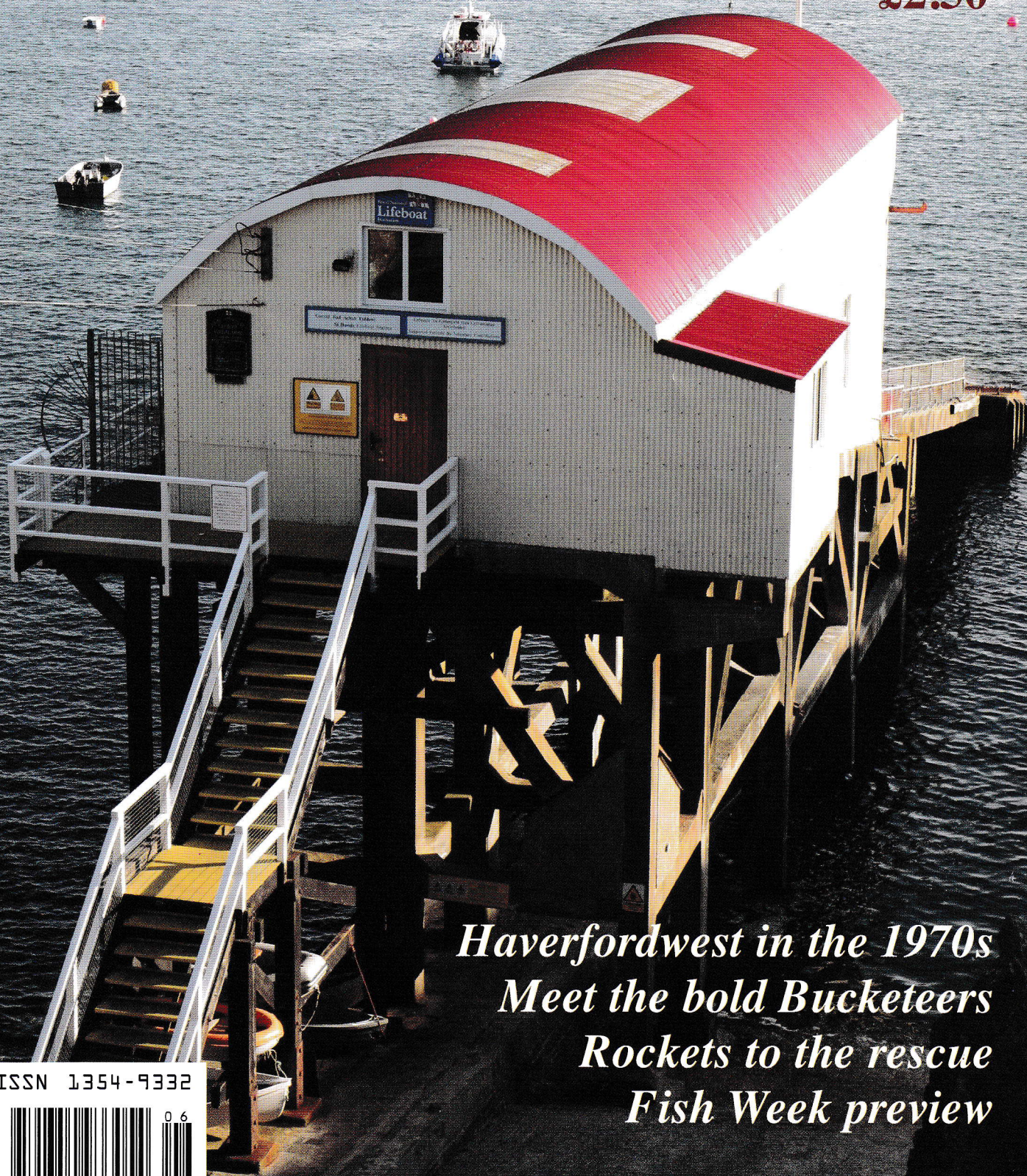


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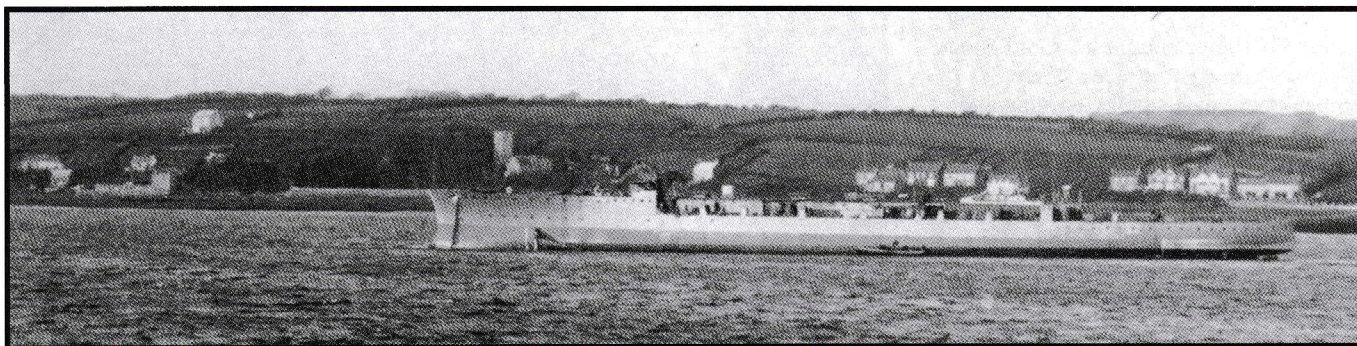


Haverfordwest in the 1970s
Meet the bold Bucketeers
Rockets to the rescue
Fish Week preview

ISSN 1354-9332



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HMS Amphion photographed soon after her launch, with Llanstadwell Church in the background.

Built in Pembroke Dock, HMS *Amphion* was the first British warship sunk in WWI. David Woodliffe has compiled this remarkable photographic history of the doomed vessel

The life and death of HMS *Amphion*

THE story of the sinking of the Pembroke Dock-built HMS *Amphion* in 1914 was featured in the August edition of *Pembrokeshire Life*, although it was unfortunately accompanied by a photograph of a different vessel.

This error was pointed out the following month in a letter by Mike Field who thought the photo was really of *Arethusa* or *Aurora*. It could also have been *Penelope* or *Galatea* as all four cruisers were sister ships in a class of four, completed from 1935 to 1937.

(To be strictly accurate, the last two vessels were 'improved' *Arethusa* class, but they were visually identical).

It was suggested elsewhere that the incorrect photo may have shown a later HMS *Amphion*. Sadly, that claim was incorrect as reference to *Jane's Fighting Ships*, (a wonderful source for settling details of Royal Navy warships), shows

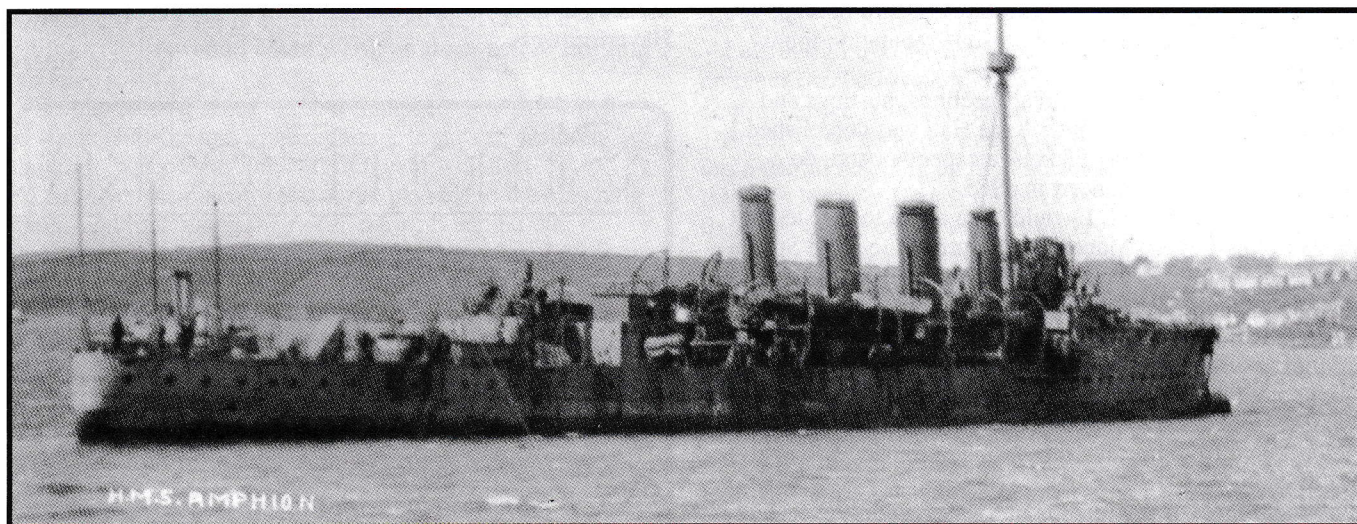
that the next HMS *Amphion* was an "A" class submarine completed in 1945.

I hope this helps to set the record straight once and for all.

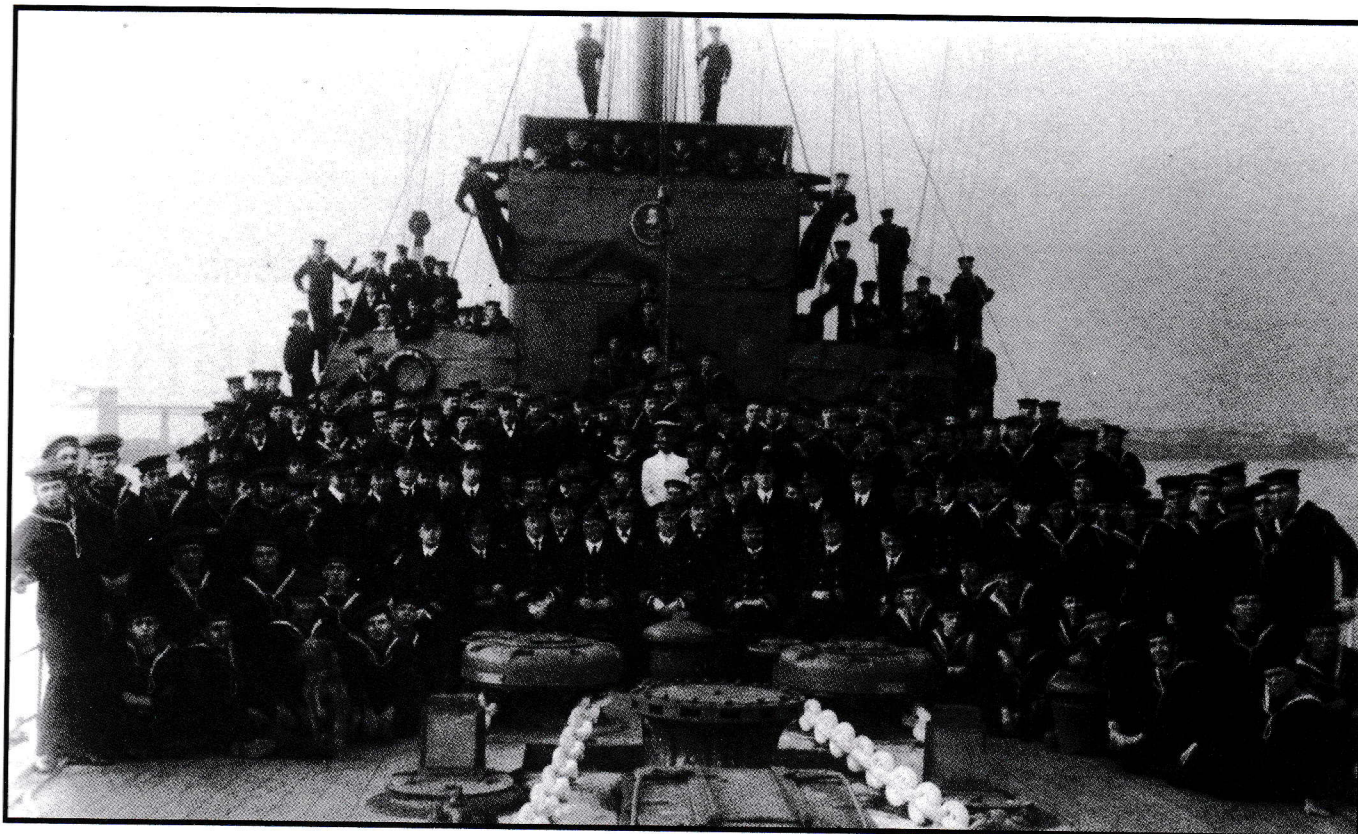
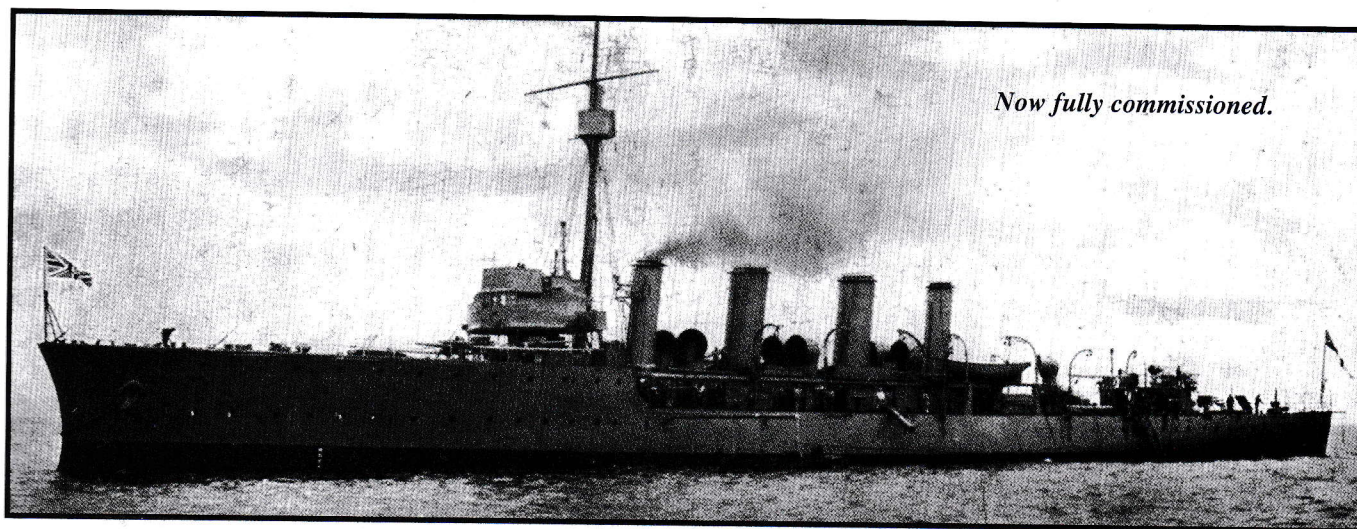
Regarding a definite photo of the 1914 HMS *Amphion*, I am on fairly solid ground. I have a friend who did his National Service in Llanion Barracks (I was posted to Aden – who had the better deal?) which gave him a lifetime interest in Pembrokeshire.

He has an extensive collection of postcards including many ships built at Pembroke Dock. They include several relating to HMS *Amphion* and he has kindly loaned them for inclusion in this article for the avoidance of any doubt as to what HMS *Amphion* looked like. (It is quite a collection considering that the Royal Navy is not his major interest).

Let the photos do the talking!



HMS Amphion at anchor, presumably soon after completion, with what looks like Neyland beyond the bow.



*The officers and ship's company of HMS Amphion – I can count some 190 members of the crew.
Can anyone identify the bridge in the background?*

More pictures overleaf

The first ship to be sunk

HMS *Amphion* was built at Pembroke Dock as an 'Active Class' Light Cruiser and launched on December 4, 1911. Based in Harwich, she was commanded by Captain Cecil H Fox and was the leader of Third Destroyer Flotilla.

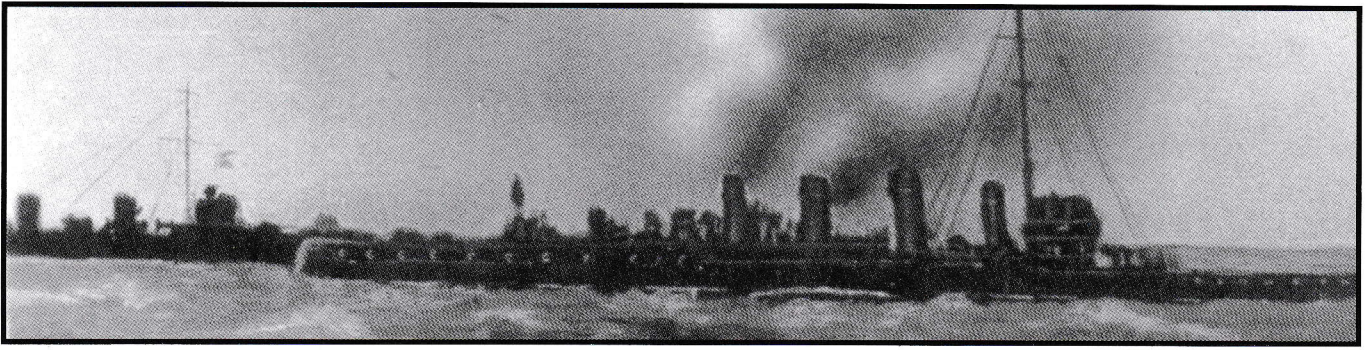
On the day war broke out, Captain Fox received information about a suspicious ship in the North Sea approaches, and on investigation came upon the German mine-laying ship SMS *Konigin Luise*. Fox in *Amphion* instructed the destroyers *Lance*, *Laurel*, *Lark* and *Linnet* to close with the *Konigin*, and within six minutes the *Konigin Luise* was sunk at

approximately noon on August 5, 1914 – just 13 hours after war had been declared.

Returning to Harwich, *Amphion* struck a mine on the edge of the minefield laid previously by the *Konigin Luise*. Survivors were being taken on board the accompanying destroyers when *Amphion* hit another mine and quickly sank,

Among those who perished aboard *Amphion* was Stoker James Henry Skyrme of Llangwm who has been identified by local historian Owen Vaughan as the first Pembrokeshire victim of WWI; the war was just 36 hours old when he died.

The life and death of HMS Amphion



The two pictures above show the last of HMS Amphion, with HMS Lark standing by to take off survivors. The images were published in postcard form by a Devonport company, Abrahams and Sons – a practice soon stopped as damaging to morale.

Left: Firing a salute at the funeral of one of the Amphion crew.

SHARPE POINTS

A *Room of One's Own* is the title of a heart-felt essay by Virginia Woolf. In it she says that, in order for a woman to be able to write without disturbance, she must have a room where other people are visitors only by invitation.

I do sympathise with her because my study, however much its book-lined condition tells everybody that it's mine, is rather like a corridor from one part of the house to another.

Of course, with only two of us living in the house now, it isn't much of an issue!

There was a time when I had a shed at the bottom of the garden but, to be honest, it was too miserably cold or too hot and too lonely to encourage me to go down to it or stay in it for long.

I admire somebody like D H Lawrence who could

write anywhere. It could be a room full of noisy people and still he would be completely absorbed in what he was writing, oblivious of what was happening round him.

All this came to mind when I visited Oriel y Parc in St David's to see the work of Grahame Hurd-Wood who is artist in residence until the end of the summer.

There he has a room of his own, a spacious studio in which to work. I ventured into it with some feeling of awe because it really did feel like entering an artist's world of light and colour.

It's a very different experience from tip-toeing past a writer at his desk. Of course, painting can be just as lonely and absorbing as writing but it has an inherent feeling of being shared.

Mike Sharpe



A recent picture in *Pembrokeshire Life* of the staff at the Riverside Poor Law Institute in Pembroke has prompted Mrs Thoburn of The Green, Pembroke, to send us this photo of staff at Riverside in the days when it had become a maternity hospital. Lady Mary Meyrick is in the centre of the front row, flanked by senior nursing staff including Sister Colley, Sister Morgan and Sister Glenwood. Nurses and catering staff identified include Rosemary Bardsley, Rosie Sweet, Margaret Mayhew, Mrs R Davies, Mrs H Collins, Evelyn Miller, Kathy Ferrier and Margaret Harries.

Langum folk were tough

SIR:- Reading April's *Pembrokeshire Life* concerning Llangwm – 'The Village with Six Names' – reminded me of tales Mum and Dad used to tell.

Although I have lived in Bristol for most of my life, my brother and I were brought up on stories of Pembroke and district and jokes so old they probably had whiskers!

Such as: 'Why did Templeton Kilgetty?', and we were supposed to reply 'Because it trod on Saundersfoot'.

Then Mum would ask: 'Why did it tread on Saundersfoot?' for our reply of: 'Because it wouldn't Stepside'.

Mum also used to sing a few lines:

*Oh, the night was dark and stormy,
The boats were in the creek,
When into Milford Haven came
The Llangwm fishing fleet.*

Why were they coming into port so long after the others were safely back? Did the Llangwm (Mum pronounced it 'Langum') fishermen go out further than the others in the hope of getting bigger catches? Thus meaning they had further to return when the weather turned bad.

'Fair do's,' Dad always said, 'Langum folk were tough. When we (Pembroke Dock) played them at rugby, gosh those boys were tough.'

Mind you, I bet the PD boys were pretty tough too!

CERI ADDIS

Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol

Browning points

SIR:- In your April issue, Brian Simmons celebrates his continuing love of Pembrokeshire. But he regrets: 'as the poet said, you cannot recapture that first fine careless rapture'..

I share his sentiments but feel that I must defend a fellow poet's integrity. Robert Browning's matchless verses deserve a more careful reading.

In *Home Thoughts from Abroad* he writes:

*That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over
Lest you should think he never could recapture
That first fine careless rapture.*

JOHN BILSBOROUGH

Glyn Abbey, Llanelli

Who was Kemble Keyes?

SIR: As part of the preparations for Pembroke Dock Bicentenary in 2014, I have been compiling a list of famous visitors to the town and have come across many notable names – Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show; Lords Nelson and Kitchener (and possibly Haw-Haw); Royalty, from Prince Albert to the present Queen; American presidents Roosevelt and Eisenhower before they took office; those great friends Margaret Thatcher and Michael Foot; and even pop stars, the Bay City Rollers and Hot Chocolate to name but a few.

However, one name has me flummoxed, a reference in Mrs Peters' *History of Pembroke Dock* to 'the late Kemble Keyes the African explorer who was brought up in Charlton Place as a boy'.

I can find no reference to him, so does anyone out there have a clue? If so please let me know.

MARTIN CAVANEY

Chairman,
Pembroke Dock Bicentenary Committee