

## Aim

The Trust's objective is to provide an above average level of income, income growth and long-term growth of capital through a policy of investing mainly in higher yielding UK FTSE 100 companies.

## Risks & Features

Investment trusts are quoted companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. Their share prices are determined by factors including the balance of supply and demand in the market, which means that the shares may trade below (at a discount to) or above (at a premium to) the underlying net asset value.

Merchants seeks to enhance returns for its shareholders through gearing, in the form of long-term, fixed rate debentures. Gearing can boost the Trust's returns when investments perform well, though losses can be magnified when investments lose value. You should be aware that this Trust may be subject to sudden and large falls in value and you could suffer substantial capital loss. Derivatives are used to manage the trust efficiently.

## History

The Trust was incorporated in February 1889, making it the oldest of the investment trusts in the RCM stable. Initially it principally invested in the fixed interest securities of railway companies in the USA, Canada and South America, with the remainder held in Government securities and companies such as Castlemaine Brewery in Western Australia. The Trust now concentrates primarily upon major UK companies with an above average rate of dividend yield.

## Fund Manager's Review



Simon Gergel

Stockmarkets generally performed well in July. The results of the European banking stress tests were published, with only 7 minor banks failing of the 91 banks tested. Economic news was mixed with generally positive developments in Europe in contrast to slightly softer indicators in the USA. The FTSE 100 index gained 7%, with BP bouncing 27% as their leaking Gulf of Mexico oil well was finally brought under control. There was a pro-cyclical mood in the market, with the banks, financials and several industrial and consumer sectors gaining whilst defensive areas like pharmaceuticals, tobacco and food producers lagged behind.

The portfolio's NAV returned 8.38% over the month. Positives included sharp rallies in the financials International Personal Finance and Aviva as well as the benefit of not owning BG or Imperial Tobacco which performed poorly. Negatives included large holdings in Glaxo and BAE which lagged behind the market as well as underweight positions in Lloyds and Barclays which were strong.

Investment activity largely involved profit taking after strong performance in stocks like IG Group, Meggitt, Britvic and two companies involved in takeover or merger discussions; Brit Insurance and International Power. We took advantage of the sell-off in Resolution during its rights issue to significantly increase the Trust's exposure, and in the process trimmed other life insurers Aviva and Legal & General, which had performed far better. Our investment strategy has not materially changed. We expect a period of below trend economic growth as governments address high debt levels. Whilst this will create challenges for businesses, many UK companies are trading at attractive valuations even taking into account this economic environment. We are particularly focused on large, multinational businesses with strong balance sheets, high dividend yields and resilient business models.

## Key Information

<b>Total Assets:</b>	£498.4m
<b>Gearing (net):</b>	25.3%
<b>No. of Shares (Ordinary 1p):</b>	103,213,464
<b>Share Price<sup>1</sup>:</b>	354.9p
<b>Net Asset Value<sup>2</sup>:</b>	365.2p (343.8p – debt at market value)
<b>Premium/-Discount to NAV<sup>2</sup>:</b>	-2.8% (3.2% – debt at market value)
<b>Dividend Yield<sup>2</sup>:</b>	6.37%
<b>Net Dividend per Share:</b>	1st interim: 5.7p (paid 20.8.10)
<b>No. of Holdings:</b>	68

All data source RCM (UK) Limited as at 30.07.10 unless otherwise stated.

<b>Launch Date:</b>	16 February 1889
<b>AIC Sector:</b>	UK Income Growth
<b>Benchmark:</b>	FTSE 100 Index
<b>Year end:</b>	31 January
<b>Annual Financial Report:</b>	Final posted in April, Half-yearly posted in September
<b>AGM:</b>	May
<b>Dividends:</b>	February, May, August, November
<b>Price Information:</b>	Financial Times, The Daily Telegraph, www.rcm.com/investmenttrusts
<b>Board of Directors:</b>	Simon Fraser (Chairman), Mike McKeon (Chairman of the Audit Committee), Henry Staunton (Senior Independent Director), Dick Barfield
<b>Investment Manager:</b>	Simon Gergel, Director, UK Equity RCM A company of Allianz Global Investors
<b>Investor Services:</b>	020 7065 1407

<sup>1</sup>Source: Lipper as at 30.07.10, market close mid price.

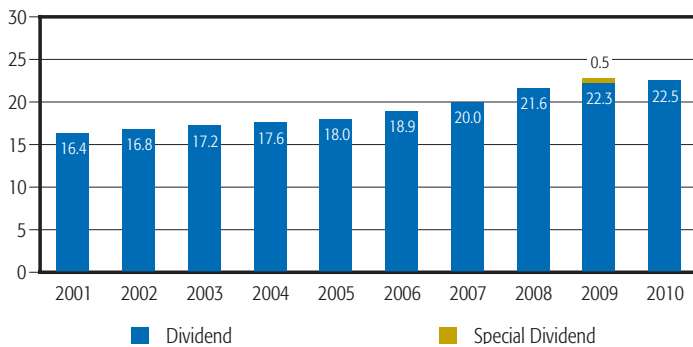
<sup>2</sup>Source: Datastream as at 30.07.10. Calculated using the latest full year dividend divided by the current share price.

<sup>3</sup>A trust's net asset value (NAV) is calculated as available shareholders' funds divided by the number of shares in issue, with shareholders' funds taken to be the net value of all the company's assets after deducting liabilities. In line with current industry best practice NAVs are now shown to take into account the 'fair value' of debt. This means NAVs are calculated after allowing for the valuation of debt at fair value or current market price, rather than at final repayment value. NAVs with debt at market value provide a more realistic impact of the cost of debt, and thus a more realistic discount. It is the capital NAV that is shown, which excludes any income.

## Top Ten Holdings (%)

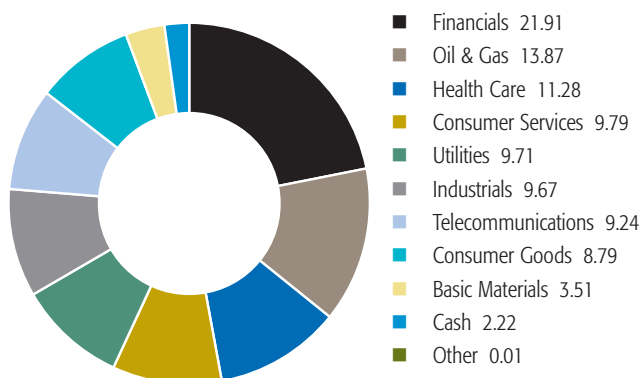
Name	%
Royal Dutch Shell "B" Shares	8.1
GlaxoSmithKline	6.9
Vodafone Group	6.6
HSBC	6.6
BP	5.4
AstraZeneca	4.1
Scottish & Southern Energy	3.7
British American Tobacco	3.7
BAE Systems	3.6
National Grid	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.3</b>

## Ten Year Net Dividend Record (to year end 31 January)



Net dividend paid per share in pence

## Sector Breakdown (%)



## How to Invest?

The Trust is a UK public limited company traded openly on the stock market. You can purchase shares through a stock broker.

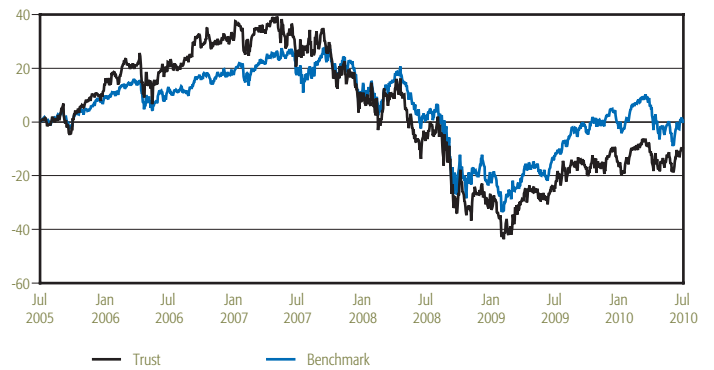
**RIC:** MRCH    **SEDOL:** 0580007    **ISIN:** GB0005800072

Shares in the Trust can be held within an ISA and/or savings scheme and a number of providers offer this facility. A list of suppliers is available on our website [www.rcm.com/investmenttrusts](http://www.rcm.com/investmenttrusts) or from the AIC at [www.theaic.co.uk](http://www.theaic.co.uk)

Please note: Our Investment Trust Savings Plan was closed and transferred to Alliance Trust Savings on 29 February 2008. Alliance Trust can be contacted on 01382 573 737 or [contact@alliancetrust.co.uk](mailto:contact@alliancetrust.co.uk)

## Performance

### Five Year Trust Performance (%)



### Cumulative Performance (%)

	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years
Share Price	2.57	7.84	19.90	-28.84	-9.92
Benchmark	-5.32	1.34	14.10	-17.33	-0.46

### Standardised Past Performance (%)

From	30.06.05	30.06.06	29.06.07	30.06.08	30.06.09
To	30.06.06	29.06.07	30.06.08	30.06.09	30.06.10
Share Price	17.28	8.25	-25.64	-24.63	15.02

Source: Lipper, percentage growth, mid to mid, capital return, to 30.07.10

Benchmark: FTSE 100 Index

Standardised past performance figures comply with the Financial Services Authority's regulations to enable investors to compare different products from different providers.

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. You should not make any assumptions on the future on the basis of performance information. The value of an investment and the income from it can fall as well as rise as a result of market fluctuations and you may not get back the amount originally invested.

This investment trust charges 65% of its annual management fee to the capital account and 35% to revenue. This could lead to a higher level of income but capital growth will be constrained as a result. Your capital could also decrease if income paid out of capital exceeds the growth rate of the trust.

## RCM Advantage

RCM and its predecessors have been managing investment trusts since 1889, providing investors with access to investment markets around the world through professionally managed portfolios. Each trust benefits from the expertise of the RCM fund managers yet, as a company listed on the London Stock Exchange, it is independent and is overseen by its own Board of Directors.

RCM is the global equity specialist within Allianz Global Investors. With offices strategically located in the US, Europe and Asia, RCM uses its global research platform to search out investment opportunities.

All data source RCM (UK) Limited as at 30.07.10 unless otherwise stated.

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