LOWES

Where personal finances are cared for personally

Spring 2006

"All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them."

Galileo Galilei

INSIDE – Stockmarkets: Value to be had

INSIDE TRACK

Awards all round at Lowes

IAN LOWES, LOWES' Managing Director (pictured right) **and Neil McLachlan, Lowes' Compliance Manager** (on the left)**, both achieved the rare distinction on 2 March of being awarded the title of Chartered Financial Planner at a graduation ceremony at London's Guildhall.**

The degree level qualification, awarded by the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII) following the Privy Council granting permission, puts financial planning on par with other professions, including law and accountancy. To date, of the tens of thousands of financial advisers in the UK, only 645 have achieved this standard.

Neil McLachlan comments: "I believe the introduction of Chartered status is a significant step in improving the profile and professionalism of Advisors within our industry. I am therefore delighted and very proud to be amongst the first to achieve this accolade."

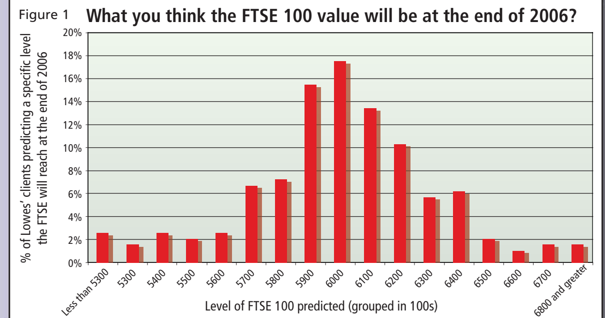
Meanwhile, Lowes' consultant Peter Collins has been awarded the prestigious title Certified Financial Planner by the Institute of Financial Planning. Peter says: "I'm now building towards Chartered status and plan to take two more exams every year."

Lowes has a culture of continuing professional development and encourages all members of staff, from the newest recruit up to the most senior member, to continuously build up their expertise and knowledge.

FTSE 100 COMPETITION

Onwards and upwards?

MANY THANKS TO all those clients who have entered our 2006 'Predict the FTSE 100' competition.



As in our previous FTSE competitions, clients have attempted to predict what they think will be the closing value of the FTSE 100 Index of leading UK companies at the close of business at the year end. The client who comes closest will win six bottles of Moët Champagne!

Figure 1 illustrates your predictions and on the basis of these, we've summarised the main points below:

- The average prediction for the FTSE at the end of 2006 is 6014.3 which is 5.9 per cent above the 2006 opening figure of 5681.5. In the same competition in 2004 the average prediction was for an 11.07 per cent rise.
- The highest prediction for the level of the FTSE at the end of 2006 is 6925 which would be a rise of 21.89 per cent.
- The lowest prediction for 2006 is 2058.6 – which would be a fall of 52.94 per cent – lets hope they are wrong!
- In the same competition in 2004, only 2 per cent of predictions were negative. This year 10.8 per cent of predictions believe the market will fall.

Whilst we feel that some of these predictions may be a little pessimistic, we fully understand why many clients are adopting a cautious stance. In our view, while we feel a significant correction in the market is possible, we do anticipate that any such fall will be short lived and followed by a period of strong growth given the sound fundamentals underpinning the market.

- *At the time of writing the FTSE is around 6046, a rise on the year to date of 7.6 per cent.*

One in three households now face an inheritance bill

New research underscores the urgency to plan for inheritance…

ACCORDING TO RESEARCH FROM Scottish Widows, more than 8.2 million people in the UK now have an estate valued at more than the 2005/06 Inheritance Tax (IHT) threshold of £275,000.

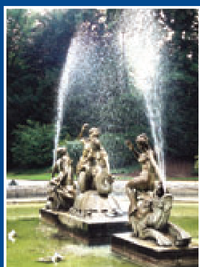
However, the research claims that nearly three quarters of them have done nothing whatsoever to mitigate a potential IHT bill.

Call to link IHT to house inflation

Meanwhile, the Halifax has called on all political parties to make it their policy to raise the IHT threshold to account for the increase in house prices over the past decade and to link it to house price inflation in the future.

The results, from a survey of Britain's wealth which looked at property prices and assets after debt, revealed that average UK household wealth now stands at about £258,000 – not far below the IHT threshold.

Anne Young, a tax expert at Scottish Widows, said: "Currently IHT is paid by just 6 per cent of estates. However, the rapid rise in house prices has pushed millions more above the IHT threshold without them even knowing it."



The photograph used on this issue's cover was taken at Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire

Make your money work

Best bank and building society instant access/no notice accounts

Branch Based

Amount	Provider	Account	Gross Rate	Contact
£1+	**Abbey**	**Flexible Saver**	**3.3%**	**Branch**
£2,000+	**Bradford & Bingley**	**Premier Saver**	**3.55%**	**Branch**[1]

Postal or Telephone

Amount	Provider	Account	Gross Rate	Contact
£1+	**ING Direct**	**Savings Account**	**4.5%**	**0800 376 8844** to request application form and information pack[2]

Internet

Amount	Provider	Account	Gross Rate	Contact
£1+	**Cahoot**	**Savings Account**	**4.85%**	**www.cahoot.com**[3]

Note 1. Guarantees to pay no less than one percentage point below base rate. Note 2. Account holders must be aged 18 or over, be a UK resident and hold a UK current account (with a cheque book and direct debit facility). Note 3. Guaranteed to match base rate until 31 December 2006 on balances up to £250,000.
Sources: www.thisismoney.com, www.moneyextra.com, www.everyinvestor.co.uk 03/04/2006. All accounts subject to terms and conditions.

IHT is the Budget issue

THE FAILURE OF THE Inheritance Tax (IHT) threshold to keep pace with house price inflation is pulling more and more people into a tax trap which only affected the ultra-rich a few years ago.

PHOTO: PA

As announced in last November's Pre-Budget Report, the Inheritance Tax threshold will be £285,000 in the 2006/07 tax year (a 3.6 per cent rise) and £300,000, in 2007/08 (a 5.2 per cent rise).

In the Budget, Chancellor Gordon Brown announced the thresholds for 2008/09 (£312,000, 4 per cent up on 2007/08) and for 2009/10 (£325,000, 4.1 per cent up on 2008/09). In so doing he sent out a clear message to homeowners – unless serious consideration is given to inheritance planning, an increasing number of estates will be liable to IHT.

Other Budget news highlights:

VCTs

- Rate of up front income tax relief for new investments reduced from 40 per cent to 30 per cent for 2006/07.
- Minimum holding period (to keep the tax relief) has been extended from 3 years to 5 years.
- VCTs can invest in companies with maximum gross assets of £7 million, reduced from £15 million (applies for investment of funds raised after 6 April 2006).

There may be two implications of this move: First, it reduces the number of opportunities for investing in VCTs. Secondly, and probably more importantly from an investor's point of view, it may increase the risk within a new VCT.

New rules on Trusts

New rules were announced on certain Trusts which are used for IHT planning. Details have still to be clarified, but there is a strong possibility that they will ultimately not affect the vast majority of clients with Trust arrangements either in place or potentially via a Will.

ISAs

- ISA limits remain unchanged in 2006/07 at £3,000 for Cash Mini-ISAs, £4,000 for Stocks and Shares Mini-ISAs and £7,000 for Maxi-ISAs.
- UK Real Estate Investment Trusts (Reits) will, on their introduction, become qualifying investments for ISAs, PEPs and Child Trust Funds.

Pensions simplification and inheritance

Prior to Pensions A-Day (6 April) if you were a member of a pension scheme you had to secure your retirement income in the form of an annuity by age 75 at the latest. But post A-Day, it is now possible to secure retirement income beyond age 75 with an Alternatively Secured Pension (ASP).

However, in the Budget, HM Customs & Revenue stressed that ASPs had been designed for people who had a principled religious objection to annuities. The Revenue warned that if an ASP was used to enable individuals to pass on tax-privileged retirement savings to their dependants (except spouses and civil partners) then a 40 per cent IHT charge could apply on any funds held in an ASP should the scheme member die after age 75.

Stamp Duty

The stamp duty threshold on house purchases has been increased from £120,000 to £125,000.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders said 56,000 households became liable for stamp duty last year purely as a result of house price rises bringing their properties into the starting band. It added that if the starting threshold had been uprated in line with house price inflation since Labour came into power in 1997, it would now be over £145,000.

COMMENT

Taxed to death

IT'S HARDLY SURPRISING THAT there's a growing level of resentment among a large and rising proportion of Britons with the way a person's assets are taxed when they die.

Until very recently, Inheritance Tax was something only a minority of very well off people had to worry about. But this is no longer the case and in not too many years time a large proportion of homeowners will face a potential liability.

According to the Halifax, 15,000 estates paid IHT in 1996/97, an estimated 35,000 did so in 2005/06, while by 2020 they predict the figure could be 46,000. For many of these estates, the house is the most valuable asset by far. As such, it's hardly surprising that people get upset at the thought that they work all their lives, pay many thousands of pounds in direct and indirect taxes, then when they die the government comes along and takes another 40 per cent.

For those who harboured any lingering hopes of reform, the Budget made it absolutely clear that tax on inheritances is a central plank of government revenue raising strategy. Whilst there is the potential for a popular revolt against government policy on inheritance to the extent that it becomes a major electoral issue, let us not forget that the Chancellor needs to raise money one way or another.

If the ultimate IHT levy is cut, taxes elsewhere will rise. Prudent financial planning is about ensuring you pay as little tax as you can without breaking the law.

In my view IHT is here to stay and so our job is to help clients ensure that they legitimately avoid as much of it as possible.

Ian H Lowes,
Managing Director

Where to now F

Lowes' consultant, Rob Newton, offers his vie direction of the stockmarkets ...

WHEN I JOINED LOWES IN 2003, IT was almost to the day that the FTSE 100 hit what has since transpired to be a low of just 3287 in the aftermath of the excessive growth of the late 20th century.

What a far cry this was from the record high of 6930.2 reached on 30 December 1999, when investors seemed to believe that the markets could only go one way – up! And what a long way it was from the 6000 figure achieved last month (see Figure 1).

Faced with such turbulence on the investment markets and mindful of the huge impact it must have had on many private investors, one of the first things I did when I arrived at Lowes was to read through past issues of this magazine to see what my new colleagues had been saying about the stockmarkets. What struck me more than anything else were the predictions they made about the future direction of the markets, and I have to say that I take my hat off!

Past predictions

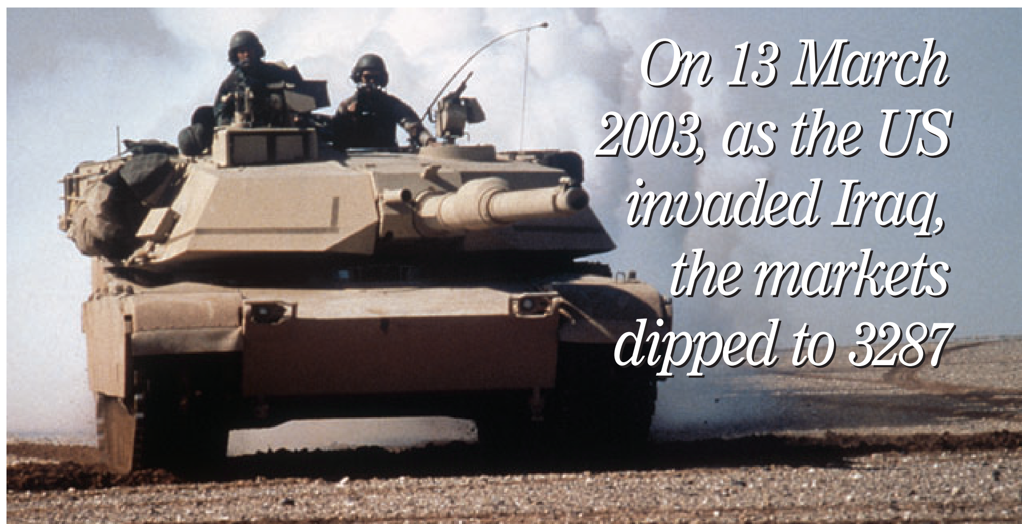
In the January 1999 issue of Lowes – faced with violently fluctuating stockmarkets – readers were advised to consider locking up the value of their PEPs in the belief that the markets would fall.

In the April 2001 issue of Lowes Magazine when the FTSE had fallen to around 5600 we said that we were as good as convinced that we were in a full correction of the market excesses and estimated the FTSE 100 would fall to 4600, unless there was government interference which could cause it to fall further.

- *What happened: The FTSE 100 peaked on 30 December 1999 but in 2001 it started to fall sharply when, after months of investor hysteria, the dotcom/technology bubble burst.*

On 13 March 2003, as the US invaded Iraq, the markets dipped to 3287. The April 2003 issues of Lowes said: "The current global bear market is one of the deepest and longest corrections in living memory. Whilst no one can accurately predict the bottom of any market fall, we are confident that hindsight will show that the present has proven to be an excellent time to invest in the market."

- *What happened: Since then the FTSE 100 has risen steadily by over 80 per cent to 6000. However, it is still some 14 per cent of its all time high of 6932.2 achieved on 30 December 1999.*



As good as these predictions appear to have been, in my view no one can be right all of the time and there can be no certainty whatsoever about anything regarding the future performance of the stockmarkets. I'm sure that Lowes has got it wrong in the past and will inevitably get it wrong again in the future, but it is clear to me that at all times they have clients' interests at heart.

Looking ahead

Bearing this in mind, the big question is, where are the markets heading? Is there still some value to be had or are shares overpriced and heading for another significant correction?

The first point I would make is that in our view another correction of at least some of the rise in the markets since March 2003 is inevitable. However, we believe it will be relatively short lived and will then be followed by further rises taking the market above its previous high.

Value in the markets

This view is based on the improvement in corporate and economic fundamentals and the generally positive state of the global economy, despite such factors as rising oil and raw material prices.

Figure 2: How equities have outperformed cash and Gilts sinc

Holding period – consecutive years	2	3
1. Cash		
Probability of equity outperformance (%) over the holding period	67	70
2. Gilts		
Probability of equity outperformance (%) over the holding period	70	76

TSE 100?

s on the future

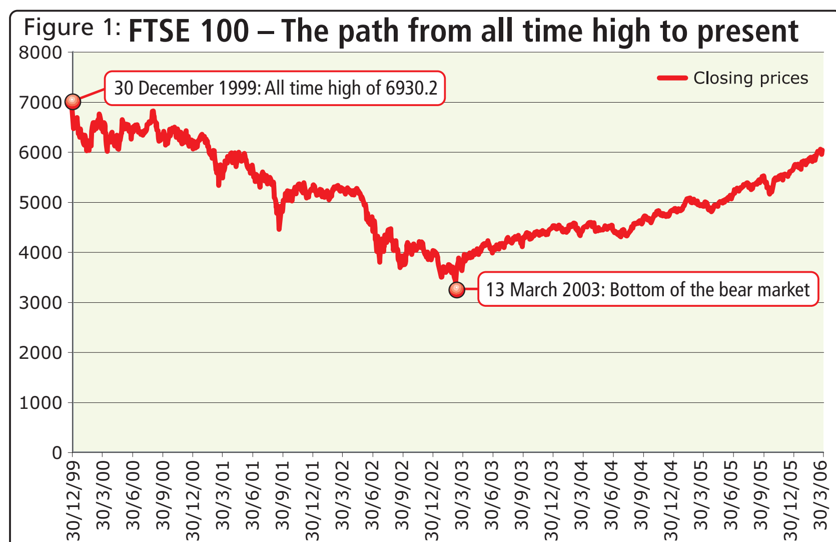


Figure 1: **FTSE 100 – The path from all time high to present**

However, we would caution against any expectations of a return to the double digit annual gains of the 1990s and believe that a lower rate of growth will be the norm, possibly around seven per cent a year – a figure which is around the same level of growth the FTSE 100 has enjoyed since it was launched in 1984.

What the statistics tell us

Past performance is, of course no guide to the future. However, it is worth looking at some statistics of how equity performance compares to Gilts and cash over time. Figure 2 details an analysis contained in the recently published Barclays Capital Equity Gilts Study of how equity returns compare to cash and Gilts since 1899.

1899

quities v cash v Gilts

4	5	10	18
74	75	93	99
78	75	82	91

Source: Barclays Capital Equity Gilts Study 2006, p49.

One of the main findings is that over any 10 year period equities have a 93 per cent chance of out-performing cash deposits and an 82 per cent chance of outperforming Gilts. So, from the record FTSE 100 closing high of 6930.2 on 30 December 1999, there is still a 93 per cent chance of it out performing cash – let alone rising over the 10 year period to 30 December 2009.

But that is not to say that there may not be a sudden – and painful fall on the way when everyone will question why on earth they invested and only those who sit tight will benefit.

Now is the time to be invested

Bearing in mind what I have said about predictions regarding future stockmarket performance, it is our belief that there is still much potential for investment growth over the medium and long-term and, therefore, now is the time to be invested in the markets. However this should be done via a diversified and well managed portfolio of funds invested across a range of assets appropriate to your attitude to risk.

BANKS

Bank interest

FACED WITH LOW INTEREST RATES WHICH look set to stay low, many readers may be seeking alternatives to traditional savings accounts, particularly if they depend on income from their savings to help fund their lifestyle.

So what are the alternatives to savings accounts?

OPTION 1 The first option is to find an account which offers a better rate than your existing one.

According to research carried out last Autumn by the Alliance & Leicester, customers lose out on £2.9 billion every year because they persist with the poor value accounts offered mainly by the traditional high street banks. But uncompetitive rates aren't exclusive to the big banks. It's not uncommon for a new entrant into the market to attract new customers with a top rate of interest and then, after a year or so, cut rates and rely on consumer inertia.

On page 2 of each issue of this magazine we publish the top savers rates for branch-based, postal/telephone and Internet-based accounts.

OPTION 2 With interest rates unlikely to rise significantly in the foreseeable future, the only other option is to take a greater degree of risk with at least a part of your money on deposit.

For example, the amount earned in interest could be invested in a suitable product which offers the opportunity to participate in possible rises in the stockmarkets.

Investment contracts are available which offer a guarantee of capital over a certain term, or enhanced returns achieved by accepting an element of risk, albeit still with a high degree of capital security. One such product is the ***NDF Growth Kick Out Plan*** which is featured on page 8 of this issue of Lowes. Whilst the Plan's full investment term is potentially 6 years, and should therefore be invested in with this in mind, it has the potential to mature early, paying out the full 9.75 per cent a year growth on any of its first five anniversaries. It is possible that you could get back less than you invested.

70 years young

You're not old until you reach your 70s, or so says a survey of 8,000 retired people around the world carried out by the insurer AXA…

EARLY RETIREMENT AT AN AVERAGE age of 59 was a common feature of those surveyed. However, they don't see themselves as getting old until they reach 78.

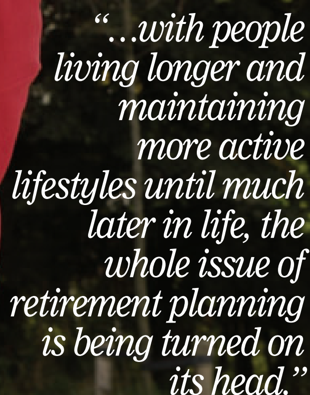
The message is clear – with people living longer and maintaining more active lifestyles until much later in life, the whole issue of retirement planning is being turned on its head.

Traditional approach falls short

The traditional advice given to people approaching retirement has been to move their investments out of equities and into safer assets such as government Gilts and cash. This view assumes that your investment life ceases when you retire.

But as life expectancy increases, people at 60 or 65 must still make plans for the medium to long-term – perhaps for 20 years or more. In practice, this means that while they should ensure that some funds are available for immediate access to cover ongoing needs for income or emergencies, other funds should be managed on a longer time frame to help maximise returns.

So, if you're investing for up to 20 years with at least part of your retirement savings, it may make more sense to consider equity funds to provide capital growth and income. Of course, this strategy requires a regular review to guard against capital erosion and to ensure any additional income requirements are met.



"…with people living longer and maintaining more active lifestyles until much later in life, the whole issue of retirement planning is being turned on its head."

What if you have a pension?

If you have a personal pension or are a member of a company money purchase pension scheme, then on retirement the traditional wisdom would probably be to convert this into a pension income by purchasing an annuity. However, in the light of increased life expectancy, there are several options which may be worth considering:

LEAVE YOUR PENSION FUND INVESTED

If you have other sources of income or capital to fund your retirement, or at least the early part of it, then it may make sense to leave your pension untouched until you need it or until age 75 at the latest, when you must then purchase an annuity. This means you can leave your pension fund invested to benefit from further investment growth. You should note (see below) that you can now do this even if you want to take the tax-free cash from your pension fund before you buy an annuity.

TAX-FREE CASH

With the advent of pension simplification on 6 April, new rules allow you to take a tax-free cash lump sum of up to 25 per cent of your pension fund from age 50 (age 55 from 2010) without having to immediately purchase an annuity with the balance.

PURCHASING AN ANNUITY

When you do need to purchase an annuity there are some key points to note:

Open Market Option: When looking to purchase a pension annuity, you do not have to buy it from your pension provider but have the right to exercise the Open Market Option. This enables you to search the entire market which could result in a substantially higher income.

Impaired Life annuity: The sad fact is that the older we get, the greater the chance of suffering a medical condition. In this event, it may be possible to purchase what is called an 'Impaired Life Annuity'. Depending on how serious the condition is, you would qualify for either enhanced or impaired annuity rates, and this could result in you receiving a much higher pension income for your money.

DEATH BEFORE PURCHASING AN ANNUITY

Because pensions are usually written in 'trust', any pension funds remaining on your death are normally exempt from Inheritance Tax. However, if the beneficiary wishes to take the pension fund as a cash lump sum, there would be a 35 per cent tax charge to pay. Alternatively, the beneficiary could immediately convert the pension fund into an annuity and so avoid this charge, although the annuity income would, of course, be taxable.

No gloom over bond prospects

By Melvyn Bell, Lowes' Investment Manager

AT THE END OF JANUARY 1981 the Retail Price Index (RPI) was 13 per cent up on the previous year – a massive figure when compared to the 2.4 per cent for the year to the end of January 2006! Although, investors in January 1981 could have made the same observation when making comparisons to the 23.4 per cent for the year to the end of January 1976.

Inflation has steadily declined over the last 30 years and, while this decline has not always been a one way street, the increases have proved the exception and interest rates have fallen as inflation has been squeezed out of the economy.

Several factors have helped cut inflation, notably the success of the Bank of England in anticipating and controlling the excesses of supply and demand, and the emergence of low cost producers in the emerging markets, notably China.

Fixed interest stocks have been a prime beneficiary of lower interest rates, giving bond investors a relatively attractive income plus capital growth.

However, with the global economy recovering, what are the prospects for fixed interest stocks, especially given the hike in raw material costs, notably oil and gas?

Over the last couple of years, bond markets have effectively ignored this threat and the fact that central banks around the world have been raising interest rates. Official UK rates have risen from a 40 year low of 3.5 per cent in November 2003 and, despite being cut to 4.5 per cent in August last year from an apparent peak of 4.75 per cent, who knows where they will head next?

Bond market resilience owes a lot to institutions (insurance companies and pension funds) buying bonds to restructure their assets and liabilities. In addition, much of the rapid growth in OPEC oil revenues has been recycled into the bond markets. Overseas holdings of UK Gilts, for instance, have risen significantly according to official data.

Where does this leave investors? Even the most positive bond fund managers anticipate little excitement in the months ahead, and most think the bulk of any investment returns will be as income rather than capital gains. However, because of the likely ongoing institutional demand, the downside should be relatively limited. But just as the pessimists got it wrong last year, they could get it wrong again!

We have expressed this view many times, but it remains our strong belief that diversification of assets remains the cornerstone for a successful long-term investment strategy and that bonds should continue to play a part in a balanced portfolio.

Making use of Funds of Funds

FOR LOWES, FUNDS OF FUNDS are not the latest hot sector – they have for many years been primary building blocks to be used when constructing portfolios for our clients.

What are they

Funds of funds are what they sound like: collective funds such as unit trusts that invest in a range of other funds, sometimes from the same fund management group, sometimes from external firms, often a mixture of the two.

They offer several advantages:

- Less risk than investing in just one or two funds.
- Diversified portfolio both geographically and among different asset classes without having to buy dozens of funds.
- Avoid having to constantly monitor a portfolio or keep track of management changes, as this will be done by the fund of funds manager.
- For the smaller investor, they offer the diversification of managers which it would not previously have been possible to provide.

Why Lowes uses them

In our view diversification is vitally important when attempting to reduce risk. As funds of funds are in effect managed diversified portfolios, they help to meet our requirements.

However, as a further level of diversification, we believe it is appropriate to use a blend of funds of funds and individual funds. This helps reduce the impact of those inevitable periods when individual fund managers underperform, whether they are a fund of funds manager or one of the individual managers within a portfolio.

How Lowes uses funds of funds

We use funds of funds to provide the core of the portfolio. We then add additional funds which meet our analysis for consistency and when blended with the other funds are appropriate for the objectives of the overall portfolio.

A traditional core holding in a portfolio would historically have comprised an 'index tracker fund' with the addition of 'satellite' holdings covering specialist areas of the market appropriate to the portfolio.

However, tracker funds follow the market relatively closely whether it rises or falls. Consequently, there may be times when market conditions require changes to be made to the portfolio. In contrast the 'fund of funds' core holding is dynamic in the sense that the internal holdings will be adjusted by the fund of funds managers according to their perception of the market conditions. They may typically do this by switching sectors, by switching managers, or by increasing the level of cash within the fund.

> *"The fund of funds is the latest hot investment sector: in the last three months of 2005, sales of these products topped £1.1bn, up from £396m the previous year, bringing the total invested in them to almost £24bn, according to the Investment Management Association."*
>
> The Observer, 26 February 2006

NDF Kick Out Plan: Innovative solution to low interest rates

ALLOWING THE BANK OF ENGLAND TO set interest rates free of political interference was arguably one of the most significant moves by the Labour Government when it was elected in 1997.

The change has led to inflation dropping to levels not seen for a generation. But while this and accompanying low interest rates are good news for borrowers, it is a problem for savers seeking good returns with low risk.

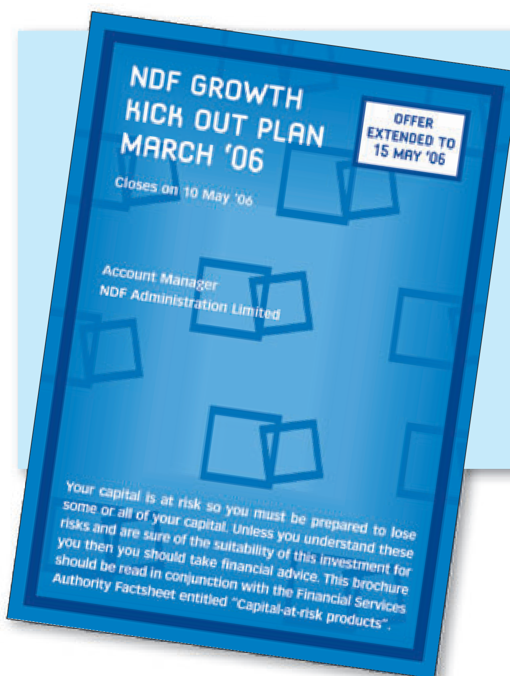
The NDF Kick Out Plan is an innovative solution and offers the possibility of 9.75 per cent a year simple growth on an initial capital investment. Although the plan's full investment term is potentially six years – and investors should bear this in mind – it has the **potential to mature early**, paying out the full 9.75 per cent a year growth plus the original capital on any of the first five anniversaries.

However, higher returns do not come without risk, and any growth payments and the repayment of the original capital will depend on the performance of the stockmarket indices the plan is linked to – the 'blue chip' **FTSE 100 Index** and Japan's 'blue chip' **Nikkei 225 Index**.

Early maturity

For early maturity to occur the closing level of both the indices on an anniversary must be the same or higher than the corresponding starting index levels on 24 May 2006. For example:

- Should both indices be above their starting levels on the 24 May 2007, the original capital plus 9.75 per cent will be repaid.
- If this does not occur until the third anniversary, the sum repaid will be the original capital plus 29.25 per cent (9.75 per cent x 3).



- Should the plan run the full six year term and both indices at maturity are above their starting levels, the plan will repay the original capital plus 58.5 per cent.

However, if the plan runs the full six year term and one or both indices are below their respective starting levels, then only the original capital will be returned – unless one or both of the indices has fallen by more than 50 per cent from its starting level at anytime during the investment term. In this event, the original capital repaid will be reduced by 1 per cent for each 1 per cent the worst performing index is below the starting level.

NOTE: Whilst the 50 per cent protection level is significant, it should be appreciated that the linking of a potential capital reduction to the worst of the two indices increases the potential reduction of capital in the event of the protection being broken. This investment is therefore only suitable for those clients who are prepared to expose their capital to a degree of risk.

The success of this investment depends on the performance of the UK and Japanese equity markets. Whilst we could of course be wrong, we believe the likelihood of an early maturity during the six year life of the plan is high. In any event, there is comfort in knowing that for any of the original capital to be lost:

- One of the indices must have fallen by more than 50 per cent during the lifetime of the investment and
- One of them would have to be below its starting level in six years time.

As with all contracts of this type, the benefits payable and the ultimate return of capital depend on the financial strength of the issuer. The assets within the Plan will be issued by a financial institution rated as A+ (i.e. having "strong financial security characteristics") by Standard & Poor's, the leading ratings agency. Example institutions with an A+ rating are: Abbey National plc, Alliance & Leicester and American Express Bank.

The product literature accompanying this magazine includes all of the terms and details of the Plan, including all the investment risks on page 7. Please read these thoroughly before you invest. You should also read the FSA leaflet entitled 'Capital at risk products' which is also enclosed. When you are satisfied that this investment is right for you please complete your application and send it with your cheque (unless it is an ISA or PEP transfer) to Lowes Group PLC, Freepost NT197, Holmwood House, Clayton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1BR or use the pre-paid envelope provided. If you have any doubts about the suitability of any investment for you, you should contact this office on 0845 1 484848 or your usual Lowes Consultant who will be happy to recommend appropriate action.

Note: Lowes may be required to approach a third part in order to verify the identity of a client or any person providing funds on behalf of an investment made in a client's name. Where further information is required to verify identity, Lowes reserves the right to delay applications until sufficient identification has been provided.

If you would like to receive further information on any of the subjects featured in this issue of **LOWES** please call **0845 1 484848**, fax **0191 281 8365**, e-mail **client@lowes.co.uk**. Or write to us at: **Lowes Group PLC**, FREEPOST NT197, Holmwood House, Clayton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1BR.
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