

The story of the RSPCA (B)

How it all began

In June 1824, 22 people met in London. They wanted to begin a group to stop cruelty to animals. The three most famous members of the group were:

- Arthur Broome, a vicar
- William Wilberforce, a MP who had wanted to end slavery
- Richard Martin, known as 'Humanity Dick'.

The group was called the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or SPCA. It was the first in the world. In 1840 the Queen gave permission for the Society to be called the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The Society has tried to help animals ever since.

No compassion

At the time the Society was started, people thought it was strange to be kind to animals. Most people thought that animals were for food, transport or sport.

The first job was to try to change people's minds about animals.

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Cruelty

In 1832 the Society made 181 convictions for cruelty. Cock-fighting and bull-baiting were abolished in the 20th century.

Men in uniform

The RSPCA started five years before the police. There were five inspectors with uniforms and truncheons. They were paid a guinea a week.

Today, the RSPCA has 323 inspectors and many volunteers. It is a charity and does not receive any money from the government.

It looks after ALL animals, including:

- farm animals
- wild animals
- pets
- animals used in scientific research.