

= David Starkey =

David Robert Starkey CBE FSA RHistS (born 3 January 1945) is a British constitutional historian and a radio and television presenter .

Born the only child of Quaker parents , he attended Kendal Grammar School before studying at Cambridge through a scholarship . There he specialised in Tudor history , writing a thesis on King Henry VIII 's household . From Cambridge he moved to the London School of Economics , where he was a lecturer in history until 1998 . He has written several books on the Tudors .

Starkey is a well @-@ known radio and television personality , first appearing on television in 1977 . While a regular contributor to the BBC Radio 4 debate programme The Moral Maze , his acerbic tongue earned him the sobriquet of " rudest man in Britain " ; his frequent appearances on Question Time have been received with criticism and applause . Starkey has presented several history documentaries . In 2002 he signed a £ 2 million contract with Channel 4 for 25 hours of programming , and in 2011 was a contributor on the Channel 4 series Jamie 's Dream School .

= = Early years and education = =

David Starkey was born on 3 January 1945 in Kendal . He is the only child of Robert Starkey and Elsie Lyon , Quakers who had married 10 years previously in Bolton , at a Friends meeting house . His father , the son of a cotton spinner , was a foreman in a washing @-@ machine factory , while his mother followed in her father 's footsteps and became a cotton weaver and later a cleaner . Starkey is equivocal about his mother , describing her as both " wonderful " , in that she helped develop his ambition , and " monstrous " , intellectually frustrated and living through her son . " She was a wonderful but also very frightening parent . Finally , she was a Pygmalion . She wanted a creature , she wanted something she had made . " Her dominance contrasted sharply to his father , who was " poetic , reflective , rather solitary ... as a father he was weak . " Their relationship was " distant " , but improved after his mother 's death in 1977 .

Starkey was born with two club feet . One was fixed early , while the other had to be operated on several times . He also suffered from polio . He suffered a nervous breakdown at secondary school , aged 13 , and was taken by his mother to a boarding house in Southport , where he spent several months recovering . Starkey blamed the episode on the unfamiliar experience of being in a " highly competitive environment " . He ultimately excelled at Kendal Grammar School , winning debating prizes and appearing in school plays .

Although he showed an early inclination toward science , he chose instead to study history . A scholarship enabled his entry into Fitzwilliam College , Cambridge , where he gained a first , a PhD and a fellowship .

Starkey was fascinated by King Henry VIII , and his thesis focused on the Tudor monarch 's inner household . His doctoral supervisor was Sir Geoffrey Elton , an expert on the Tudor period . Starkey claimed that with age his mentor became " tetchy " and " arrogant " . In 1983 , when Elton was awarded a knighthood , Starkey derided one of his essays , Cromwell Redivivus and Elton responded by writing an " absolutely shocking " review of a collection of essays Starkey had edited . Starkey later expressed his remorse over the spat : " I regret that the thing happened at all . "

= = Career = =

Bored at Cambridge and attracted to London 's gay scene , in 1972 Starkey moved to the London School of Economics . He claimed to be an " excessively enthusiastic advocate of promiscuity " , seeking to liberate himself from his mother : she strongly disapproved of his homosexuality . A 30 @-@ year career as a teacher ended in 1998 when , blaming boredom and modern academic life , he gave it up .

Starkey entered a wider public awareness in 1992 on the BBC Radio 4 debate programme The Moral Maze , where he debated morality with his fellow panellists Rabbi Hugo Gryn , Roger Scruton and the journalist Janet Daley . He soon acquired a reputation for abrasiveness ; he explained in

2007 that his personality possesses " a tendency towards showmanship ... towards self @-@ indulgence and explosion and repartee and occasional silliness and going over the top . " The Daily Mail gave him the sobriquet of " the rudest man in Britain " , although Starkey claims that his character was part of a " convenient image " . He once attacked George Austin , the Archdeacon of York , over " his fatness , his smugness , and his pomposity " , but after a nine @-@ year stint on the programme he left , citing his boredom with being " Dr Rude " and its move to an evening slot .

From 1995 he also spent three years at Talk Radio UK , presenting Starkey on Saturday , later Starkey on Sunday . An interview with Denis Healey proved to be one of his most embarrassing moments : " I mistakenly thought that he had become an amiable old buffer who would engage in amusing conversation , and he tore me limb from limb . I laugh about it now , but I didn 't feel like laughing about it at the time . "

His first television appearance was in 1977 , on Granada Television 's Behave Yourself with Russell Harty . He was a prosecution witness in the 1984 ITV programme The Trial of Richard III , whose jury acquitted the king on the grounds of insufficient evidence . His television documentaries on The Six Wives of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were ratings successes .

In 2002 he signed a £ 2 million contract with Channel 4 to produce 25 hours of television , including Monarchy , a chronicle of the history of English kings and queens from Anglo @-@ Saxon times onward . He presented the 2009 series Henry : Mind of a Tyrant , which Brian Viner , a reviewer for the Independent , called " highly fascinating " , although A. A. Gill was less complimentary , calling it " Hello ! history " . In an interview about the series for the Radio Times , Starkey complained that too many historians had focussed not on Henry , but on his wives . Referring to a " feminised history " , he said : " so many of the writers who write about this are women and so much of their audience is a female audience . " This prompted the historian Lucy Worsley to label his comments as misogynistic . More recently , in 2011 , he taught five history lessons in Channel 4 's Jamie 's Dream School , after which he criticised the state education system .

The core of history is narrative and biography . And the way history has been presented in the curriculum for the last 25 years is very different . The importance of knowledge has been downgraded . Instead the argument has been that it 's all about skills . Supposedly , what you are trying to do with children is inculcate them with the analytical skills of the historian . Now this seems to me to be the most goddamn awful way to approach any subject , and also the most dangerous , and one , of course , that panders to all sorts of easy assumptions - ? oh we 've got the internet , we don 't need knowledge anymore because it 's so easy to look things up ' . Oh no it isn 't . In order to think , you actually need the information in your mind .

In 1984 Starkey was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and in 1994 a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London . He has worked as curator on several exhibitions , including an exhibit in 2003 on Elizabeth I , following which he had lunch with her namesake , Elizabeth II . Several years later he told a reporter that the monarch had no interest in her predecessors , other than those who followed her great grandfather . " I don 't think she 's at all comfortable with anybody ? I would hesitate to use the word intellectual ? but it 's useful . I think she 's got elements a bit like Goebbels in her attitude to culture ? you remember : ' every time I hear the word culture I reach for my revolver . ' I think the queen reaches for her mask . " His remarks were criticised by Penny Junor , a royal biographer , and Robert Lacey , a royal historian .

= = Politics = =

Starkey was raised in an austere and frugal environment of near @-@ poverty , with his parents often unemployed for long periods of time ; an environment which , he later stated , taught him " the value of money " . " I suppose my politics remained essentially in the middle @-@ of @-@ the @-@ road Labour left until the end of the 1970s " . Starkey blames the Callaghan administration for " blow [ing] the nation 's finances " . During the 1980s he was an active Conservative Party member , and he was a Conservative candidate for Islington Borough Council in 1986 in Tollington ward , and in 1990 in Hillrise ward .

He bemoaned the Tories when they were in Opposition , criticising Michael Howard in particular : " I

knew Michael Howard was going to be a disaster as soon as he opposed top @-@ up fees , either out of sentimentality or calculated expediency so that it might get him a bit of the student vote ... Instead of backing Tony Blair , causing revolution in the Labour Party , the Conservatives have been whoring after strange gods , coming up with increasingly strange policies . " He likened Gordon Brown to the fictional Kenneth Widmerpool , continuing , " It seems to me that with Brown there is a complete sense of humour and charm bypass . " Of Ed Miliband , in 2015 he said " He is a man of high ambition and low talent ? the worst possible combination . His whole language at the moment is soak the rich , hate the rich . "

During the 2011 Conservative Party Conference , he spoke at a fringe meeting , declaring Mayor Boris Johnson to be a " jester @-@ despot " , and Prime Minister David Cameron , as having " absolutely no strategy " for running the country . He urged the party to re @-@ engage with the working class rather than the " Guardian @-@ reading middle class " . In 2015 he claimed that while Cameron and his Chancellor , George Osborne , had introduced some meaningful reforms to education and welfare policies , they had not made large enough cuts to the UK 's budget deficit .

Starkey prefers radical changes to the UK 's constitution in line with the federal system used by the USA , although in an interview with Iain Dale he expressed his support for the monarchy , the Queen and Prince Charles . In the run @-@ up to the UK Alternative Vote referendum , he was a signatory on a letter to The Times , which urged people to vote against the proposals .

Starkey is an honorary associate of the National Secular Society and an ardent supporter of gay equality movements . A supporter of the Tory Campaign for Homosexual Equality (" Torche ") , during one of many appearances on the BBC 's Question Time he attacked Jeffrey Archer over his views on the age of homosexual consent .

In 2009 , Mike Russell , then the Scottish Government Minister for Culture and External Affairs , called on him to apologise for his declaration on the programme that Scotland , Ireland and Wales are " feeble little countries " . Starkey responded that it had been a joke regarding the lack of necessity for the English to outwardly celebrate their nationalism , approvingly quoting H. G. Wells 's observation that " the English are the only nation without national dress " . He described Alex Salmond , then Scottish First Minister , as a " Caledonian Hitler " who thinks that " the English , like the Jews , are everywhere " . He is one of 200 signatories of a letter to the Guardian newspaper , opposing Scottish independence .

= = Views on multiculturalism = =

Starkey 's comments in August 2011 on the BBC 's Newsnight programme alongside Owen Jones and Dreda Say Mitchell , made during a discussion about the 2011 England riots , precipitated support and condemnation from several notable commentators . Starkey claimed that " the whites have become black " , and that " a particular sort of violent , destructive , nihilistic , gangster culture has become the fashion " . The leader of the Labour party , Ed Miliband , spoke about Starkey 's remarks , saying " they are racist comments , frankly " . The author Toby Young , blogging in the Telegraph , defended Starkey by claiming that Starkey had been talking not about black culture in general . Rod Liddle argued in support of the remarks . Fellow panellist Owen Jones described the comments as " one of the ugliest episodes of the backlash " , claiming that " multiculturalism and ethnic groups have nothing to do with what happened " .

Writing in The Daily Telegraph , Starkey argued his views had been distorted , he referred only to a " particular sort " of ' Black ' culture , and that the " black educationalists " Tony Sewell and Katharine Birbalsingh supported the substance of his Newsnight comments . The broadcast regulator Ofcom said that Starkey 's comments were part of " a serious and measured discussion " , and took no action .

In a June 2012 debate , Starkey stated that a Rochdale sex trafficking gang had values " entrenched in the foothills of the Punjab or wherever it is " , and was accused by his fellow panelist , writer Laurie Penny , of " playing xenophobia and national prejudice for laughs " .

= = Personal life = =

Starkey lived for many years with his partner , James Brown , a publisher and book designer , until the latter 's death in 2015 . The couple had two homes : a house in Highbury and a manor house in Kent . Starkey was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2007 Birthday Honours for services to history . He is a Visiting Professor of the University of Kent . An Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society , he has described the Catholic Church as being " corrupt and riddled with corruption " .

= = Work = =

Books

This Land of England (1985) (with David Souden)
The Reign of Henry VIII : Personalities and Politics (1986)
Revolution Reassessed : Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration (1986)
(Editor with Christopher Coleman)
The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War (1987)
Rivals in Power : the Lives and Letters of the Great Tudor Dynasties (1990)
Henry VIII : A European Court in England (1991)
The Inventory of Henry VIII : The Transcript , Volume 1 (1998) (with Philip Ward and Alistair Hawkyard)
Elizabeth : Apprenticeship (2000) (published in North America as Elizabeth : The struggle for the throne)
The Stuart Courts - Foreword (2000) (Edited by Eveline Cruickshanks)
The Inventory of Henry VIII : Essays and Illustrations , Volume 2 , (2002) (with Philip Ward and Alistair Hawkyard)
The Inventory of Henry VIII : Essays and Illustrations , Volume 3 , (2002) (with Philip Ward and Alistair Hawkyard)
The Six Wives : The Queens of Henry VIII (2003)
Elizabeth I : The Exhibition Catalogue (2003)
The Books of King Henry VIII and His Wives - Introduction and Preface (2004) (James P. Carley)

The Monarchy of England : The Beginnings (2004)
Monarchy : From the Middle Ages to Modernity (2006)
Making History : Antiquaries in Britain , 1707 @-@ 2007 - Introduction (2007) (Edited by Sarah McCarthy , Bernard Nurse , and David Gaimster)
Henry : Virtuous Prince (2008)
Introduction to Henry VIII ; Man & Monarch (Susan Doran , ed. published by the British Library , 2009)
Crown and Country (Harper Press , 2010) (A compilation of The Monarchy of England : The Beginnings , Monarchy : From the Middle Ages to Modernity and some new material)
Introduction to Fatal Colours : Towton 1461 - England 's Most Brutal Battle by George Goodwin (2011)
Henry : Model of a Tyrant (September 2016)

Television
Henry VIII (1998 , revised 2001)
Elizabeth (2000)
The Six Wives of Henry VIII (2001)
Edward and Mary : The Unknown Tudors (2002)
David Starkey : Reinventing the Royals (2002)
Monarchy by David Starkey (2004 ? 2007)
Henry VIII : The Mind of a Tyrant (2009)
Kate and William : Romance and the Royals (2011)
The Churchills (2012)

David Starkey 's Music and Monarchy (2013)

David Starkey 's Magna Carta (2015)

Applications

Kings and Queens by David Starkey for iPhone and iPad (2011)