

The Cotton and The Rose

Words & Music: Geoff Drummond (3.45)

For Michelle Erceg, Maree George and all the 'Roses' of the Cotton Country.

Dateline.. Narrabri, NSW

As chronicled in 'The Gamblers on the Land' {Best Of Australia, ABC Country Records 514 218 2}, my grandfather was among the first men to put cotton into Central Queensland. As a result, I suppose, I feel a special affinity for the Cotton Country. When I heard this love song of Geoff's about an exile from the bush whose thoughts turn homeward, it reminded me of the times I had spent in and around Warren and Nevertire, where I played The Macquarie Cotton Growers Cup in 1991. Flat roads, warm smiles and verges dusted in a ribbon of cotton, hundreds of kilometres long.

I'm going back to Narrabri;
heading west with the sun in my eyes.
The speedo says, a hundred miles
up the Boggabri Road.
The black top stretches out forever
but, if this rust-bucket'll hold together,
I'll see the lights of Narrabri tonight.

Chorus: I've seen 'The Bridge' in Sydney and I rode the Melbourne trams.
In Adelaide, was a girl I knew, before she started making plans.
But my heart belongs to New South Wales; to the valley where the Namoi flows.
I'm going back to Narrabri, to the cotton and 'the Rose'.

Now the Rose was only Seventeen.
She worked behind the counter in Doyle Street.
When she wasn't selling magazines,
she'd spend a little time with me.
After dark, we'd make our love,
down by the river on a travel rug,
and gaze at the cotton in the moonlight, Rose and me.

Chorus.

**You see the wanderlust has left me now in the years that I have known.
Drowned in the towns I left behind; washed up on the shores of home.
But if a country girl remembers me as the boy that she once chose,
I'll settle down in Narrabri with the cotton and 'The Rose'.**

Chorus.