



## **Hampshire psychic locks horns with scientist on TV**

MILLIONS of TV viewers will see a prominent Hampshire-based psychic locking horns with a best-selling author and evolutionary biologist who believes superstition is damaging society.

In a Channel 4 show to be screened tomorrow, Craig Hamilton-Parker, from Bishopstoke, tries to convince Professor Richard Dawkins he can talk to the dead.

But after watching him perform a séance, Prof Dawkins, whose book *The God Delusion* is a worldwide smash hit, accuses the Hampshire man of preying on the frailties of vulnerable people.

A vocal atheist and critic of "unsubstantiated" religious beliefs, the professor challenges the psychic to justify his claims, and prove he is not simply letting people read too much into what he tells them.

"Psychics may believe they can communicate with the dead but I have seen no evidence for it," said Prof Dawkins.

"My concern is that for some people this superstitious nonsense can be far more than harmless fun.

"Time and again, so-called psychics claim special status outside science and evidence.

"As a scientist I do not think our indulgence of irrational superstition is harmless. I believe it profoundly undermines civilisation.

"Beyond whether it is true or false, what concerns me as well is the exploitation of often vulnerable people."

But Mr Hamilton-Parker, who previously worked as resident psychic on Channel 4's *Big Breakfast*, says he is convinced of what he does, and believes he can use his powers to help others.

"I believe 100 per cent that what I do is absolutely true because it has been proven to me against my rationality many, many times that life continues (after death)," he said.

"For me it has been life-transforming and I believe that as I was helped then I can help others.

"If you have convinced a person that their grandmother is making the communication, to the point where they are actually crying, surely those tears are proof enough that it really is their grandmother."

The Enemies of Reason: Slaves to Superstition is on Channel 4 tomorrow, starting at 8pm.

9:00am Sunday 12th August 2007

*By Jon Reeve*

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