did not rise by enough to compensate for the higher inflation. Equally, investors tended in the 1970's to discount future earnings at the high nominal rates rather than low real rates. I can recall discussions 30 years ago as to whether a quality stock was overpriced at 8 times after tax earnings.

¹ Credit Suisse Global Investment Returns Yearbook 2012, Dimson and Marsh

² http://www.valueinvesting.de/warren-buffett-on-inflation/



Third Quarter Report

General Commentary

September 2021

Part of the reason for those low valuations was the uncertainty that came with inflation; uncertainty as to future levels of inflation, uncertainty over political strains from the unfortunate distributional effects of inflation; and uncertainty over the timing and extent of the monetary and fiscal austerity that would eventually be needed to control it.

This is all on top of the impact on inflation on the effective rate of corporate rax. The most dramatic example was in the UK in 1973 and 1974, when FIFO accounting meant that manufacturing companies were paying tax on the sale of goods where most or sometimes all of the profit was an inventory gain; the squeeze on cash flow was devastating and only a switch in one of several budgets in 1974 that moved tax on to LIFO basis avoided large scale bankruptcies. After such a long period of negative inflation, it seems likely that many such traps will be revealed as inflation grows.

Dimson & Marsh's categories are of course very broad. Commercial offices are not like residential flats. Indeed, office rents where we are in the City have not materially moved in 30 years. Residential rents have more than kept pace with inflation. So, we hope that we can find strong inflation-proofed streams of income in specialised real estate and infrastructure that will perform relatively well. Careful assessments of the capital value put on those cash flows will be essential.

Of course, the one asset class that was differentiated was gold. TIPS did not exist, but we would be comfortable that they too would outperformed and indeed expect the financial repression that is likely will produce further capital gains in real terms. Gold has a role, but for us a comparatively minor one, given the elevated starting price. But overall, it will take some luck as well as sound analysis to produce positive real returns for investors if indeed inflation does accelerate over the next few years. Dimson & Marsh's chart illustrates the challenge.

Peter Spiller

October 2021

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Third Quarter Report

Dollar Fund

September 2021

The Efficient Market Hypothesis (EMH) is a much maligned element of financial theory. However, in its weaker formulations it is much less controversial and simply says that, in finance, there are very few free lunches. The metaphorical \$100 bill on the sidewalk is indeed most likely to be fake. In that context the outperformance of TIPS vs. nominal bonds over the past 20 years presents something of a puzzle. The level of outperformance has been as extraordinary (178% vs. 114%) as it has been persistent. Why did TIPS perform better in an era of mild inflation? How can this be rationalised and why haven't investors noticed and competed the excess returns away?

First one must understand how those differences arose. Breakevens have risen over the period from 1.25% in October 2021 to 2.65% today. Rising breakevens are associated with TIPS outperforming nominal bonds. Duration considerations have also played a part: the TIPS index is longer than the nominal index and the last 20 years has been characterised by falling yields, which the longer duration TIPS will have benefitted from. The lower coupons on TIPS – and therefore their greater convexity – should have reinforced this trend.

These excess returns, however, are the "common or garden" variety and pose no obvious problem to EMH adherents. It is a third area of excess return that is more interesting: the difference between expected and realised inflation over that period. We have used the 2 year breakeven inflation rate as a proxy for the TIPS market's short term inflation forecasts. This has averaged 1.5% over the period. Actual inflation was 2.1% - a full 60bps per annum higher. Of course, the latter has undershot the former from time to time, but the general trend is clear and persistent: markets underestimated short run inflation.

Surprisingly, this oversight was unique to the TIPS market. Professional forecasters of inflation (as surveyed by the Philadelphia Fed) estimated average short term inflation of 2.1% over the period. This is an impressive feat of prognostication, though perhaps not quite sufficient to warrant a retraction from JK Galbraith.²

How can we rationalise this? First, it isn't quite accurate to say that the breakeven is the market's implied inflation forecast. At least, it isn't *only* that. It can also be thought of as containing an illiquidity premium (TIPS are less liquid than conventional treasuries) which should push breakevens lower. In addition, breakevens should include an insurance premium (given the presence of the par floor, TIPS provide an asymmetric bet on inflation). This latter should raise breakevens. Both these elements are hard to quantify, but we judge the latter to be more valuable than the former, so the puzzle remains.

We are left with the conclusion that TIPS are structurally underowned, perhaps because investors think in nominal terms and don't like the nominal uncertainty that arises from holding a real instrument. Should this change, and investors' preference for nominal bonds become outweighed by their desire for inflation protection, as seems plausible in an inflationary environment, then the outperformance of TIPS vs. nominal bonds should increase. The case, at least in the short to medium term, for TIPS to continue to outperform nominals looks strong.

¹ Attacks on the World Trade Centre had just happened and breakevens were anomalously low that particular month

 $^{^{\}rm 2}$ "The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable" – J K Galbraith

Dollar Fund



Fund information as at:

Fund price:

Status:

30th September 2021

£174.30

Open

Investment objective

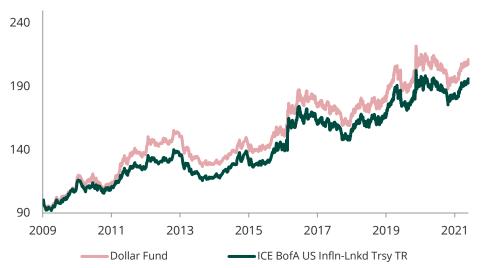
To achieve real returns through long only investment in Treasury Inflation Protected Securities (US government index linked bonds).

Fund information	
Fund Size	£1,045m
Class Size	£324m
Dividend Yield	< 2%
Management Fee < £1bn	0.25%
Management Fee > £1bn	0.15%
Total Expense Ratio	0.34%

Return history (total returns)				
1 month	1.2%	2020	8.6%	
3 months	4.3%	2019	4.9%	
6 months	8.5%	2018	4.9%	
Year to date	3.9%	2017	-6.3%	
1 year	-0.4%	2016	24.2%	

Largest holdings	
US I/L 0.375% 15/07/27	4.4%
US I/L 0.125% 15/04/25	3.9%
US I/L 0.75% 15/02/45	3.5%
US I/L 1.00% 15/02/46	3.5%
US I/L 0.625% 15/01/26	3.5%

Performance since inception (total return)



Credit ratings	
AAA	100%
AA	0%
A	0%
BBB	0%
BB and below	0%

Characteristics	
Number of bonds	46
Yield to Maturity (real)	-1.2%
Average Maturity	9.3 Yrs
Average coupon (real)	0.95%
Composite rating	AAA

Duration history		
30 Sep 21	8.5	
30 Sep 20	10.3	
30 Sep 19	8.9	
30 Sep 18	7.4	
30 Sep 17	6.8	
30 Sep 16	5.9	



Dollar Fund (GBP Hedged)

Fund information as at:

Fund price:

Status:

30th September 2021

£110.13

Open

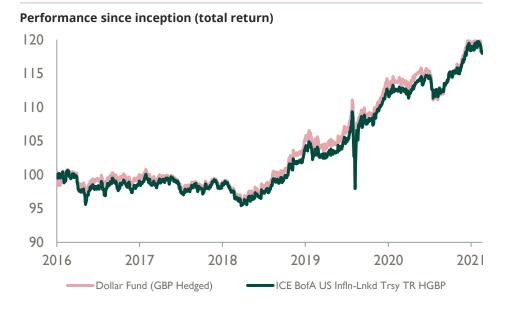
Investment objective

To achieve real returns through long only investment in Treasury Inflation Protected Securities (US government index linked bonds). All US dollar currency exposure is hedged back to Pound Sterling.

£1,045m
£628m
< 2%
0.25%
0.15%
0.34%

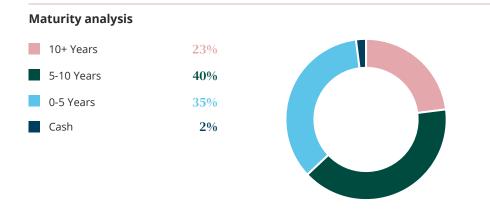
Return history (total returns)			
-0.9%	2020	10.5%	
1.7%	2019	7.4%	
6.1%	2018	-2.6%	
2.7%	2017	1.4%	
4.0%	2016	-1.5%	
	-0.9% 1.7% 6.1% 2.7%	-0.9% 2020 1.7% 2019 6.1% 2018 2.7% 2017	

Largest holdings	
US I/L 0.375% 15/07/27	4.4%
US I/L 0.125% 15/04/25	3.9%
US I/L 0.75% 15/02/45	3.5%
US I/L 1.00% 15/02/46	3.5%
US I/L 0.625% 15/01/26	3.5%



100%
0%
0%
0%
0%

Characteristics	
Number of bonds	46
Yield to Maturity (real)	-1.4%
Average Maturity	9.3 Yrs
Average coupon (real)	0.9%
Composite rating	AAA



Duration history		
30 Sep 21	8.6	
30 Sep 20	10.3	
30 Sep 19	8.9	
30 Sep 18	7.4	
30 Sep 17	6.8	
30 Sep 16	5.9	

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Third Quarter Report

Real Return Fund

September 2021

On Wednesday 20th October Jens Weidmann announced that he would step down as head of Germany's central bank, a mere two years into his second eight year term. It is always dangerous in investing to read too much into a single event. Nevertheless, this does seem significant. Dismissed by Mario Draghi as being nein zu allem,1 Weidmann cut a lonely figure as a hawk on the ECB governing council. His resignation letter- by the gnomic standards of central bank utterances - is unusually candid². He frets that monetary policy needs to respect "its narrow mandate and does not get caught in the wake of fiscal policy or the financial markets" and laments that "emergency monetary policy measures were also associated with considerable side affects". He also makes clear the personal struggles that he faced during the "sometimes difficult discussions of the past years".

Why do we judge this to be significant? He was the last of the hawkish central bankers of any major central bank.³ Doves are in the ascendancy in all spheres of economic thinking: central banks, government treasuries, academia and commentariat. At our investor day⁴ Peter's contention was that it is precisely when the fear of inflation is dead (and the pursuit of full employment at the forefront of central banker's aims) that its risk of resurgence is greatest.

We have always held that the Euro project would ultimately be doomed without one of two things happening. Either the Eurozone countries must commit to full fiscal union, or Germany needs to become less competitive with respect to the other Eurozone members. Given that it cannot adjust its currency it can only do this by reversing the wage restraint (and, more generally, price restraint) that has typified its behaviour since introduction of the Euro.

There are signs that both these things are now happening. Producer price inflation in Germany is in double digits, the highest level since 1977, and CPI is at 4.1%, comfortably above the level prevailing in the wider Eurozone. The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has brought the first hints of fiscal union. The EU Commission's NextGenerationEU debt programme plans to issue up to EUR 800 bn by 2026 in bonds that are jointly backed by the member states, debt which the ECB has started buying.

Such changes do not preclude another sovereign debt crisis, indeed Italy's fiscal position has never looked more precarious. But large scale fiscal transfers through grant funding from the EU Commission will certainly alleviate pressures on weaker members. Debt mutualisation has always been a red line among the northern European members. The NextGenerationEU fund blurs, if not crosses, that red line.

If an existential crisis for the EU is less likely does that require us to reconsider our underweight bet on the Euro? Not yet. The risks of such a crisis hasn't completely receded. And should these policies be successful in stimulating inflation both in Germany and in weaker member states, it is hard to envisage the Euro strengthening against the dollar.

^{1 &}quot;No to everything"

 $^{^2\} https://www.bundesbank.de/en/press/press-releases/letter-from-the-president-to-bundesbank-staff-877834$

³ We cannot think of another but would welcome any counterfactuals examples!

⁴You can see his slides at www.cgasset.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Investor-Day-presentation-2021.pdf and watch his talk at https://vimeo.com/623524336



Real Return Fund

Fund information as at:

Fund price:

Status:

30th September 2021

£210.80

Open

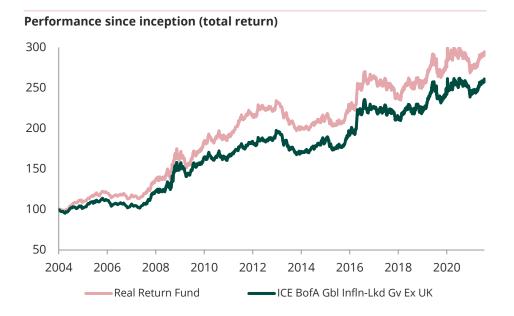
Investment objective

To achieve real returns through long only investment into a global portfolio of government index linked bonds outside the United Kingdom.

Fund information	
Fund Size	£614m
Dividend Yield	< 3%
Management Fee < £500m	0.30%
Management Fee > £500m	0.20%
Total Expense Ratio	0.39%

Return histo	ry (tota	returns)	
1 month	1.0%	2020	8.0%
3 months	3.7%	2019	2.6%
6 months	7.3%	2018	3.5%
Year to date	2.6%	2017	-4.4%
1 year	-0.5%	2016	22.9%

Largest holdings	
US I/L 1.00% 15/02/46	3.8%
US I/L 2.00% 15/01/26	3.8%
US I/L 2.375% 15/01/27	3.6%
US I/L 0.75% 15/02/45	3.4%
US I/L 1.375% 15/02/44	3.3%



Credit ratings	
AAA	100%
AA	0%
A	0%
BBB	0%
BB and below	0%

Characteristics	
Number of bonds	66
Yield to Maturity (real)	-1.2%
Average Maturity	9.2 Yrs
Average coupon (real)	1.3%
Composite rating	AAA

Asset allocation



Duration history 30 Sep 21 8.6 30 Sep 20 8.6 30 Sep 19 7.6 30 Sep 18 6.4 30 Sep 17 6.2 30 Sep 16 5.6



Real Return Fund (GBP Hedged)

Fund information as at:

Fund price:

Status:

30th September 2021

£104.84

Open

Investment objective

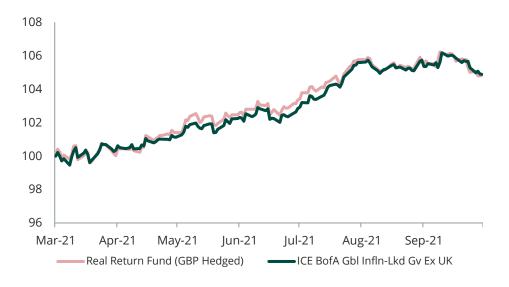
To achieve real returns through long only investment into a global portfolio of government index linked bonds outside the United Kingdom.

Fund information	
Fund Size	£614m
Class Size	£142m
Dividend Yield	< 3%
Management Fee < £500m	0.30%
Management Fee > £500m	0.20%
Total Expense Ratio	0.39%

Return histo	ry (total	returns)	
1 month	-0.7%	2020	N/A
3 months	1.4%	2019	N/A
6 months	4.8%	2018	N/A
Year to date	0.0%	2017	N/A
1 year	0.0%	2016	N/A

Largest holdings	
US I/L 1.00% 15/02/46	3.8%
US I/L 2.00% 15/01/26	3.8%
US I/L 2.375% 15/01/27	3.6%
US I/L 0.75% 15/02/45	3.4%
US I/L 1.375% 15/02/44	3.3%

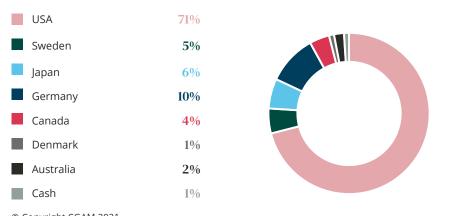
Performance since inception (total return)



Credit ratings		
AAA	100%	
AA	0%	
A	0%	
BBB	0%	
BB and below	0%	

Characteristics	
Number of bonds	66
Yield to Maturity (real)	-1.3%
Average Maturity	9.3 Yrs
Average coupon (real)	1.1%
Composite rating	AAA

Asset allocation



Duration history

30 Sep 21	8.7
30 Sep 20	8.6
30 Sep 19	7.6
30 Sep 18	6.4
30 Sep 17	6.2
30 Sep 16	5.6

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Third Quarter Report

Absolute Return Fund

September 2021

We frequently write about index-linked bonds, equities and alternatives in these quarterly reports. Our allocation to corporate credit gets rather less attention, with good reason. Government bond yields are low and credit spreads are tight. In addition our concerns with inflation means that, we see no general attractions in investing in corporate credit as an asset class.

In recent years we have been content to purchase short dated, high quality liquid credit to provide a pick-up to short dated nominal gilts within our "dry powder" bucket. Today, the extreme monetary policy interventions of central banks have created such desperation for income that spreads on liquid, high quality paper have fallen to nugatory levels. While this letter was being written an offer arrived to purchase 10 month IBM paper at a heady spread of 15 bps over gilts, 50 bps annualised all-in. If those are the rules of the game then – for the time being, at least – we elect not to play.

In our assessment, credit markets have a characteristic analagous to the "impossible trilemma" of the FX market. You can have quality, yield or liquidity. But you can't get all three at the same time. We are never prepared to sacrifice quality and, in the current environment, liquid names have limited appeal. That leaves illiquidity as a source of excess return. The majority of our dry powder comprises cash, treasury bills and short dated UK index-linked which are all pristine and highly liquid. We are therefore prepared to tolerate some illiquidity in our corporate credit provided that: i) we sufficiently compensated with spread and ii) the bond meets our quality criteria.

A favourite hunting ground in recent years has been short dated index-linked corporate bonds. One such bond redeemed shortly after the quarter end, the National Grid 1.25% 06/10/21. We mourn its loss.

We love all our investments but feel redemptions especially keenly where we struggle to replace them on similar terms. We were able to purchase this over the last 18 months on spreads between 250 and 450 bps over the reference gilt. That compares with spreads of less than 50 bps for similar duration nominal paper by the same issuer. Over the same period, we were able to buy index linked paper by less well-known issuers – though of similar quality to National Grid – on even better terms. Sadly, most of our remaining holdings of these kind are approaching redemption.

In the past, the closing of one credit niche presaged the opening of another; over the years our multi-asset funds have cycled first from Zero Dividend Preference shares, to bonds issued by property companies and then to corporate linkers. Today it is not obvious where the fund will find attractive credit exposure. The privilege of running a multi-asset fund is that we are not compelled to allocate to sectors where we do not see value. Today we are turning our attention to other areas: long lease property has many of the characteristics of credit, though with far higher yields. We are also happy to do nothing: allowing our holdings to redeem and park the resulting cash in treasury bills. If we are patient better opportunities will present themselves.

We content ourselves with the fact that, even in this yield starved world, our corporate bonds returned 6.5% over the last 12 months and 1.8% in the last quarter. Given their low weighting their contribution to the fund's overall return of 9.8% and 2.6% (over the same time periods) was modest but nevertheless satisfactory.

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¹ "The impossible trilemma" holds that a country cannot have all three of: i) a fixed exchange rate, ii) free movement of capital; iii) independent monetary policy.

² We do purchase junk bonds from time to time but we class them as risk assets and they have to compete directly with equities in terms of prospective returns to form part of the portfolio.



CG Absolute Return Fund

Fund information as at:

Fund price:

Status:

30th September 2021

£140.57

Open

Investment objective

To achieve absolute returns through asset allocation across equities, bonds and commodities. In most cases bond investments are made directly and equity investments via collective funds such as ETFs and listed closed ended funds.

Fund information	
Fund Size	£796m
Dividend Yield	< 1.5%
Management Fee	0.35%
Total Expense Ratio	0.44%
Comparator Index	GBP SONIA

Return history (total returns)			
1 month	-0.9%	2020	7.2%
3 months	2.6%	2019	8.2%
6 months	7.1%	2018	1.5%
Year to date	6.6%	2017	6.3%
1 year	9.8%	2016	N/A

Largest fund/equity holdings	
Ishares MSCI JP ESG Screened ETF	5.0%
Vanguard FTSE 100 ETF	2.8%
Ishares FTSE 100 ETF	2.7%
Grainger	2.3%
Vonovia	2.0%

Performance since inception (total return)



Largest bond holdings		
UK I/L 0.125% 22/03/24	4.2%	
UK I/L 0.00% 28/02/22	1.4%	
US I/L 1.00% 15/02/46	1.3%	
JP I/L 0.10% 10/03/29	1.2%	
US I/L 0.125% 15/07/26	1.1%	

Currency exposure		
GBP	53%	
USD	26%	
SEK	4%	
EUR	7%	
JPY	8%	
Other	2%	

Asset allocation		
Index Linked Gov't Bonds	31%	
Conventional Gov't Bonds	15%	
Pref Shares / Corp Debt	5%	
Funds / Equities	44%	
Cash	3%	
Gold	2%	

Fund/equity breakdown Equities	19%
Property	17%
Loans	3%
Infrastructure	4%
Private Equity / Hedge	1%

Third Quarter Report



Capital Gearing Portfolio Fund

September 2021

The scale of issuance in the Investment Companies sector has been something to behold. We stopped counting the number of secondary placings in the quarter as it moved into double digits but the result was £4.2bn of new capital raised. Year to date there has been £11bn raised which has helped to grow the total net assets of the sector to £247bn. In all likelihood 2021 will be the second largest year ever for issuance by Investment Companies, after only 2006. That is not an altogether comforting fact given 2006 proved to be an extremely poor investment vintage.

One notable feature of issuance in 2006 was that it was dominated by IPOs in temporarily hot asset classes that then went on to disappoint. There have been eight investment company IPOs so far in 2021 (and there are more in the pipeline) and they include specialist private equity funds respectively investing in space, hydrogen and specialist segments of shipping. In each case these companies have gone straight to double digit premia often without the companies having invested a single penny. It is possible that pursuing topical sectors will prove fruitful but there is more than a whiff of speculation in the air. Some of the capital raised might be considered the transatlantic cousin of Special Purpose Acquisition Vehicles ("SPACS") so popular in the US. If so the results are likely to be mixed.

Whilst undoubtably there are similarities between current and historic periods of exuberant issuance, it is also worth emphasising the differences. Importantly the Investment Companies sector is more than three times the size it was in 2006. In that year the £15bn of capital raised expanded the sector by a blistering 20%. Issuance in 2021 is likely to increase the sector by a more reasonable 6%. Of the issuance this year almost 90% has been secondary issuance by existing companies with well established track records. In 2006 it was the inverse with almost 90% of new issuance coming in the form of new IPOs in hot asset classes.

These distinctions might be important, as somewhat to our surprise we have found ourselves being reasonably active during this period of secondary issuance. We have used it as an opportunity to marginally rebalance away from property towards infrastructure. Both of these sectors do have similarities in risk profile due to their asset backing and long dated inflation protected cash flows. So why the switch? Property, which represents 20% of the portfolio has enjoyed a dramatic re-rating over the last 12 months. In many cases this has resulted in our holdings moving from significant discounts to premia. We have taken profits in many holdings and three property companies have been subject to bids, so these positions will be fully realised.

In contrast infrastructure has had rather a lackluster 12 months and has been de-rated significantly since 2019 notwithstanding a solid performance over the Covid crisis. Of course part of the reason these infrastructure companies do not trade on higher ratings is precisely due to their frequent issuance activities. Even with this caveat the opportunity to establish or build positions at close to NAV makes sense in an increasingly inflationary environment. During the period the fund took secondary placings in, amongst others, International Public Private Partnerships ltd, Digital 9 Infrastructure plc, Gore Street Energy Storage plc and the Renewables Infrastructure Group ltd.



Capital Gearing Portfolio Fund

Fund information as at:

Share prices:

Status:

30th September 2021

P shares £39,143.49 V shares £190.37 Hard Closed

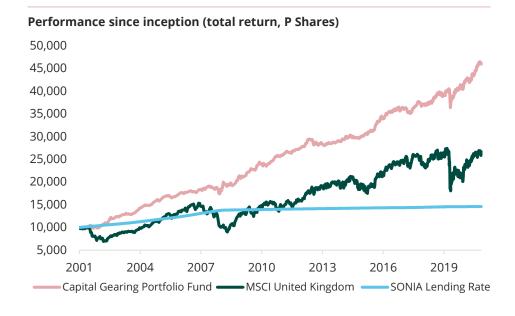
Investment objective

To achieve absolute returns through asset allocation across equities, bonds and commodities. Equity investments are made in quoted closed ended trusts and other collective investment vehicles.

Fund information	
Fund Size	£440m
Dividend Yield	< 1%
Management Fee	0.90%
Total Expense Ratio	0.99%
Comparator Index	3m Libor

Return history (total returns)			
1 month	-0.9%	2020	7.3%
3 months	2.8%	2019	7.6%
6 months	8.2%	2018	1.5%
Year to date	8.0%	2017	4.9%
1 year	12.4%	2016	13.3%

Largest fund/equity holdings	
Ishares MSCI JP ESG Screened ETF	4.6%
North Atlantic Smaller Co	4.4%
Grainger	2.4%
Vonovia	2.2%
Secure Income	2.0%



Largest bond holdings		
UK I/L 0.125% 22/03/24	4.3%	
US I/L 2.375% 15/01/27	2.1%	
US I/L 2.00% 15/01/26	1.6%	
JP I/L 0.10% 10/03/29	1.5%	
US I/L 3.875% 15/04/29	1.4%	

Currency exposure		
GBP	52%	
USD	27%	
SEK	4%	
EUR	7%	
JPY	8%	
Other	2%	

Asset allocation		
Index Linked Gov't Bonds	31%	
Conventional Gov't Bonds	8%	
Pref Shares / Corp Debt	11%	
Funds / Equities	46%	
Cash	2%	
Gold	2%	

Fund/equity breakdown	
Equities	18%
Property	18%
Loans	4%
Infrastructure	5%
Private Equity / Hedge	1%



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