

## John Humphrys

Award Winning BBC Broadcaster

John Humphrys is one of Britain's best known and most controversial broadcasters. He has been a journalist for more than half a century. He was BBC TV's youngest foreign correspondent and has anchored most frontline news and current affairs programmes on both television and radio. He has presented the *Today* programme for a record-breaking 29 years ... and counting!

He has won just about all the national broadcasting awards, including the "Oscar of Oscars": the Sony Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement. The citation read: "He has truly changed the face of radio and the nature of the radio interview for an entire generation."

He is frequently referred to by newspapers as a "national treasure" - which he loathes because he says it makes him feel a bit like one of Queen Victoria's commodes! He was far more flattered by a former Foreign Secretary who once wrote that the only thing that kept him awake at night was the prospect of being interviewed by John Humphrys in the morning.

But he has also achieved something else. He has become a hate figure in his time for BOTH major political parties. When the Conservatives were in power he was savagely attacked by one cabinet minister for "poisoning the well of democratic debate" with his style of interviewing. When the Labour Party was in opposition he was praised by them for his robust approach. Then, when Labour came to power, all that changed and he was attacked by New Labour for giving ministers a hard time. He was described as the "John Humphrys problem". They called for him to be sacked. So he went from being a hero of the democratic process to a villain in a matter of months.

In November 2012 he was in the headlines again – this time because of an interview with his own boss: George Entwistle, the director general of the BBC. A few hours later Mr. Entwistle resigned.

Apart from his broadcasting work John writes books (seven so far) and newspaper columns and has set up his own charity: the Kitchen Table Charities Trust. He also presents that rare programme: a serious television quiz show, *Mastermind*.