

# George Green.

## NOTTINGHAM'S MAGNIFICENT MATHEMATICIAN

Over 170 years after his death, mathematical techniques invented by George Green (1793-1841) are still widely used in physics and engineering.

Green's first essay, self-published in 1828, has been described as "one of the most important works ever written on electricity", and "the beginning of mathematical physics in England". Yet he died in obscurity, his essay virtually unknown and its significance unrecognised.

In his will, Green described himself as a Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, emphasising his academic credentials. In his home town he was probably better known as a miller, owner of a handsome brick windmill at Sneinton. This exhibition explores both aspects of his life.

His biographers have wondered how this apparently self-taught genius could have been introduced to the complex mathematics that he used in his essays. As Green died early and without fame, very little original material from his lifetime has survived. Unfortunately all of his own papers were destroyed after his death. We do not even have an image of him.

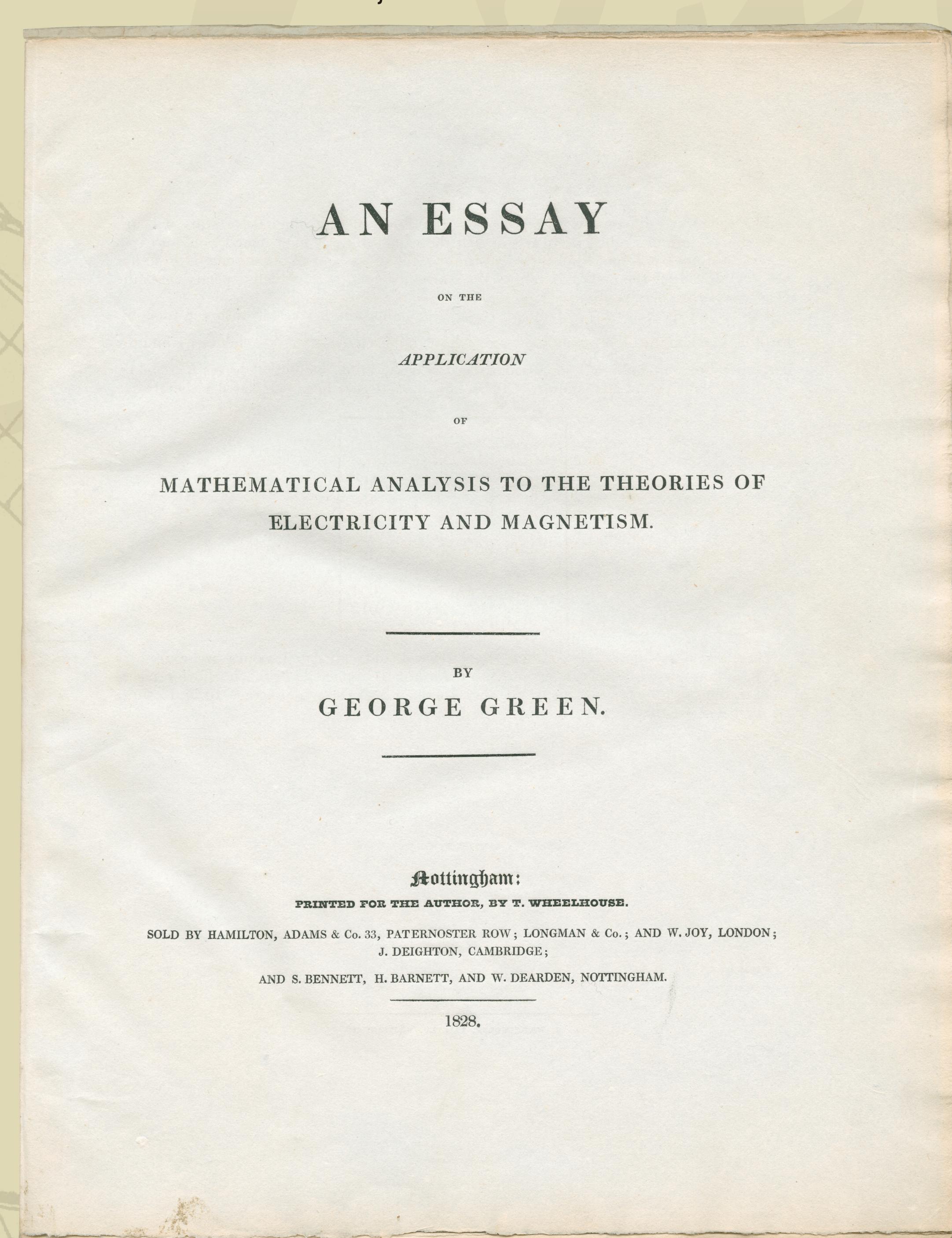
The exhibits come mainly from the George Green Collection held at King's Meadow Campus. This is an artificial gathering of publications and copies of research materials relating to Green. A large proportion of the material was donated by Green's most authoritative biographer, the late Mary Cannell (1913-2000), and by Professor Lawrie Challis of the School of Physics. Since the early 1970s Challis has been the leading force in commemorating Green, as the founding Chairman of the George Green Memorial Fund and the organiser of prestigious events in 1993 to celebrate the bicentenary of his birth.

This exhibition has been curated by Manuscripts and Special Collections at The University of Nottingham. We are indebted to Lawrie Challis, all Green's published biographers, and to University members Roger Bowley, Paul Matthews and Kostas Soldatos, who have provided additional useful information.



Green's Mill, Sneinton, 2014.

George Green's grave in  
Sneinton churchyard, 1984.  
From GG 5/21/15



ABOVE: Title page of George Green, *An Essay on the Application of Mathematical Analysis to the Theories of Electricity and Magnetism* (1828). From GG 1/1

ABOVE RIGHT: Lawrie Challis at the Bicentenary service, Westminster Abbey, 1993, by permission of Andrew Dunsmore/ Picture Partnership. From GG 7/5

