



Dr Luigi Galvani (1737–1798) studied the bodies of frogs at the University of Bologna in Italy in the 1780s. One day he was examining a nerve in a frog's leg, and he noticed that it twitched when a spark was made by a machine at the other end of the laboratory.

Galvani thought that the twitch was connected with the spark. He predicted that other sparks of electricity should make a frog's leg twitch, and he tested this idea by hanging a frog's leg outside when there was a thunderstorm. The leg twitched when lightning flashed.

Unfortunately for Galvani's theory, he also found that he could get a frog's leg to twitch without lightning. The leg would twitch if he pushed a copper hook into a frog's nerve and hung it on an iron wire.

Galvani decided that animals' bodies contained a new kind of electricity, which he called 'animal electricity'. He thought that this animal electricity would make muscles twitch when a piece of metal connected the nerve to the muscles. He published his findings in 1791.

In the 1800s, people called electricity 'galvanic current' after Galvani. Your school may have a galvanometer, which is an instrument that can measure very small currents.

**S** knowledge, literacy