

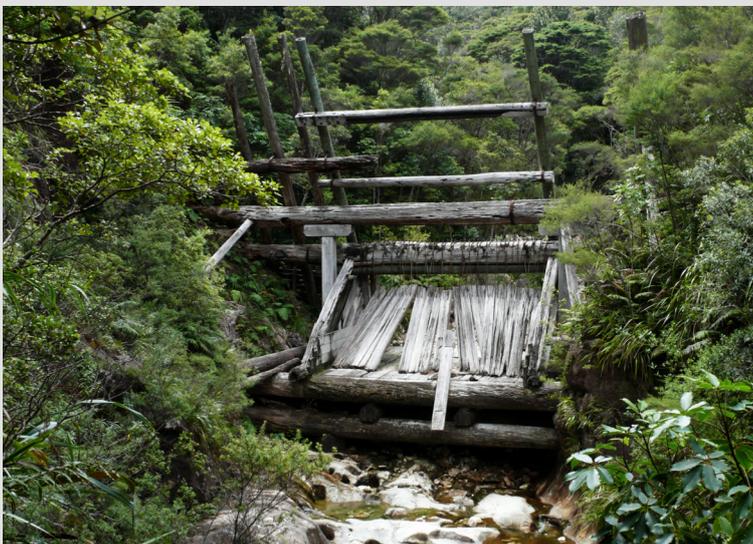
# George Boris Rawlings (1906 – 1978)

George Boris Rawlings (usually known as Joe) was born in 1906 at Claverton Down on the outskirts of Bath in Somerset, England. He was the younger son of George Francis Rawlings, a "gentleman of independent means", and his wife Margaret Christine née Bumpus, a miller's daughter from Stowe, Buckinghamshire. They had married at Marylebone, London, on 20 August 1903, and in the register Francis Charles Rawlings, chemist, is noted as father of the groom. The Bumpus family is of French extraction. Joe's early years in the Somerset countryside gave him a lifelong appreciation of the natural world; friends and visitors in his later life recall him showing them photographs of himself as a baby in a pram and as a toddler in Bath, but nothing more about his childhood and family.

In 1926 Joe Rawlings arrived in New Zealand. He enrolled at the Auckland School of Forestry and in 1933 graduated from Canterbury College with a degree in forestry. After a stint of goldmining in the depression years, he was appointed entomologist-pathologist to the State Forest Service in 1938. During World War Two, forestry companies contributed to the allied war effort. After three months' basic military training, 645 men arrived in England in June 1940. The 14th company, with Sapper G J Rawlings, was sent to Grittleton and Savernake forest in Wiltshire and engaged in tree felling, mill construction – and poaching! From July 1943 until August 1944 they served in Algeria and Italy. Rawlings was then assigned to study forest entomology in North America for six or seven months before returning home. In 1947 he was relocated to the newly established Forest Research Institute at Rotorua, where staff handled collections and data from field staff throughout New Zealand, with the early emphasis on monitoring insect populations and fungal problems in exotic forests.

Although his work was specialised, his scientific interests embraced many fields, and when he resigned in 1962 he turned to botany.

He moved to a scrubby 10-hectare block with a very basic house at Opito Bay, Kerikeri, and lived at one with nature – no electricity, running water or routine, except the dictates of the rising and setting sun. *Boletus rawlingsii*, a fungus he found there in 1966, was "named in honour of Mr G B Rawlings, who first collected the fungus, and whose field work on the introduced Boletaceae of this country amply deserves recognition". His retirement plan was to find every native and introduced plant species recorded in Northland. He had an affinity with plants; anything he was unsure of was sent to Botany Division DSIR for identification, and led to many new records for the region. A favourite story about Joe is that he realised before the "proper" botanists that more than one species of *Tmesipteris* existed. His pet name for *Tmesipteris elongata* was *T. moronicus* because it had a "dull" surface (moron/dull). He often joined other botanists on their forays in the north, and was with pteridologist Barbara Parris in the Waipoua Forest in 1970 when she saw a scruffy *Grammitis* fern in an unusual habitat. When her later study confirmed it was a new species, she offered to name it after him if he collected a better specimen for her. Indicating that he would like to be remembered by something more attractive than a slimy fungus, he set off for Waipoua almost immediately! He went there again in early January 1974 to help John Woodhams from Kew locate and collect species he otherwise may have missed. A few weeks later Joe moved to Tokerau Beach on the Karikari Peninsula in the Far North, where friends cared for him in his final years. He died at his home on 28 April 1978.



## *Notogrammitis rawlingsii*

Formerly *Grammitis rawlingsii*, *Notogrammitis rawlingsii* (Greek *noto* 'southern') is a species of strap fern characteristically associated with kauri (*Agathis australis*) forests or forest remnants, where it grows on mossy mounds (often the common milk moss *Leucobryum candidum*), on rotting logs, exposed roots or (rarely) as a low epiphyte. Populations tend to be very localised and small, and prone to over-zealous collecting. The tufted habit with long, narrowly elliptic fronds, the winged and sparsely hairy stipe to the base, and the red-brown hairs encircling the green sori are diagnostic of the species.

Kaiarāra kauri dam  
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