

# TALKING WITH

## Jason Pidcock

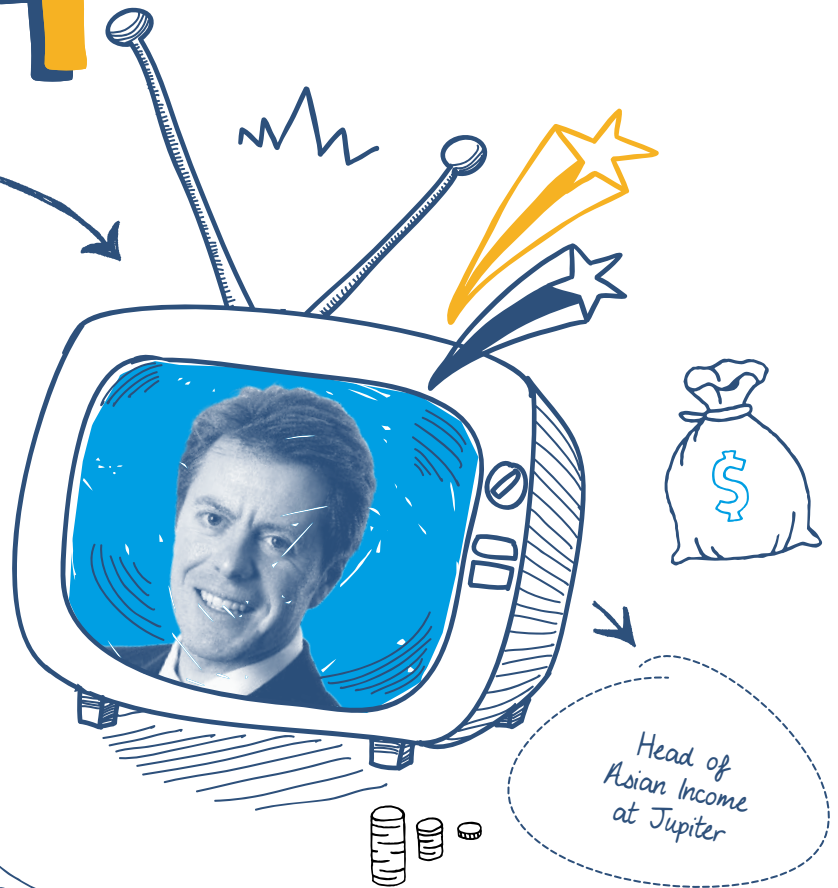
Jason Pidcock, Head of Asian Income at Jupiter, talks fund management, industry challenges and being a movie buff with Victoria Hasler and Amaya Assan at Square Mile.



### WHAT GOT YOU INTO FUND MANAGEMENT?

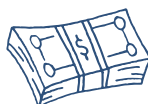
I bought my first shares in 1984 and they went up and I thought 'this is great!'. It was the privatisation of BT, in early December 1984, a month just shy of my 14th birthday. I got the application form from the back of the Daily Telegraph and I only had to pay 50p per share as it was partly paid but the percentage gain was huge. Then I subscribed to the penny share guide which I found rather exciting. For the next 2-3 years I mostly did well until the crash of 1987. This was a wake up call that shares can also go down.

After I graduated in 1992 there was the recession and I took a year off and went travelling. When I got back I wrote to 200 financial companies but I only had two interviews. The first was with Commercial Union and the second Henderson, which was offering a graduate trainee scheme. 1993 was a roaring bull market for Asia, they were given the first pick of the graduates so by luck I ended up on the Asian desk. I thought this was just a starting point for my move to other desks but I realised that this was where the growth was so I stayed put. I later left to join BP as they had an opening to run money, but from then on it was clear that Asia was the place for me.



### WHAT KEEPS YOU IN FUND MANAGEMENT?

I love it. It is a really stimulating job, great for general knowledge and I love investing. The region is, in my view, the most exciting and I feel I've got my own niche. I was the first to launch an open-ended Asian fund and now I am in the right company running the strategy.



### WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS IN YOUR CAREER?

Oh lots of memorable moments. The Asian crisis was the most memorable – 1998 was a traumatic time when shares and economies were collapsing and everything fell until the final quarter of 1998 when markets rebounded sharply. That for me was much more of an event than the 2008 global crisis. The crash of 1987 was pre my career, but as an investor that was also a big event for me.

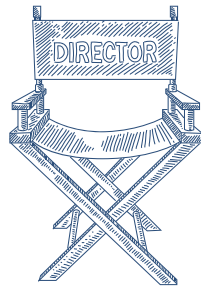
### WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE KEY TO JOB SATISFACTION?

You need to have a personal interest in what you are doing. That cannot be taught. You naturally have to be a bit of an entrepreneur and you've got to want to make other people money. You've also got to be able to soak up information, read a lot and keep up with events, but for job satisfaction I think being a fund manager is the best job in the world and better than any other career.



## WHO COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF THE WORD SUCCESS?

Neil Woodford and Warren Buffett. They both have a genuine interest and fascination in what they are doing. For them investing is their whole life, their passion, and their records, of course, speak for themselves.



## WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU HADN'T BEEN A FUND MANAGER?

I would have gone into the movie industry - as a producer or director rather than an actor. I am a bit of movie buff.

## WHAT'S BEEN YOUR BEST ACHIEVEMENT?

My proudest achievement was in a scout unit area orienteering competition. We normally fielded the winning team and were very competitive. In my last year I led a team which won the event and it was a great moment. Within my career my previous fund made more than a billion pounds of profit, that was a tangible achievement and I hope to do that again!

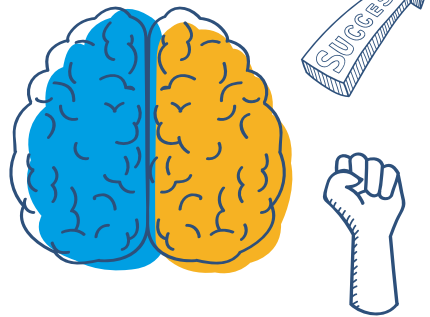


## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOURSELF OR OTHERS IF YOU WERE STARTING OUT NOW?

Take a long-term view, be patient, don't let things happening in your first year influence you too much. Absorb as much information as you can and talk to people who have been in the industry a long time to understand how things work. Be interested in current affairs, understand the economic situation and decide whether you want to focus on bonds or equities. Focus on specific areas and try to engage fairly quickly where you think your skill set is, since ultimately you are trying to outperform.

## WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE?

I normally get on the train by 06:50 and by then I am on my Blackberry reading the news and any company information so by 07:00 I know what has happened overnight. My train journey of an hour is spent half on that and for the second half I read a book. I try to alternate between light reading and heavy stuff. Right now I am reading the biography of Oliver Reed. Once I get into the office there will be company meetings, meetings with analysts, clients etc. If we had new money coming in or out orders have to be placed. I also take time to talk to colleagues or they come to talk to me, but a lot of the day is spent absorbing information. We don't make snap decisions, and it is rare that any piece of information leads to something; it is mostly lots of information building up over time.



## LOOKING BACK OVER YOUR CAREER WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON?

I have learnt not to be too emotional but to be able to move on. When things go right you can't get too carried away and when things go wrong don't get too despondent; having the right state of mind is essential. This is not a job for an emotional person and won't suit everybody. Understanding the mechanics of markets, not getting carried away and keeping control of the risks involved are the keys for success.

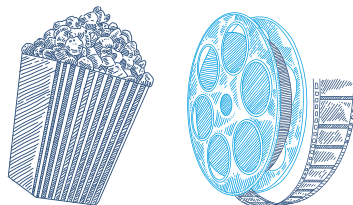
## WHAT DO YOU STILL WANT TO ACHIEVE?

I want to be the best performing fund anywhere in the world and all fund managers should have that type of ambition. I am always targeting being the number one fund.



## WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX?

I like watching films. I don't like conversations last thing on a Sunday night. Walking the dogs and mowing paths through fields and sitting on my lawnmower. I also find swimming therapeutic.



## WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU?

Neil Woodford leaving Invesco to set up his own company. That inspired me to think where exactly I would like to work. I thought long and hard about what I wanted from a company and it did have a bearing on me leaving Newton.

In a more general sense, people who are free spirited, who are adventurous or entrepreneurial - I like the writing of Ayn Rand. She wrote *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. If you like *Atlas Shrugged* people will probably think you are a bit of a fanatic, but I think that book is the best book I've ever read and everyone should read it.



## WHAT KEY CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE FOR THE FUND MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY?

Margin compression, competition on fees; you always have to earn your place. This is one of the most competitive industries and in this region, there's always the challenge of state government interference. What we are doing is looking after people's savings and we need to make a return on those savings but we are investing in markets that go up and down. So, we need to be careful to balance risks and explain to people they need to take a medium to long term outlook.

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