

# Alice in Parliament

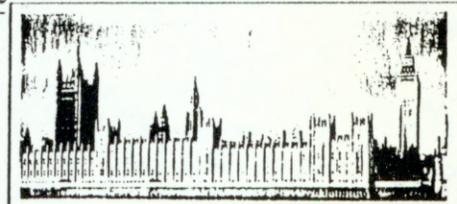
**Alice Mahon**  
**Halifax MP**

## Pass Notes

<b>Name:</b>	Alice Mahon
<b>Occupation:</b>	Labour MP for Halifax since 1987
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	28 September 1937
<b>Place of Birth:</b>	Halifax
<b>Majority at 1992 election:</b>	478
<b>Political Career:</b>	Member of Labour Party for 30 years, Trade Union Steward, District Councillor (1982-87)
<b>Union Sponsorship:</b>	UNISON
<b>Previous Occupations:</b>	Auxiliary Nurse, College Lecturer
<b>Personal:</b>	Married, two sons (over 18yrs old)
<b>Special Interests:</b>	Member of Select Committee for Health, member of North Atlantic Assembly, Chair of All Party Group on Breast Cancer, UN Association, Member of All Party Group on Human Rights
<b>Most likely to say:</b>	It's outrageous.
<b>Least likely to say:</b>	Post-endogenous growth theory



## UPHILL ALL THE WAY



**Winning the Halifax seat from the Tories in 1987 meant that I became one of only 139 women to enter the British Parliament since 1919.**

Getting to Parliament was an uphill struggle. However I was lucky in that coming from a large Labour family, politics has always been part of my life. My mother was a mill-worker with a keen interest in the establishment of the NHS and my father, a bus-driver, was deeply involved in Trade Union activities. Both were staunch socialists. Like many women, I brought up my two sons whilst working in a low paid job. It was whilst I was an auxiliary nurse that I was thrust into the deep end of politics as a Union steward.

**At the time, my colleagues were being pushed around by the management and I wasn't prepared to sit on the sidelines.**

Once my children were grown up I decided to enrol on a Social Policy and Administration degree at Bradford University as a mature student. After working all my life, three years to read and study was a wonderful opportunity.

From there I became a Trade Union lecturer and at the same time, a local councillor.

Becoming a local councillor is a traditional route into parliamentary politics and certainly is an invaluable training ground. I enjoyed representing the views of people in my local community.

In 1987, with the encouragement of the local constituency members, my union and my family, I decided to stand as the Labour candidate against the Tory MP for Halifax. During the campaign, my gender was an issue, not only with opponents but also within the Labour Party. Several members felt that as a working class woman, I would not be able to hold my own in Parliament. However, Halifax had been represented by a Labour woman MP previously, and I feel this helped counter a lot of prejudice.

*If you are interested in becoming a Labour MP, a very useful publication is*

**"Uphill All The Way"**

*from Labour Women's Network (£3)*

*PO BOX 708, LONDON SW10 0DH*