



# Radio

EDITED BY JANE ANDERSON

## PICK OF THE WEEK

### Inside The New Yorker

Saturday 10.30am **Radio 4**

**Naomi Gryn**, the writer and film-maker, gets unique access to the illustrious magazine

**T**he *New Yorker* magazine is the essence of Manhattan. A weekly compendium of essays, profiles, political comment, world news, fiction, poetry, listings, reviews, and one-line cartoons, *The New Yorker* was conceived more than 80 years ago over a poker game at the Algonquin Hotel. Harold Ross, a Runyonesque impresario with gapped teeth and hedgehog hair, was its founder and editor from 1925 until his death in 1951. He recruited Dorothy Parker and other members of the sharp-witted "Vicious Circle", who lunched together at the Algonquin Round Table, to create a magazine that was satirical and funny, a sophisticated reflection of metropolitan life.

Despite its illustrious history and a reputation for editorial integrity that makes most writers long to write for it, no-one, so far as I know, has ever made a programme about *The New Yorker*. I spent a week prowling its offices, meeting writers, editors, cartoonists, and the fact-checkers who meticulously unravel every sentence of every article to test them for accuracy. Influenced by underground comics, the hand-



**AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN NEW YORK**  
Naomi Gryn (above) with her perfect souvenir (right)

drawn covers often have a subversive twist, but its Art Deco title font and scant use of photographs give the magazine an old-fashioned flavour. *The New Yorker* might have become as anachronistic as the Regency dandy who graced its first cover and still appears on the masthead. But just when so many other publications are sinking, the magazine's circulation has grown to more than a million.

*The New Yorker's* winning formula? The clarity of its writing, perhaps, along with the ironic, irreverent humour that underpins it. Contributors are given scope for their individuality to shine through; it has a human feel about it. Under the current editor, David Remnick, himself a Pulitzer Prize-



winning journalist, *The New Yorker* has also gained a reputation for hard news stories and revelations about the Bush administration's plans for a nuclear strike on Iran.

The following Monday, naturally I bought a copy of *The New Yorker*. I bought *The New York Times* as well. There was an article about how the view from *The New Yorker's* offices will soon be obliterated by a 54-storey skyscraper, with a photograph of two women looking out at the construction site. It was captioned "*New Yorker* employees". Not quite true, but a perfect souvenir: the one on the left was me.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

### Radio ga-ga with "Gorgeous" George

It's 8pm on Sunday, and at Talksport, the man they call "Gorgeous" takes to his feet for "the mother of all talk shows". Those accustomed to seeing George Galloway on all fours with the former Mrs Dennis Waterman might be surprised, but it fits with his rabble-rousing political image. "I'm on my soapbox," he admits.

When *Radio Times* drops into the studio, the chosen topics are whether Tony Blair should resign, whether Christianity is in terminal decline and, conflating the two, whether Tony Blair thinks he's Christ.

Galloway can barely conceal his glee at the 57 per cent in a *News of the World* poll who want Blair out. Ironically, it's the week when Galloway foiled the *News of the World's* infamous investigative journalist Mazher Mahmood. Galloway threatens to unmask him, but his producer wonders "isn't it a bit obvious if a sheikh invites you to the Dorchester?"

The callers range from cogent to radio ga-ga. "When we did conspiracy theories, I'm convinced the conspiracy theorists were ringing each other and conspiring before they came on," confides Galloway. The religious lot are an especially rum bunch. Galloway (a Catholic) is incredulous at Terry from Wiltshire, who won't accept Catholicism as a creed. Another alleges that non-belief is rife in the priesthood. Galloway challenges him to name names, but is reminded gently that Parliamentary privilege doesn't extend to Talksport.

Despite Galloway's showboating, it's a serious programme. Do callers ring in just to make catty comments? "Sometimes, but they usually forget that we can cut them off." If only the House of Commons had that facility.

**Louis Barfe**



## THE FACE BEHIND THE VOICE ADIL RAY



**Age** 31.

**Current job** New presenter of BBC Asian Network's Mon-Fri *Drivetime* show (from mid-May). He is also a regular presenter of BBC2's *Desi DNA*.

**CV** Born in Birmingham of Pakistani and Kenyan origin, he began his broadcasting career with pirate station Jive FM. He became the first

British-Asian to present a daily show on mainstream commercial radio. Joined BBC Asian Network at their digital launch in 2002.

**Best moment** "Getting the first radio interviews with Craig David (Galaxy 105) and the British-Asian R&B singer Jay Sean (Asian Network)."

**Worst moment** "During that interview with Jay Sean

I called him Craig David!"

**First radio memory** "Les Ross of BRMB playing a record for my tenth birthday."

**Ambition** "To merge British-Asian culture with mainstream culture right across TV and radio."

**Secret skill** "I played semi-pro cricket in the Birmingham League, and once played against Steve Waugh."

MARLYNN K YEE