

WILPF and The Clapham Film Unit present

These Dangerous Women

A Heritage Lottery Funded project

Eleanor Barton

1872 - 1960

By Gillian Lawrence

“A worker for the workers”

Born in Stockton in 1872, just after the first women's suffrage committee was formed, Eleanor Barton attended Socialist League Meetings with her brother Herbert in her late teens. It was here that she fell in love with her husband Alfred with whom she would continue the fight for the free speech that she so strongly believed in. Calling herself an Anarchist-Communist as her brother and husband liked to be known, Barton became active in the political arenas of Sheffield, to which she and Alf moved when she was just 25.

On the 4th August 1914, Barton was at the second anti-war for peace rally in Kingsway Hall, London and as president of the Women's Cooperative Movement she addressed the audience. She stood for peace and for working women, co-operation and the Labour Movement. As a working women herself she was billed as “A worker for the workers”.

Eleanor Barton was also secretary of the Brightside and Carbrook's Hillsborough branch a branch of the Sheffield Cooperative Movement rising up to become a director of the Sheffield Co-op.

At the age of 48 Barton became the first woman to be elected to Sheffield Council. At the same time Nancy Astor was the first woman to get into Parliament. Eleanor Barton stood as Labour candidate for Attercliffe in the 1920 council elections in Sheffield, a seat where women's suffrage was a prominent topic.

When Alfred died in 1933 Barton emigrated to New Zealand.

