

When the Stockton Mine suspended its workers during 1951, Bob and son George would head off up Charming Creek, pan a pennyweight or three of gold and be back within a couple of hours – "enough to pay for some tucker..." According to pencil notes in his own hand (see above), and reinforced by the Les Wright interview with Bob Calvert, George Meynell Calvert (George's grandfather) was based as a teacher in the Thames/Coromandel goldfields nearly all of the year 1886, the "goldfields" (as per his notes) from November 1894 until March 1895, and had once been a gold-miner for some five years at Preservation Inlet – this between March 1895 to March 1900. Our George's love of solid, dependable gold, of his golden neck and finger bling, may well have its origins in this glittering history.

Drinking was unquestionably an integral, near-compulsory part of the culture. It was sustained in the 1951 miners' strike by comradesly largesse, local generosity and an eye to the future. George: "The Ngakawau publican, old 'Bronc' Hayward at the time, would look after the miners, because none of them had any money for months. And they used to play cards out the back, he had three sheds out the back, they'd go out the back and play cards, a bit of low stakes' gambling. Ted Ross took it over from Bronc. Ted Ross was a good publican too, an ex cop from Christchurch. But we got kicked out of the pub when I was 14, before I went up north. There was Ike [Kevin – see later Buller Rugby photograph] Blair, Jimmy Murray and a whole group of us you know. You could get a glass for thruppence [three cents]. And on a Saturday Snowy Willman [Snowy was Don Willman's father. Don would later be one of George's best men at his wedding to Janet – see later photograph] would take his son up, the bus would go from Ngakawau to Seddonville and stay there for 3 hours, and then bring a crowd down to the pictures. So we used to go up there, old Snowy would get on the piss at 'Bowie' Watson's pub. Ted Ross said to me that Les Hudstrom the cop had cautioned him. He said "I've got to kick these jokers out of the pub, because they're too young you know", so fair enough. Because of that the old man used to buy us a 4 1/2 gallon keg [of beer] on a Saturday, and we'd go and sit in our garage at home and drink it and play up something shocking. Well, it only lasted two weeks and Les Hudstrom said "Let them back in, they're more goddamned trouble out there than they are in here, at least while they're in here I know where they

Part of George Meynell Calvert's pencilled record of his life travels around New Zealand. Written in 1907, the second to last entry on this excerpt is 'Preservation Inlet. [18]95 to March 1900; Courtesy of Eleanor Calvert

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