

Hugh Salmon

Your Independent MP Candidate for Battersea



General Election 2010

Manifesto

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

My name is Hugh Salmon and I am standing as your Independent MP for Battersea in the 2010 General Election.

I know the 'Battersea' Constituency contains some parts of Balham and Wandsworth – but, throughout this Manifesto, when I refer to 'Battersea', I mean the whole constituency.

There is a map outlining the borders of the 'Battersea' constituency on the website: [hughsalmon4battersea.co.uk](http://hughsalmon4battersea.co.uk)

As an Independent candidate for Battersea, I think it is important to set out my political beliefs in a way that reflects my own experiences in life – both personally and professionally.

I do not think it would be appropriate for an Independent candidate to stand for a constituency other than where they live themselves so, where possible, I will address each topic from a local, as well as a national, point of view.

In the 'About Hugh' section of my website, you can see that I have lived in Battersea for nearly 20 years, how well I know Battersea, and how many friends I have made in my 'home town'.

I have also made some suggestions as to how our lives in Battersea could be improved – particularly by the development of a new Secondary School on the old Bolingbroke Hospital site.

As an Independent candidate, I also think I should explain the overall benefits of your electing me as your Independent MP in Parliament – rather than, say, a Labour or Conservative candidate.

First, I apologise for the amount of information in this Manifesto. But, as an Independent candidate, it is important that I demonstrate to you that I am a person of intelligence and integrity and that, if you do vote for me, you know where I am coming from and you can trust me.

Before he became President of the USA, Barack Obama wrote a book about his life called 'Dreams From My Father'. If you haven't read it, then I do recommend it. And I can promise that, however long this Manifesto, it will be less than a whole book!

Also, as a local Independent candidate, when it comes to national issues, I think it is important for you to know where I stand – particularly because an independent voice is likely to carry more influence on any given issue than a backbench 'career politician' in any of the major parties.

## Independent

Please do not confuse the word Independent or 'Independents' with the word 'Independence'. **I am NOT UKIP!!**

I will not be tied to any political party at all. That is why I am standing as the 'Hugh Salmon for Battersea Party'.

The reason for forming a 'party' is that, by doing so, candidates are allowed to add a six-word description and an emblem on the ballot paper.

So, when you, the voter, goes to the polling station, I hope it will help you recognise me better when you read my name plus the line 'Supporting the Battersea Neighbourhood Schools Campaign' and this emblem:



There is more about the Battersea Neighbourhood Schools Campaign on the website [www.thensc.net](http://www.thensc.net).

If I did NOT form a 'party' and stood under the name 'Hugh Salmon', then my name is all you would see on the ballot paper.

As a prospective candidate for Parliament, these are the rules. I'm not sure why, but I can tell you that when it comes to 'rules', there are lots of them!

So, I am standing as an Independent MP to represent the best interests of you, the people of Battersea, in the House of Commons. I will not be whipped by any political party and I will vote for every issue on its own merits and according to my own conscience.

There is more about Independent MPs, and why more of them will be standing in 2010, on the 'Why Independent' tab on my website.

There are going to be many more Independent candidates standing to be your MP at the next General Election.

This will give you the chance to research them and see if you agree with their values and are worthy of your vote.

In the past, you might have felt that all you had to do is go to your local polling booth and vote for one of the traditional parties – knowing that, in turn, for the next 5 years they would just troop into the House of Commons Lobby that their ‘whips’ told them to troop into (and thereby knowing that your vote was never really effective anyway).

Now, this time round, you will have a wider choice of candidates than ever before, including Independents. And, within the Independents, you may find a far higher quality of person than would ever have thought of playing the Party political game for life.

These are the career politicians. They have let us down and I can't stand them.

### Career Politicians

Most of the potential MPs who are standing for Parliament in 2010 will be members of established political parties (Labour, Tory, Lib Dem etc).

And most of these candidates will have been planning their careers within these parties for a very long time.

In fact, this may be the entire focus of their lives since leaving school and/or university. They do not know much about the local area they are standing for, and they may even have been ‘parachuted’ in because their Central Office is aiming to achieve a defined demographic profile.

Here is what John Major said on the Andrew Marr Show (5 July 2009):

*"Already we have a problem with people becoming advisors to Ministers, learning the jargon, getting selected for seats and getting into Parliament without touching real life on the way."*

So, even a former Conservative Prime Minister admits it is important that whoever you vote for has experienced a ‘real life’.

In my case, as a relatively successful 53-year-old, white male I would be unlikely to fit the demographic profile required by any of the major parties – even if I wanted to commit myself to one party's cause.

But, as you will read in the Manifesto, I have been through life's ups and downs. I have touched 'real life'.

And this is the key issue. If the person you vote for is a 'career politician' it is likely that for the next five years, your MP will be 'whipped' into voting the way their Party bosses have told them to vote.

They vote, not for what they believe in as individuals or for the merits of the issue under debate, but for the party they work for. Their career is at stake and it is against the best interests of their career to vote against their own party. They are the ultimate 'jobsworths'.

There is more about this here <http://www.independentnetwork.org.uk>.

I am fortunate enough to have been endorsed by the Independent Network and, as such, am committed to abiding by the principles laid down by the universally respected former Independent MP, Martin Bell. Here they are: <http://www.independentnetwork.org.uk/about-us/bell-principles>.

So, I am not alone!

I am a serious candidate who would like to bring my experience of 'real life' to the benefit of everybody who lives in the Battersea constituency.

Most importantly, if you are disillusioned by politics generally; if you feel detached from the 'career politicians' who have looked after their own interests rather than yours; if you are disgusted by the way MPs have behaved in regard to their expenses; if you are a 'floating voter' - then please consider me, Hugh Salmon, as a serious candidate for your vote.

And please remember that your vote is very important. Throughout history some very brave and honest people, particularly women and ethnic minorities, have fought for the right to vote.

If nothing else, you owe it to them to vote for who you think is the best possible candidate for you and the community you live in – especially now, after the scandalous, sometimes criminal, behaviour and complete lack of integrity of the career politicians who we have elected in the past.

Please let me state my position on the local issues that I think are important. I will then turn to national issues, and inter-weave how they affect us here in Battersea accordingly.....

## 2. LOCAL

### Secondary Schools

When I was a bachelor, before I had children, I used to question why I was paying tax for people with children at school. Now I have children, I am more aware of the absolutely fundamental importance of education in our society. I will discuss this as a national issue later.

As far as Battersea is concerned, the mis-match of the number and quality of our primary schools and the shortage of secondary schools for these children to move on to is an absolute scandal.

It is also unfair. Just as some parents can afford to send their children to private schools (which is unfair too), so some parents in Battersea move to rented housing in Tooting on a temporary basis with the sole objective of getting their children into a good local secondary such as Graveney. Then, having achieved this, they move back 'home' to Battersea.

And the situation now becomes even more farcical. Apparently, the trick is to pay for private tutoring to train your eldest child to fail the entrance exam - because if they fail on academic grounds, but pass because if they 'live' locally, however temporarily, they then qualify for sibling priority and don't have to go and rent in Tooting again. How ridiculous is that?

Clearly, this is not fair on parents who cannot afford to do this.

One of my campaign team is a widow who, in March 2010, has just suffered from this farcical and outrageous situation. Her son has been refused a place at any of her first choice schools and been offered a place at her fourth-choice school.

How can we overcome this scandalous situation?

I live near the old Bolingbroke Hospital. About a year ago, I realised this would be an ideal site for a new secondary school – especially as it is right beside Wandsworth Common. I passionately believe in extra-curricular activities such as sport, and am convinced that the old Bolingbroke Hospital would be an ideal site for a new, local secondary school.

When I started researching this issue, I discovered that there was already an active parent group with exactly the same objective. They are called the 'Neighbourhood Schools Campaign' ([www.thensc.net](http://www.thensc.net)). Whatever the outcome of the General Election, I have made the commitment that I will continue to help this fundamentally important Campaign.

In the meantime, this NSC campaign is the absolute focus of my ambition to stand for Battersea as your local MP.

I am aware that, at the last General Election, 28,499 potential voters in Battersea did not vote at all. The winning Labour candidate achieved 16,569 votes and the losing Conservative candidate achieved 16,406 votes.

So, between them, both Labour and Conservative combined achieved a total vote that only just overtook the number of people who did not vote at all.

And only 24% of the people of Battersea voted for the winning Labour candidate and only 23% voted Conservative.

So, if you are one of the majority of people in Battersea who did not vote for either Labour or Conservative last time – or, indeed, the majority who did not vote for Labour or Conservative combined, then please consider me, Hugh Salmon, as your credible local alternative.

Don't float – vote!

Since the last election, as I will show later in this manifesto, I believe that you, the electorate, have become even more disillusioned with politics and politicians – especially with 'career politicians' - and with good reason.

So, my objective is to provide an alternative for the local people in Battersea, to vote for the old Bolingbroke Hospital to become a an exciting new secondary school – without feeling they have to join the minority of our constituency who vote for either of the two major parties.

Finally, to those who think making Bolingbroke Hospital into a Secondary School will foster a 'them and us' situation, by attracting only the privately tutored wealthier 'Between the Commons' families, please note that every place in the new Bolingbroke School will free up a place in one of the other existing schools nearby providing the best possible solution for all.

Between us, we, the people of Battersea can make this school happen!

### Health

There is no major hospital in Battersea. Those of us who live in the constituency are referred to hospitals elsewhere, such as St George's and Chelsea & Westminster.

For most of us, this either involves depending on unreliable and random bus journeys, expensive car parking charges and/or the fear that one will fail to find a parking space at all.

I propose to meet with these hospitals and with Wandsworth Council to explore ways of overcoming these issues. Perhaps dedicated 'shuttle buses' would be the answer. I would be interested to hear your views.

What I do know, is that there is an inconsistency between the geographical definitions of Wandsworth Council, the NHS Trusts and the Parliamentary constituencies. We must find a way of overcoming these confusing overlaps.

I have had a lot of experience with the NHS and these are reflected in my views on Health at a national level below.

### Battersea Charities

My team and I have an interest in the Paul d'Auria Cancer Centre ([www.pauldauriacentre.org.uk](http://www.pauldauriacentre.org.uk)). This relatively small local charity has been devastatingly affected by the withdrawal of funds from Wandsworth Council.

I am interested in bringing together all the charities in the constituency to explore where they can benefit from shared resources and experience.

For nearly ten years, I was a Trustee of a national charity called Regain (the UK's only charity for tetraplegics injured in a sporting accident). I know only too well how difficult it is to manage small charities. The more government fails, the more important the work of these charities becomes. I believe it is part of the role of the Local MP to support local charities. And I will.

### Uniting the people of Battersea

Since moving to Battersea in 1991, I have become aware that the gulf between the 'haves and the have nots' in Battersea has widened. I believe this may reflect a national trend.

But even though, arguably, I am one of the 'haves', largely because of the increased value of my house - see 'Housing' below - I would like to do everything I can to bring the people of Battersea closer together.

I do not judge people by their wealth, or the title on their business card, or the value of their car, or where they went to school, or their religion or by the colour of their skin.

I judge people by how they behave.

With a close friend, I have written a book about this called 'Do As You Would Be Done By'. You can download the book for free on the website [Lovereading.co.uk](http://lovereading.co.uk) at: <http://tinyurl.com/ye45dk4>.

I admit that the divisions in our society will not be solved easily. But, as your prospective local MP, I would like to do everything I can to bring the people of Battersea closer together.

As an Independent MP sitting, I hope, well above the petty squabbling of the established political parties (whose whole job is to create divisions where they need not exist) I am standing for convergence rather than divergence.

As in my book, by encouraging people to behave to other people as they would like other people to them, I hope we can make a start.

My professional career has been in advertising and marketing, during which time I have learnt that people balance rational and emotional reasons when making decisions.

Bringing people together is a very difficult objective on an emotional level. I believe it can be done, for example by producing media messages that encourage us to feel that we would like to be part of a less divided society. But the financial sums required to produce this material would only be affordable on a national, rather than local, level.

But there is one rational thought I have that I would like to share....

### Clapham Junction

Clapham Junction is not in Clapham. It is in Battersea. How many of us who live in the area have been asked by visitors: "Where is Clapham Old Town?" or "Where is the cinema?"

We have to tell them they are miles away from Clapham.

So, I would like to float the idea that, over a five year Parliamentary cycle we, the people of Battersea, campaign to change the name of Clapham Junction to 'Battersea Junction' or perhaps even to 'Battersea Central'.

I know this would be a huge task. Certainly, I would like to minimise the expense incurred by the rail companies with all the signage, timetables etc.

I am also aware that there is a long history of 'the Junction'. But it would send a signal to the world that we, the people of Battersea, are coming together with the determination to make our 'home town' more united.

We live in a unique part of London. In the Battersea Constituency, we are bordered by a long stretch of the River Thames, we have the whole of Battersea Park - and whoever decides these things has given us half each of Wandsworth and Clapham Commons!

This suggestion about re-naming and re-launching Clapham Junction is aimed at giving Battersea a better sense of identity, unity and cohesion.

Let's define who we are and be proud of ourselves and our home town.

### Traffic

With the South Circular Road running right through Battersea, and with Wandsworth Road becoming increasingly congested (especially with the temporary closure of Albert Bridge), an enormous amount of traffic passes through Battersea. I will lobby Wandsworth Council to produce a more imaginative approach to solving this problem.

Also, we have to accept that we live in streets that, with parked cars on either side, simply do not leave room for traffic going in one direction can pass traffic passing the other way. This often leads to road rage, loud tooting of horns and more uncivilised behaviour.

I have some ideas about how the sensible use of one-way systems can overcome this situation.

### Cycle Lanes

Personally, I am physically disabled from riding a bicycle, but I do think it would be beneficial for those who do ride bicycles to do so more safely and with more confidence. We need more bicycle lanes.

But, cyclists, in return we want you to obey the rules of the road!

### Parking

Parking is a real problem in some parts of Battersea, especially around the Northcote Road at week-ends. I need to understand more about the issue of parking throughout the constituency, from Southside to Nine Elms, from Battersea Bridge to Balham High Road.

Clearly, there have to be controls, but parking control is most definitely a 'Role of Government', in this case local government.

One more thing. It is a fundamental principle of our history and our legal system that you are 'innocent until proven guilty'. As this principle has been conveniently discarded for parking fines (and speeding fines for that matter), where you are 'guilty until proven innocent', in return society deserves this issue to be treated with sensitivity and respect.

Parking regulations are often confusing and poorly communicated. We deserve better than this, especially as the level of punishment can be disproportionately high and, to many, almost completely unaffordable.

### 3. NATIONAL

#### Role of Government

I believe the entire political system by which we are governed would benefit from a fresh approach. We need to re-examine and re-think every area of society and determine what I have called the Role of Government.

Please let me explain.

On the radio programme Desert Island Discs, when asked how and why he "writes women so extraordinarily well", the respected novelist Sebastian Faulks replied: "we are now allowed to admit I think - those wars having been fought and won - that there are small but significant differences between most men and most women.....".

By the same token, I believe we now allowed to admit that the ideological differences between the two major parties have been fought and won.

For those who are too young to remember (and, if you are one of these, more than anyone, you really must vote – it is your future at stake here!), the historic ideological wars between Labour and Conservative were much more clearly defined: in essence, Labour was a socialist party and the Conservatives were a 'free market' party.

In the 1994, at a seminal party conference, Tony Blair tore up the historic Clause 4 of the Labour Constitution ('To secure for the workers... the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service').

In 1995, new Labour was fully ratified and Blair was given the ammunition for his spectacular General Election victory in 1997.

To achieve this, the career politicians who were now running the Labour party conveniently discarded the principles that had lured them into politics in the first place and accepted many of the reforms under 'Thatcherism' that they inherited in 1997.

For example, as a student in 1975, Gordon Brown said: "Political power will become a synthesis of - not a substitute for - community and industrial life. This requires from the Labour Movement in Scotland today a positive commitment to creating a socialist society...".

Well, he does not lead a socialist society now and he knows it.

However, that is not to say that the fruits of 'free market' Thatcherism have been golden apples. In fact, in some areas, we have seen that Britain today is rotten to the core. I am thinking particularly of the greed and self-interest that caused the banking crisis - and the financial controls over our market economy in general. And, of course, MPs expenses where the MPs we elected were above the laws of 'common people' like us.

I am also thinking of the other end of the spectrum, where the poor are poorer, the weak are weaker and the old are older, colder and hungrier.

The Conservatives have identified that we live in a 'broken society', but they have failed to tell us how they are going to fix it. Their core message is that this will be the 'Year of Change'. The lack of intelligence and sheer banality behind this claim shows, if they do win the next General Election, how the Conservatives need to be provoked and challenged by people like me.

Also under this section called 'Role of Government', there are two further social dynamics that I will attempt to incorporate and inter-weave into each social area:

1. Our society is more divided than ever before. We need to learn to live together - to converge, not diverge - and I will reveal some ways I think this can be achieved.

2. When examining social issues with the intention of defining the 'Role of Government' in each case, one is often led to two key factors that modern governments must provide – freedom and protection.

Finally, in any manifesto, there are numerable issues that need to be addressed. For the sake of the people of Battersea, I will be as honest and frank as I can – as I always will be.

But, as a 'one-person-party', I cannot pretend to be an expert in every local issue. Not yet, anyway. Where I have a point of view, I will express it but, in every political area, I am independent, open-minded and am interested in representing the views and expertise of my neighbours in Battersea.

There are four areas in which I believe I can claim some expertise and these are: education, health, market economy and the media.

In each of these four areas, I will provide a Personal and a Professional perspective.

As this has been my career, I will also provide a fresh Insight which will, I hope, help us redefine the issues we face in today's society and, through innovative thinking, help us move forward to a more prosperous and united future.

## EDUCATION

### Personal

The particular cause which has inspired me to fight this election is the scandalous lack of secondary schools in the Battersea constituency.

On a national level, I am aware of the plans of the Conservative Party to act quickly if elected:

"We will immediately change the law so we can set hundreds of good schools free from political interference and enable them to help struggling schools. We will enable them to re-open as Academies this September. And we will empower them to take over failing primaries or other schools which need their leadership."

This is all very well but how can they guarantee these plans will be so effective so quickly for all schools and all children? If even one child in one school drops through the net, this policy will have failed.

As a society, we must make absolutely certain that the appalling cruelty and treatment suffered by Baby Peter and Kyrah Ishaq must never happen again. I was absolutely appalled by the sheer inhumanity of these poor young children dying the way they did. I am ashamed to live in a society where this could happen.

We must realise that poor education breeds and festers parents who treat children like this and we must make sure that we create a society where respect for others is vital and create a watertight education system where tragedies like this simply cannot happen.

It is a vicious circle that must be broken and successive governments and politicians have failed us in overcoming the appalling lack of opportunity we provide for our children.

We must develop an educational system where parents are free to choose the right school for their children but, at the same time, ensure poorer, less academic children are protected from being left out of the system.

Finally, having been to both Roman Catholic and Protestant schools myself, I do not understand how the existence of 'faith schools' can contribute positively to a 'multi-cultural society'.

I do understand that many parents want their children to be brought up with their own faith. But, if these parents are really honest with themselves (and truth is at the heart of most religions) is the real reason they want their children at a faith school because the alternative state school is so bad?

In a multi-cultural society is it really the 'Role of Government' to organise and fund schools of different faiths where children leave school to join a multi-faith big wide world outside? Surely faith schools create cultural, as well as religious divisions in society rather than bring them together?

We have to admit that some faiths predominate in certain parts of the world. Some of these places have developed their own unique cultures. Some of these cultures are defined by race. Would we tolerate 'race schools'? Of course not. But is this where faith schools are leading us?

God, I hope not.

Remember, I am standing for convergence rather than divergence.

### Professional

I am a Co-founder and Director of [www.Lovereading.co.uk](http://www.Lovereading.co.uk), which has twice been nominated for Innovation in the Book Trade (the 'Nibbies').

Since launch in 2005, Lovereading has expanded to include:

[www.Lovereading4kids.co.uk](http://www.Lovereading4kids.co.uk)

[www.Lovereading4schools.co.uk](http://www.Lovereading4schools.co.uk)

and [www.Lovewriting.co.uk](http://www.Lovewriting.co.uk).

Through these businesses, we have been able to validate the national lack of literacy – and, importantly the sheer enjoyment of reading. If we can encourage our children to read more, they will learn more, they will gain more knowledge and they will be less ignorant of the world around them.

### Insight

I believe that every child has a talent, and that it is the responsibility of schools to help identify and nurture this talent. It is not enough to set academic targets without balancing them with teaching wider skills such as sport, music and the arts.

Over the years, the 'equalisation' of the comprehensive system and the introduction of Academic League Tables, where schools and children are judged by academic achievement alone, have been a spectacular failure.

It is easy to see why untrustworthy politicians and bureaucratic Government Departments set these targets. But they are a cop out.

Children themselves know whether or not they are more talented than the other children in their year. "OMG, Dad, X is brilliant at Maths. I'll never be

as good as her". "OMG, Dad, Y is a really quick runner – he beats me by miles!". "OMG, Dad, Z is fantastic guitarist – you should hear her!".

Children themselves know they are not equal. So, let's be grown up and admit this and give our children the chance to develop their talents in the things they are good at - and not judge them by academic results alone.

On a separate note if, in the private sector, teachers are provided with accommodation on top of their salary, why cannot state schools do the same? I am not an expert on Housing, but surely it would be easier to recruit new, better teachers straight from College or University if they were not burdened by the level of local property prices, especially in expensive urban areas like Battersea?

The Conservative Party has announced a policy that teachers can only qualify if they achieve a degree above a certain level. What about Art teachers, or Music teachers, or Sports teachers? Why does an academic degree make them a better teacher?

The most talented graduates often choose careers other than teaching because they are more financially remunerative. If accommodation came free with the job, then I am sure more graduates would become teachers.

If, as a society, we treated teachers better we would get better teachers.

## **HEALTH**

### **Personal**

In the years leading up to November 2005, I began to suffer from increasingly chronic back pain. Following numerous MRI scans, with all the waiting time involved, at the Chelsea & Westminster and Charing Cross Hospitals, I underwent three surgical operations on my back at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore.

More recently, in 2009, I attended a three-week Pain Management Programme at The Wolfson Neuro-Rehabilitation Centre in Wimbledon.

These experiences have severely affected my career but, more positively, they have opened my eyes to the suffering of people around me – and my desire to help them.

Although I like to think that I have always contributed to the society around me throughout my life, I admit that the sheer level of pain, and the length of time I have suffered this pain, has directly led me to offer myself to stand as your MP in Battersea.

If it were not for this, it is unlikely that my professional career would have enabled me to make this move.

I am not a 'career politician'.

### Professional

In 2003, I was asked by the Department of Health to find a way to persuade people to use and, in particular, access the NHS more efficiently.

The NHS felt that if I could help them persuade patients to go to appropriate 'Primary Care' outlets before seeing their GP, then this would lessen the burden on GP surgeries and cut down waiting times – which was the major complaint about NHS services.

My simple insight was that all the communications material about the NHS was distributed within GP surgeries (and hospitals for that matter).

When you enter your GP surgery, you are inundated with publicity material for all manner of medical conditions and social issues.

Yet, when you walk out of the surgery into the big wide world, the NHS is largely invisible.

So I took a walk from Tooting Bec station to St George's Hospital. There were no less than thirteen NHS outlets, not one of which had any NHS branding whatsoever.

For example, if you went to see your NHS-trained doctor, there would be no NHS branding outside the surgery, if he gave you a prescription (on an unbranded green form), you would take it to the chemist (no NHS branding), you would walk to the Pharmacy section at the back of the store (no NHS branding) and receive your medicine, often for free, from the NHS-trained pharmacist and walk out of the store with your medicine in a paper bag with a green cross on it (no NHS branding) – plus various other items you had bought from the same shop at the same time.

So, my recommendation was that the NHS should approach all of these outlets and insist that these stores place an NHS sign outside with the promise that this would mean that inside the store would be the leaflet advising you of how and where to access your local Primary Care outlets.

Following presentations to the Department of Health, I was asked to present my recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office of Public Service Reform.

Soon after, although they tried to claim this thinking for themselves (clearly, Civil Service integrity is consistent with their Ministers), the Department of Health announced that my ideas were to be adopted nationally.

## Insight

In my life, especially recently, I have depended more than most on the NHS.

From my own personal and professional experience, I treasure this unique privilege. With a few newsworthy exceptions, I am convinced that the standard and quality of medical treatment provided by the NHS is a match for anywhere in the world.

What lets the NHS down is management (in which I include cleaning).

I believe it is absolutely within the 'Role of Government' to fund and support the NHS, but I myself have heard NHS staff say 'the Government wants every child to have an MMR injection' and even 'the Government is investing in pain' (yes, it's true). But I don't want 'the Government' anywhere near my body. Don't you touch me with that needle, Gordon!

All the major political parties claim the NHS will be better under their management, but I don't want any Government – especially these career politicians who, as John Major said, have never touched real life, to manage the NHS at all.

I appreciate this is a hugely complex issue, and that it is difficult to provide high services on a local level within a national service. I just don't think the people charged with addressing the issue (i.e. politicians and civil servants) are the right people to do it.

As demonstrated by the Primary Care issue above, I know I could help sort this out.

## **MARKET ECONOMY**

### Personal

This is where my philosophy of 'freedom and protection' most applies.

As stated above, I think we can now admit that the historic ideological wars between socialism and free enterprise are over. We have to accept that we live in a global, free market economy.

I had my own professional experience where this freedom was abused.

It took five long years and the immense support of friends and family to help me demonstrate my honesty and integrity and to protect my professional reputation.

## Professional

In 1992, I was head-hunted in true cloak-and-dagger style by a publicly-quoted, international advertising Group to be Managing Director of a London subsidiary called CM:Lintas.

Soon after my arrival, I realised the Chairman was perpetrating a financial fraud against the company and I reported this to the senior management of the holding company in London.

In order to protect the scam, these managers retained the fraudster and fired me. It emerged that he had told lies about me in order to get me out of the way and the senior managers supported him.

In 1997, after five long years, the holding company (Interpublic) caved in, admitted I had been fired for false reasons and that I had been 'justified in bringing these proceedings' (lawyer-speak for admitting the fraud) and I was compensated with substantial damages.

During these five years, my lawyer advised me to beware my telephone was being tapped, not to stand near the line at railway stations, to discard rubbish away from my house and check the brakes of my car before driving. A mysterious person even called my old school to check that I had obtained five A Levels and if I had lied about this on my CV (of course, I hadn't). I suspect this person was working for a private detective. Not nice.

At the end of the case, my lawyer advised me that at least three of the other side had committed criminal offences and should have been imprisoned. Quite the opposite happened. Despite the cost of the case, they carried on working for Interpublic for many years until retirement.

In the event, my action against that publicly quoted company must have cost over £2million and not one employee was effectively punished.

For me, having tried on numerous occasions to get back into the 'big time' international advertising and media groups, I have been told that, since this court case, I am seen as 'damaged goods'. It's a funny old world.

## Insight

We have to find a way of managing a free market economy based on trust and transparency. Too many people in business are too dishonest. Too many can 'get away with it'. And, if their employees get caught, too many companies, especially public companies, would rather buy these people off than risk any perceived damage to their corporate reputations. This includes giving false references for known fraudsters.

It is imperative that if modern society is to be based on free markets, there must be laws where companies found 'covering up' financial fraud by their employees, and sweeping these issues under the carpet, are heavily fined with criminal charges brought against managers, directors and owners.

My deepest concern is that 'career politicians' are the least qualified people to solve this problem. I'm not sure they even want to. It has been shown quite clearly that these politicians themselves have at best bent the rules and at worst committed criminal offences. We must not forget that these fiddles have not been perpetrated by a flipping few. It is the sheer number of offending MPs that is such a disgrace.

Let's face it, even the Party Leaders have had to repay wrongly claimed expenses.

In this free market economy, as our politicians themselves have shown, we have failed to place a value on the importance of integrity and this must change.

I would like to call for a major cross-party review of how Government can make laws which foster and encourage a free market economy and, at the same time, protect society from the wilful exploitation of this freedom.

For example, I believe that, in any business, action by an employer to knowingly pressurise an employee to lie on behalf of the management should be made a criminal offence. The perpetrators of these crimes should face prison sentences.

This is just one example. There are many others, including my own experience. Neither the banking crisis nor the MPs expenses scandal surprised me. They are the tip of the iceberg.

I support and applaud the work of the charity 'Public Concern at Work' ([www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)) which helps whistleblowers act in the public interest.

## **THE MEDIA**

### Personal

I believe in the 'freedom of the press', although I share the concerns about children's access to the internet. How to give children the freedom to access the huge volume of knowledge and information whilst, at the same time, protect them from internet abuse? This is a very serious debate and will only become more serious over time.

I believe that 'being of interest to the public' is different from 'acting in the public interest' and support recent decisions by the judiciary that all of us, including politicians, have the right to a private life.

However, I cannot abide hypocrites who say (preach) one set of values and act in another. Politicians have been guilty of this in the past.

### Professional

Throughout my career, I have worked in advertising and the media. It is an exciting and invigorating business sector which is constantly changing.

In my youth, I conceived and founded a music magazine called SFX (industry short-hand for 'sound effects'). The idea was to take advantage of the Sony Walkman and an amazing new invention called cassette tape.

More recently, I have co-founded Lovereading.co.uk and helped that business evolve into new areas. Unfortunately, for health and financial reasons, I have not been able to contribute as much to this business on a day-to-day level as my talented and hard-working co-founders.

My own company, The Salmon Agency, has evolved into more of an innovations consultancy business than a full-service agency. But I do have some views on the relationship between the media and government.

### Insight

I have a suggestion which the last may be the most important thought in this manifesto (and possibly of my life).

I believe there is one vitally important area where we are under-using the potential of the media.

It concerns what we call 'Defence' but recently has been 'Attack' (Iraq).

A seminal moment in my life came when I was one of the first European business managers to visit Vietnam. At the time, I was the General Manager of Ogilvy & Mather in Thailand. Our US clients were embargoed from engaging with Vietnam and our European and Thai clients wanted to find potential business opportunities in the Vietnamese population of 70 million 'consumers' before their American competitors were allowed in.

I was told I would have a 'guide' but that really he was a Government employee who would report back on all of my movements. A spy.

At the War Museum in Saigon, in rows of glass jars, were the deformed embryos who had been conceived by Vietnamese mothers whose homes had been blanket-bombed by napalm dropped by American airplanes.

During this trip, I was constantly urging my guide that I was European, not American. He told me I did not need to do this. The Vietnamese held nothing against Americans. After all "we won the war" he claimed "but what we couldn't understand was that the Americans were bombing us in South Vietnam when our leaders told us they were on our side".

Of course, the Americans could not tell the difference between a North Vietnamese 'enemy' citizen from a South Vietnamese 'friendly' citizen – so they decided to bomb the lot of them. And, more recently, I fear this ruthless military strategy may have caused the appalling, and unforgivable, suffering of the children of Fallajuh in Iraq.

We are told that we are in Iraq and Afghanistan to win over the 'hearts and minds of the people'.

Yet when President Obama, who inherited this mess, wanted to win over the hearts and minds of Republican voters to win the US election, did he do it by sending in the troops, by shooting people or by dropping bombs? Of course he didn't. He used sophisticated 'new media' techniques.

Do we, here in cosy Britain, with a General Election looming, know who votes Conservative and who votes Labour? No, of course we don't. And I don't think even our ruthless and unprincipled politicians will be blanket bombing us all in the hope that they will mop up the other side.

And now consider what happened when it emerged that thousands of Iranians felt that their election in Iran had been fixed. What did they do?

They used new media channels, especially Twitter, to protest at what was happening. In June 2009, the BBC reported: 'Although there are signs that the Iranian government is trying to cut some communications with the outside world, citizen journalism appears to be thriving on the web.'

Yet when it comes to us communicating to them, we send in the tanks.

Where is the media strategy that we could develop, and media intelligence we could apply, to work alongside our brave Army soldiers?

In Iraq or Afghanistan, how on earth can these brave service men and women tell the Al Qaeda or the Taliban from the rest of the population? Recently, I heard a radio report that the issue facing our brave servicemen and women in Afghanistan is that the Taliban disguise themselves as local people, enter a village, lay a few bombs, blow up some soldiers and then disappear back into the hills.

What if we provided the villagers (who presumably know who all the Taliban insurgents are but are too scared to say) with the media technology such as

laptops and mobile phones to keep our soldiers, or select 'middle men' informed as to presence of our real enemies within?

And how differently would our Army be perceived if, instead of firing guns and parading around in tanks and dropping bombs (as well as dying for the cause themselves), they handed out laptops and mobile phones and develop messages to help the local people understand the reasons we are there?

And wouldn't it help these poor people in these poor countries if we told them more clearly and more often what we are doing there and what we are fighting for – human rights, the difference between right and wrong, the rule of law, the importance of education, respect for others, 'do as you would be done by', tolerance, freedom of speech, liberty, democracy?

Quite apart from the lives lost, the BBC have reported that the ultimate bill for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could reach \$3 trillion (\$3,000bn). That is a lot of second-hand laptops and mobile phones.

So, my proposal is to allocate just a small percentage of these vast costs to develop a media strategy to communicate what we are up to.

If millions of Americans and Europeans cannot understand why we are in Iraq and Afghanistan, how on earth can we expect the indigenous people to have a clue what we are doing there either?

I believe passionately that, as one of the great 'creative' countries of the world, we should be developing a more sophisticated approach.

We have the expertise to persuade people to change the way they behave. It is called Behavioural Economics. But I do not believe we use these skills to overcome the really important things in our society or the wider world.

Instead, we have our creative, media and communications experts using meerkats to sell insurance and a gorilla to sell chocolate.

Come on, we can do better than this.

One further thought. Why is it that the responsibility of countering terrorism within Britain is the responsibility of The Home Office (i.e. the Police), but outside Britain is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence (i.e. the Military)? Surely terrorism is an international problem that, like the internet, transcends national borders?

In my experience, expecting two parts of one Government Department to communicate with each other is a recipe for disaster, let alone completely different Departments with different hierarchies and different Ministers.

I reckon this muddled management structure makes us sitting ducks.

## OTHERS

So far, I have discussed what I think I can achieve on a local level in Battersea as your Independent local MP.

And in my 'specialist' four areas – Education, Health, Market Economy and The Media – I have provided an in-depth analysis of the professional skills and experience I would hope to achieve on a national level.

I will now provide short answers as to where I stand on a number of other issues.

## CRIME

In my life, I am lucky not to have been the victim of serious crime.

However, my family has suffered from anti-social behaviour, and we know the culprits, so we understand the difficulty of taking them to task, or calling the authorities, because one is fearful of escalating the problem.

I am sure this is a dilemma many of us have faced and it is a terrible indictment of society today.

My parents had their house robbed once. My dad didn't care much about the stuff that got nicked. But he was distraught that his war medals and OBE were among the haul. How can any thief look at himself in the mirror with any self-dignity having robbed a poor old man of such priceless possessions for the sake of a few quid? I just don't understand it.

I am against the death penalty for domestic murders. Any of us who were living near Wandsworth and Clapham Commons following Rachel Nickell's murder on Wimbledon Common in July 1992 must have felt a real sense of concern - and deep sympathy for her two-year-old son who was with her.

However, the way the police tried to frame Colin Stagg for this murder was an absolute disgrace and has compromised my feeling of trust in the police forever. For me, this was the death knell for capital punishment.

There may be a case for capital punishment for terrorist offences as indiscriminate acts of war. After all, you don't hear many complaints about the hanging of Saddam Hussein.

I would have to think carefully about this if asked to vote.

As for the Police, since I have started writing this manifesto, only a few short weeks before the General Election, a seven year old girl has been starved to death, a man has fathered nine children by repeatedly raping his own two

daughters and a sad and vulnerable 64 year old man has been hounded to death after ten years of harassment by local youths.

I have said that for most social issues, the Role of Government comes down to defining and ensuring freedom and protection.

Nowhere is this more important than the local areas where we live.

I am not an expert in how the Social Services work in Battersea but I promise you that, if you vote for me as your MP, I soon will be.

And, as I hope I have shown elsewhere in this Manifesto, I know I will find new and creative insights to help overcome anti-social behaviour.

It is a crime that people in our society can behave in this way.

When it comes to Crime, our flipping politicians have totally let us down.

Perhaps they have been too busy committing criminal offences themselves.

## HOUSING

I fear that, in modern Britain, our housing system divides us as much as our education system. We are divided by the 'private' and 'state' sectors.

As someone who has either paid rent or owned a house, I have always lived in 'private sector' housing.

More recently, I have come to learn more about 'public sector' housing – and I am keen for a dialogue with the people of Battersea to examine whether or not the system is as fair as it should be.

I have an instinct, but no evidence, that there are people who 'play the system' to the detriment of others whose housing needs are far greater.

If you have any evidence of this, please contact me if I win this election. It is a vitally important issue and one which I would very much like to address with more knowledge and evidence behind me.

## IRAQ

Until he appeared at the Chilcot enquiry, I was one of the few prepared to give Tony Blair the benefit of the doubt in that, if he was convinced that the US were going into Iraq to get Saddam anyway (which they were), then he may have judged that by going in alongside Bush, he would have avoided a USA vs Europe clash (which is just what Al Qaeda would have wanted).

As we now know this was not the case, I feel more let down than the rest of you. But I hope I have contributed to a more speedy outcome, and an earlier withdrawal of troops, by my media proposals above.

## TAX

I believe that tax should not be so onerous as to discourage a healthy free market economy but should be sufficient to deliver 'front-line' services.

Businesses need the freedom to make profits and thrive.

The Role of Government is to set tax levels that will encourage legal, free enterprise in such a way that Government can protect for the poor, the old, the sick, the disabled and the 'underclass' that divides our society.

Before the banking crisis, I believe we had the taxation balance about right – except we spent too much in the good times which has left us short of cash for the bad times. This is not a party political point. It is the truth.

## EUROPE

I believe Britain should be a self-governing nation state within a free enterprise, trading co-operative with our neighbours in Europe.

I do have one insight here which is that, if we do ever have to join the Euro, all this would mean would be 'pegging' our currency to the Euro.

We would not have to throw away the pound. For example, in The Bahamas, where the Bahamian dollar is pegged to the US dollar, both Bahamas and US currencies exist and are used side-by side.

If ever we do enter the Euro zone, we would have to make sure we went in at a favourable exchange rate, which is certainly not now.

## ENVIRONMENT

I am in line with the majority thinking on the environment, although the society cannot be governed on a totally 'green' agenda.

The 'haves' may think we can live this way but the 'have-nots' know we can't. Many people are struggling to get through their own lives and their own difficulties, and I know the feeling.

As far as the environment (and global poverty) is concerned, the priority is to identify and minimise needless waste so that we can re-allocate money and resources to the people who need it most. Again, I am open to ideas here.

I recently joined the much-despised people in London who drive a 4x4 car. This decision was taken because I am disabled by chronic back pain and it is easier for me to get in and out of one of these cars. I would rather have bought a car that was more environmentally friendly (and cheaper).

Chewing gum on pavements is really annoying. Chewing gum manufacturers should provide wrapping for every 'pastel' and urge their customers to use this to discard chewing gum less selfishly. Sir Alex Ferguson, I'm marking you!

Lastly, we need more waste re-cycling points in Battersea. The queues for the tip in Smugglers Way are ridiculous, especially just when you need them. This seems to be a seasonal issue, so the tip needs to be open for longer hours at these times of year.

### FAMILY

I am lucky to have come from a close family and to be a happily married husband and father.

Others are not so lucky, but I do not think it is the 'Role of Government' to massage the tax system with a view to socially engineering marriage. What if you are a widow – or your husband beat you up?

'Family' is not just Mum and Dad. As we know from other cultures, family is a much wider support group, including friends and neighbours.

### ID CARDS

I do not mind carrying an ID card. In fact, I think it might be quite useful. But I do not believe it is the 'Role of Government' to force people to do so.

### FOX-HUNTING

In my late teens, a farmer friend invited me shooting. I shot a pigeon but when I approached where it had landed, I saw I had not killed it and had to blow its brains out. I did not enjoy this experience and vowed never to shoot anything ever again. So I haven't.

However, I do not think it is the 'Role of Government' to ban people from traditional countryside pursuits although I do hope that, over time, social awareness will be such that we do not kill animals for sport.

I am happy to talk to Battersea people, and Wandsworth Council, to sound out opinions on urban foxes. They make a mess and smell. But I don't want to shoot one.

That would be the end.