

# Rose Scott

**“did more real good in the town amongst those who needed it than any other single individual”**

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**By John Buckell**

Rose Scott

Amy Rosaline Scott was the daughter of one Baptist minister and became the wife of another. She was a life-long campaigner against poverty, at first



through church work. However, becoming convinced that poverty was the result of an unjust social system, she joined the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), and was elected to the Croydon Board of Guardians. She also became a national speaker for the SDF.

Rose Jarvis, as she was, came to Northampton in 1905. The following year she was elected to the Northampton Guardians and married Charles James Scott, a leading member of the local SDF. As a Guardian, Rose

criticised the poor building standards of the town's elementary schools. She worked for the relief of the unemployed and unmarried mothers, and urged the Board to employ a female Relieving Officer to give confidence to female clients. When told that this was too expensive, she retorted, "I am a member of this board to guard the poor, not the rates."

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In January 1910, the Northampton Mercury published a number of New Year messages from prominent citizens of the town. Rose was one of a small number of women invited to do so. Her message comprised the problems of local unemployment, child poverty and housing shortage.

Rose established the SDF Women's Circle, with about 20 members, a forerunner of the later Labour Party Women's Section. She supported women's suffrage, but only if all women and men were enfranchised regardless of property. When Emmeline Pankhurst spoke at a meeting in Northampton, Rose challenged her on this point.

During the First World War Rose served on the Food Control Committee, one of three women on a 15 strong committee tasked with keeping down the prices of food and fuel. The Committee urged the government to introduce rationing, but this was not done until 1918.

In 1919 Rose became the first woman to be elected to the Town Council. She served on the Education, Finance, and Health Committees and the Sites and Buildings Sub-Committees. She chaired the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee.

Rose died in St Matthew's Hospital, Kingsley, in 1923. There were many tributes, among them one from the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. D. J. McCrindle, which contained these words: "I consider she did more real good in the town amongst those who needed it than any other single individual, man or woman." She is commemorated by a blue plaque on her former home in Birchfield Road.