

WILPF and The Clapham Film Unit present

# These Dangerous Women

A Heritage Lottery Funded project

**Sarah Reddish**

**1850-1928**

By Alison Ronan

**“left school at the age of 11 to work with her mother, a silk weaver”**

Sarah Reddish was born in Bolton and left school at the age of 11 to work with her mother, a silk weaver. Her father was a librarian and secretary to the Bolton Co-op Education. Sarah became a forewoman in a hosiery mill and by the 1890s she was active in the Lancashire and Cheshire Women Textile and Other Workers' Representative Committee with other trade union activists like Eva Gore Booth (sister of Countess Markievicz) and her partner Esther Roper who were active in the suffrage movement in Manchester. By the 1890 she was elected to the School Board, as a Poor Law Guardian and active in the Women's Co-operative Guild.

Sarah was a radical suffragist, a group of working class suffragists whose aim was 'womanhood suffrage' (voting rights for *all* women). Where they were prepared to support demands for limited women's suffrage, they saw this as a step towards full universal suffrage and not an end in itself.

The radical suffragists naturally took the question of women's suffrage into their own organisations – the cotton workers' and weavers' trade unions, the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Independent Labour Party (ILP, formed in 1893) and, later, the Labour Representation Committee (which preceded the Labour Party).

Sarah would have known [Margaret Ashton](#) through the suffrage campaigns and trade union activity throughout Lancashire and Cheshire in the years before the war. She was a political woman and her visibility in the region as a champion of women's rights made her a natural choice as a delegate for The Hague in 1915.

