

Remembering Eliza Richards

by Alan Miles [\[email\]](#)

I have written something in tribute about the once Mayor of Walthamstow in 1941 and also about some of the family connections that Keith Richards had with Walthamstow.

In his autobiography "Life" he writes a little bit about the early Labour movement in Walthamstow. In his family Keith had stern and rigid socialists " Bert's father my grandfather, Ernest G Richards known locally as Uncle Ernie, was not just a Labour party stalwart , Ernie was up in arms for the working man and when he started there was no socialist movement there was no Labour party" .

At the beginning of the party they had two MPs in 1900. Keith also recalls Walthamstow as being the recipient of many eastenders moving out of the East End. Then Walthamstow was a very fertile territory for socialism. Keith remembers Walthamstow as becoming a Labour party stronghold, secure for Clement Atlee. In these days of rising socialism, I think a most outstanding figure who seems hardly to be remembered, was Eliza Richards (Keith's grandma). "Like Ernie she had risen through the political hierarchy her origins were in Bermondsey, working-class and she more or less invented Child Welfare for Walthamstow, a real reformer. She must have been a piece of work as she became chairman of the housing committee, in a borough that had one of the biggest programmes of council housing expansion in the country"

Fortunately, or unfortunately Eliza refused to give Doris and Bert (Keith's parents) a council house. Eliza told them "I can't give you a council house just because you are my daughter-in-law". Fortunately, they moved to Dartford where Keith was born and where we got The Stones. Just think if Keith had been born in E17 he may have ended up in the band Sam Apple Pie or worse never to meet Mick Jagger.

The book "Life" by Keith Richards is published by Orion Publishing Group 2011 and it is a good read for grey-tops and silver-tops.