

## 'Blind Alf' (Alfred Warrington Lodge)

Alfred Lodge was a well-known character on the streets of Leeds in the early 20th century. He sang and played his concertina to entertain people around the Commercial Street corner of Lands Lane and in Briggate for over 40 years.



Photograph of Alf Lodge

At the age of 9 he decided to start making his own way in life, having seen how his parents struggled to feed all their children. He took a whistle and Bible and began reading and playing outside Arthur's factory.

Once he could afford it he bought a concertina (although his obituary in 1928 mentions that "when the fates were unkind, the concertina was missing, but it was not long before Alf had acquired sufficient money to regain it again from the custody of the pawnbroker").

He was also able to play the piano, harmonium and fiddle. Above all he was noted for his "voice of peculiarly deep timbre, which he turned to advantage in his misfortune".

Alf lost his sight at three weeks old. When interviewed by the Yorkshire Evening Post on 24 November 1921 he said "I have not wanted sight, though there were things I should have liked to have seen".

# SOUNDS OF OUR CITY



## Alf's Leeds City Tramways 'Free Pass for Blind Person'

His ambition was to appear as a music-hall singer and he did make several appearances at the Leeds City Varieties, particularly in the revue "Hello! Leeds" during the First World War. In 1922 he wrote and published a patriotic hymn called "The Call to Duty".

In the 1921 interview he noted the changes he had witnessed in Leeds despite his lack of sight. He noted that the noise of the streets and traffic had increased, and wrote about them in a book using his braille frame.

He was conservative in his musical tastes, learning most of his songs from opera and disliking modern fads such as ragtime! He died of a stroke aged 61 in 1928, and was buried in Burmantofts Cemetery.



Newspaper photograph of "Blind Alf", probably from the Yorkshire Post