

"Human beings aren't designed to play golf five days a week. Now, I'm a member of

riage in reverse." In many ways, George Hook is representative of his gener-

I was effectively bankrupt, so I was lucky. You should have to have a plan, but the single most

(preparing for hours for even the tiniest break), and his willingness to take a chance liter-

The grass is always greener

Can't see the woods for the trees when it comes to investing after retirement? Then Greenwood Investments may be exactly what you're looking for, writes Aidan Fortune

YOU'VE DECIDED to retire and want to invest some of your hard-earned cash. However, with the world economy in turmoil and the property market not what it used to be, you may have to look elsewhere for an investment option.

Greenwood Investments specialises in the acquisition and development of forestry land that provides a strong return for investors, but without the long-term waiting period that is usually associated with forestry investment.

"An investor can look to achieve full returns within six to 15 years, which is much shorter than traditional forestry holdings that can be 30 years or more," says Joe Randall of Greenwood Investments.

A person sees a return with Greenwood by investing in an acre of land that contains the trees that are being grown for harvesting when they have fully matured.

Firstly, the company looks at high value, short rotation crops, such as Christmas trees, which are ready for production within six to 12 years of being planted. This means there is a shorter waiting period for a return on your investment. Then when the trees reach a marketable size, they are harvested and sold on the open market.

"Obviously it depends on species and location, but Firs generally bring the best prices. Another way that we achieve returns within the desired holding period is to look at forestry in areas with longer growing seasons. For example, a tree will grow a lot faster in Morocco than in Ireland because they have longer summers."

Randall believes that more and more people are looking to alternative

methods when investing their money and that forestry is something that will remain stable throughout any financial downturn.

"With current turmoil in the world markets, we have discovered that a lot of investors have become disillusioned with the more traditional markets and are looking to alternative investment ideas.

"A main driving force behind forestry as an investment is the fact that we're not as dependent on the market as other commodities. If the value of timber should fall, we can take a step back and not harvest the crop until the market stabilizes. Another benefit of this is that the longer we wait the more supply we have to sell when we do eventually harvest."

An investor can look to achieve full returns within six to 15 years which is much shorter than traditional forestry holdings

Not content with providing short-term returns to their investors, Greenwood use whatever additional revenue they make to develop the company and invest in other plots. In essence, as the investor's money grows, so does the company.

Although investing in forestry is

generally seen as a long-term plan, Greenwood Investments look to achieve returns in as little as six years, giving you the return sooner.

You can become involved in Greenwood for as little as €4,950. The length of time that you remain with them varies from species to species, but the minimum period is usually between six and eight years.

According to Greenwood Investments, over the past 30 years, returns through forestry investment have averaged 14.5% per annum. They estimate that a good level of return would be between nine and 16 per cent, depending on the species, location and length of time. They are currently looking at a potential investment area that they believe will show returns of up to 27% per annum over a 14-year holding.

Even though the company was just set up in 2007, they have had a huge amount of interest, especially from Ireland.

"We have had a lot of response from Irish investors. We feel that this is due to companies like the Irish Forestry Fund who have structured their business for more short-term investments so that more people can make use of the tax incentives available," says Randall.

"The majority of our investors are in the 30 to 50 age group, but we are getting a lot of elderly clients looking to invest with us as they want to see a short term return on their investment," he concludes.

For more details on Greenwood Investments, log onto www.greenwood-investments.com or contact them on (01) 452 0326. or info@greenwood-investments.com