

# The Heath & Hampstead Society, Springett Lecture 2019

## ***Bird Navigation: How do swifts find their way back to Hampstead, and how do pigeons home?***

**Dr Rupert Sheldrake**

Thursday 17 October 2019  
7:30 refreshments, 8:00pm talk  
Rosslyn Hill Chapel  
3 Pilgrim's Place, (entrance from Rosslyn Hill)  
NW3 1NG

Every spring swifts fly from equatorial Africa across the Sahara desert and over Spain and France before crossing the sea to England. They often return to the same place they nested the previous year, where they meet their life-long mates. Racing pigeons can fly home from 600 miles away in a single day, even when released far from anywhere they have ever been before. How do they do it?

Despite decades of research, bird navigation remains unexplained. A magnetic sense may play a part and so may the sun's position. Landmarks help when birds are near their destination and in familiar terrain. But something more mysterious is going on.

Dr Sheldrake will discuss possible explanations and describe some of his own experiments carried out in conjunction with the Royal Dutch Navy, in which the pigeons' home was on a ship that traversed the Atlantic.

*Rupert Sheldrake, Ph.D. is a biologist and author of more than 85 scientific papers and nine books, including *The Science Delusion*. He was a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge and a Research Fellow of the Royal Society, and is now a Fellow of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, in Petaluma, California, and of Schumacher College, in Dartington, Devon. He lives in Hampstead and has been a member of the HHS Heath Sub-Committee for more than 25 years. His web site is [www.sheldrake.org](http://www.sheldrake.org)*

**Kate Springett was the founding president of the MBS so we have always promoted and been part of this event organised by the Heath and Hampstead Society.**

**BUT this year  
NB Venue different from usual, advance booking required  
and event is NOT free to everyone.**

Admission is free for members of the Heath and Hampstead Society and the Marylebone Birdwatching Society. Please RSVP to [info@heathandhampstead.org.uk](mailto:info@heathandhampstead.org.uk).

Admission for non-members is £15 and tickets are available via Eventbrite:  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/springett-lecture-2019-tickets-66879689953>

On the evening of the lecture, non-members will be offered the opportunity to convert their £15 ticket into a discounted annual membership of the Heath & Hampstead Society.

**Please note** MBS members as well as Heath and Hampstead Society members need to **RSVP** by email. Marion Hill has offered to send in a list of names of MBS members – please email [birdsmbs@yahoo.com](mailto:birdsmbs@yahoo.com) or phone 020 7722 2965 by Tu 15/10 if you wish to attend.