

Alan Cameron

A Single Red Rose

Alan Cameron was born in Bradford, a quaint little fishing village in West Yorkshire. Umm! Better let Alan tell his story . . .

'When I was three, along with dad Stanley, mother Minnie, older brother Tony and baby brother Barry I moved to a village called Wyke, which is on the outer edge of Bradford, very much a Last Of The Summer Wine setting. There I was raised, so I am Bradford born, bred and buttered, the Tyke from Wyke.

'When I was 16 a doctor told me that I had rheumatism, which meant nothing to me until three years later when it struck me down. It was while I was receiving endless treatment for my condition that I decided I needed a hobby. I tried womanising but failed miserably and so I bought a cheap guitar as I had always fancied myself as another Beatle or a Rolling Stone. After a lot of hard work I managed to teach myself to play. I did try the Bert Weedon 'Play with yourself in a day' book but it might as well have been in Chinese as I couldn't understand what he was going on about. Besides who wants to sing What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor, that's how you lose all your friends. I was more into Hank Williams and Buddy Holly.

I became reasonable on the guitar and when I became mobile I answered an advertisement in the local paper for a rhythm guitarist. I got the job and after a couple of weeks I was nominated by the singer and the bass player to sack the drummer. I felt rather guilty about this because it was him who had placed the ad in the first place. We weren't much good but it was all a learning experience and inevitably we broke up after struggling for a few months doing the working men's clubs. My mate Daz, the bass player, rang me one day and said he had got us in another group if I was interested and of course I was.

'It turned out a cracking little group, we had a girl singer who had a wonderful voice and personality to match. We did really well for about a year until she decided to get married. By now I had gained a bit of confidence and had tried my hand at singing and with the latest group going from group, to trio, to duo, I decided to try and go it alone. I did my apprenticeship in the clubs over the years and gradually went from oldies and middle of the road to doing full time Country.

'Those nice people at the NHS gave me two artificial hips in 1980 and I can't tell you what a difference that made to me and after a slight disagreement with my boss I went full time singing. It was scary at first but I soon got used to struggling to make ends meet for a living. Eventually I became a decent enough singer and my guitar playing improved and so I began to gain a reputation.

'In 1982 I met Carol, my wife, while performing in a pub which at the time I played every Wednesday. She thought I was wonderful, I couldn't help but agree. She has been by my side ever since in



everything I've done. She has been my inspiration, roadie and in later years, my driver. Yes, she started driving and in the early days I would have my eyes closed, she made cats eyes squint and if she turned when the

road did, it was a coincidence. Then I started playing about with writing songs. One of my early songs, The Crystal Chandeliers Gets Up My Nose became very popular with my fellow artists and at one time most of them were singing it and it is still popular to this day. Another of my early efforts A Single Red Rose, inspired by Carol, has become a favourite with audiences and many artists. I have recorded it and so have others such as Keith Thornhill (West Virginia) Dave Bryan, Steve Chase and Ed Pearson.

'In 1993 and again in 1994 we went to Nashville to see if I could get my songs heard. I entered a few talent contests and did quite well. I also sang my songs at the numerous songwriters' nights around Nashville. We made many friends from all over America who were also struggling songwriters trying their luck. You have more chance of winning the lottery than getting anywhere in Nashville, we met so many talented people who were never going to get anywhere without a huge slice of luck. Listen to the lyrics in another of my songs, Nashville Superstar, it tells of a singer who went to Nashville in search of the dream and ended up busking on the streets. He didn't have the heart to tell his parents that he had failed so he lied and told them he was a star. It is sad.

'I have played just about everywhere over the last 35 years, done most of the festivals and clubs, also Chinese restaurants, Indian restaurants, churches, fish and chip shops, fields, bingo halls and once, a sheep pen! During the last couple of years I have been struggling with poor health and so I have practically retired. The only singing jobs I do now are guest cabaret spots for my good friends at Cloud 9 Entertainments, alias West Virginia. I often think, if it wasn't for becoming ill, I would never have picked up a guitar and would never have had the wonderful life that I have had, never met Carol or the wonderful friends I have made all over the country and beyond. So thank you one and all and if you want to see one of my rare performances then speak to Arthur at Cloud 9. Maybe come to Spain with us one year and see what we can do when we're legless, we sound even better when we've had a pot of tea.

'Bye for now Alan Cameron, the Yorkshireman.'