



## PHOTO FINISH

From 'The History of Men's Magazines: Vol 1', ed by Dian Hanson, Taschen, £29.99 (£15.99 plus £2.25 p&p, tel: 0870 1557222)

The first volume of Dian Hanson's history of men's magazines argues that the early part of the 20th century showed a "struggle between lust and taboo". This cover of *High Heel Magazine* from April 1937, we are told, aims to sell "spicy" stories without getting busted. Its Betty Boop-like minx isn't fully nude, but that open shoebox with its ruffled tissue paper has been suggestively placed.

It's hard to get too caught up in the documentary aspects of the book when there are such "luscious lovelies" on offer. Diaphanous silks, straps and girdles festoon most of them like bunting at a fair. Semi-clad girls cavort with polar bears and dragonish sea horses. Full marks to Hanson for collating so much delightful, haywire erotica.

**Alastair Sooke**