



JOHN BILES

MASTER

2019 - 2020

John Biles was born in Norwich, Norfolk, in 1947 and then lived in Birmingham and London. He read Chemistry and Physics at the University of Exeter where he graduated with a Combined Honours degree in 1968. He decided to train as a Chartered Accountant and joined Price Waterhouse in 1968, qualified in 1971 and left in 1976 to join EMI, a major conglomerate. In 1981 he was headhunted by Racal Electronics plc and became successively financial director of three of its defence businesses. In 1991, Racal fought off a hostile takeover bid by promising to demerge its security businesses as Chubb Security plc and John was appointed its Group Financial Director. Chubb's interests included electronic security, manned guarding and the ironmongery related safes, locks and fire extinguishing businesses. Following its takeover in 1997, John became Group Financial Director of FKI plc, an engineering group, which also included ironmongery businesses in the US. In 2004 John decided to become a non-executive director and chaired audit committees for twelve mostly FTSE mid-250 companies.

After university, John joined the Honourable Artillery Company and spent seventeen years soldiering until work commitments made it impossible to continue in an active role. In 1976 he married Françoise and they have two daughters, Caroline (40) and Nicola (37), who are both married, and have four grandchildren. He enjoys travel, gardening, collecting antiques and Victorian paintings, walking, shooting and fine wine. He and Françoise live on the outskirts of Reigate, Surrey.

John became a Freeman of the Company in 2008, a Liveryman in 2011 and joined the Court in 2012. In addition to other roles, for four years he chaired the Property sub-committee, charged with investing the Company's funds in commercial property, and later chaired the Financing sub-committee which raised debt for the Company on favourable terms.