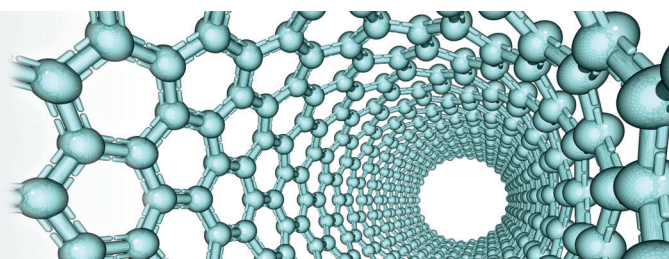


The Inaugural Lecture of Professor Geoffrey Hunt

Rupert Bear, Metaphysics and Nanotechnology

21st February 2012, 5.30pm
to be held in the Waldegrave Drawing Room,
St Mary's University College
Light refreshments will be provided following the lecture



In the world of Rupert Bear anything is possible. Animals have human bodies. Cats, birds, badgers and pigs can speak English. When Rupert wants to know something, however difficult or peculiar, he only has to ask the Professor or the Magician. The adventures of Rupert Bear intrigued and mystified Professor Geoffrey Hunt as a boy and no doubt played their part in leading his life into philosophical questions, such as what is and is not possible. Artistic and literary licence knows no limits, of course, but can this be said of science? Not only do we know that badgers do not in fact speak a human language but that they cannot possibly speak one. 'Cannot' is a fascinating and perplexing concept. What is its meaning or meanings? Are there things which it's not just difficult to know, but *impossible* to know? Are there limits to scientific knowledge and therefore to scientific progress?

Professor Hunt's view is that science will reach a limit, arguably one of an absolute (i.e. metaphysical) kind. Before that point is reached science will find it harder and harder to cross certain boundaries, but its practitioners will not at first understand why this must be the case. This is already partially evident in the case of nanotechnology and artificial intelligence. An awareness of this may throw humanity back to the moral, ethical, spiritual and religious challenges we have long neglected.

RSVP: Kristina Jarabicova, Deputy Principal's Office, St Mary's University College
Waldegrave Road, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, TW1 4SX
Tel **020 8240 4004** Email kristina.jarabicova@smuc.ac.uk