

The Life of

WILLIAM

WILBERFORCE



William Wilberforce was a famous British politician and prominent abolitionist who campaigned strongly for the abolition of slavery across the British Empire. His efforts contributed greatly to the eventual eradication of slavery throughout the Empire.

Birth & Early Life



William Wilberforce was born into a prosperous family in Hull in the north of England. However, his father died when he was young and this meant William had to go to London to continue his studies



Becoming an MP

William became independently wealthy at a young age when he inherited wealth following the death of his grandfather and uncle. William became an MP at the age of only 21. He was transformed when he became an evangelical Christian in his twenties. He began to use politics as a way of living out his religion and spreading humanitarian reforms. However, it would be the issue of slavery which would grab his attention

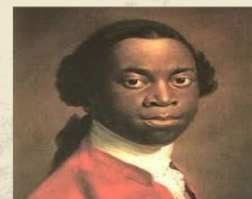
Abolitionist

Wilberforce was deeply influenced by meeting with abolitionists like Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp and John Newton who had written the hymn Amazing Grace based on his own experiences with slavery. Alongside others they educated him on the evils of slavery. Wilberforce was a powerful debater with influential friends. He was a key part of the Society for effecting the abolition of the slave trade - set up in 1787 to create effective action. They were attacked verbally and physically for their viewpoints. However, soon with petitions and talks and debates things began to change and the abolitionists became much stronger



Abolition Campaign

Wilberforce forged ahead with the campaign to end slavery in Britain and the Empire. He tirelessly organised petitions, boycotts against goods associate with slavery. He wrote pamphlets explaining the evils of slavery. He used lobbying - networking with influential people including politicians to lead them to follow the abolitionist movement. He supported the work of freed black slaves and helped them publish their books and organise public talks. Slaves like Olaudah Equiano impressed tens of thousands with their recount of their lives of slavery.



Legacy

In 1807, after years of campaigning, the **SLAVE TRADE ACT** was passed at last. In 1833 the **SLAVERY ABOLITION ACT** meant that slavery was completely abolished across most of the British Empire.

Wilberforce passes away just three days later leaving a lasting legacy

