



## **THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GOLD AND SILVER WYRE DRAWERS**



### **John Woodward Walsham Master Installed 8th January 2018**

I was born in Hertford in 1942 and my family moved back to Grays in Essex at the end of the War, where my father had a Building Construction Company. At the age of 7, I boarded at Eton House School in Thorpe Bay. This was followed by Allhallows School in Devon where I was a House Prefect, playing Rugby and Tennis for the school. I also became a Junior Under Officer in the School Combined Cadet Force and represented the school at the Centenary Celebrations at Buckingham Palace.

On leaving school I studied as a Quantity Surveyor at the Brixton School of Building and worked in Pimlico. After 5 years, I joined the family Construction Company which specialised in Local Authority Council Housing until a change in Government policy, then Commercial Property. In 1976, I built and opened a small Garden Centre in South Ockendon, Essex which I still run with my wife, daughters and sons-in-law. It has grown and now employs over 60 people with a 220 seater Restaurant. I have been Chairman of the North Thames Group of the Garden Centre Association.

I was a General Commissioner of Income Tax for 15 years, sitting in the Grays and Brentwood Divisions. I have also enjoyed being Chairman of Grays Round Table, Chairman of 41 Club and President of Grays Thurrock Rotary Club. I am known as the 'father of the club', having been a member for 45 years, following my father and grandfather.

I played Rugby in the lower teams for Saracens RFC during the amateur days, and still support the Club as a Season Ticket Holder. I have also played social golf, cricket and tennis. As a teenager I was a dingy sailor (Enterprise) and coastal sailor (Alacrity 22). In 2001 I took delivery of a 59ft Narrowboat as my family and I have always enjoyed exploring the English Canals.

My wife Amanda and I have been married for over 50 years and have three married daughters who have given us six very successful grandchildren and we are now great grandparents following the marriage of our granddaughter in 2016.

With Amanda, I support the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Wellbeing of Women, and my local Hospice. During my year I will be supporting Headway Essex, a charity based in Colchester, which provides rehabilitative care for survivors of brain injuries.

I joined the Livery in 2000, was elected to the Court in 2008, and fourth Warden in 2014. I trust, as Master, during 2018, I can continue to support our Charities, our Armed Forces, and as many individuals as possible. I look forward as well to the enjoyment and fellowship of representing the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers.