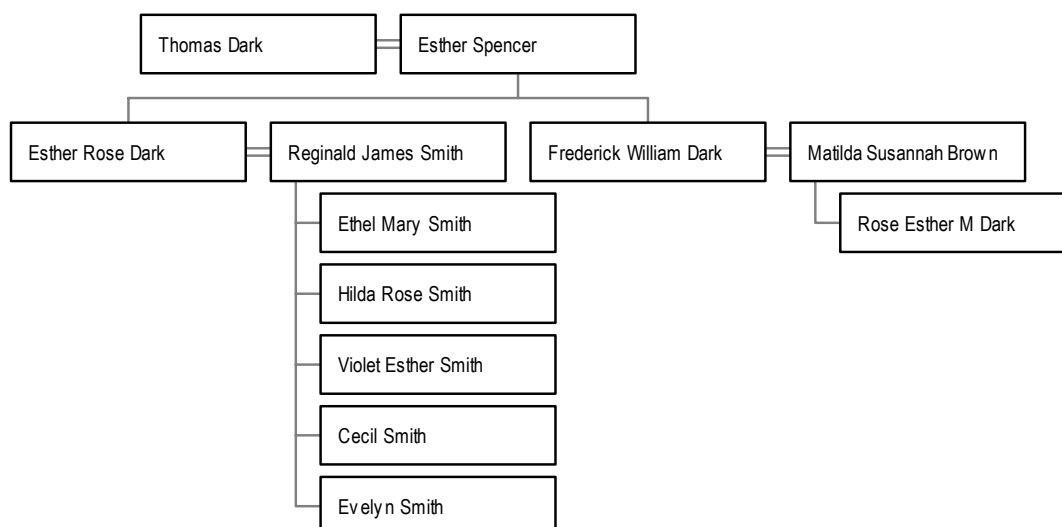


Thomas Dark



Thomas Dark, second known son of Sarah and Thomas Dark, was born in Norwich in 1830 and was another son who would have naval connections. He was at home in Hunslet for the 1851 census and working, as was his older brother William, as an engine fitter. Ten years later finds Thomas having followed his brother to Portsea, and living in a boarding house run by Eliza Weeks at 27 Prince George Street.[#]

Eliza Weeks		46	Boarding House Keeper	Rowner
James Weeks		17	Shipwright Apprentice	Gosport
Ellen Tho Weeks		11	Scholar	America, New Orleans
Frederick I Hayward	Boarder	27	Confectioner's Assistant	Portsea
Thomas Dark	Boarder	30	Millwright HM Dock Yard	Lakenham
Augustine Kedwood	Boarder	21	Engineer, RN	Herdford, Herefordshire

Thomas's engine fitting skills would have secured him the position at the naval dockyard. By the time of the 1871 census Thomas had left the boarding house and had set up home at 10 King Street, Portsea, with his wife Esther and their two young children.^v

Thomas Dark		40	Engine Fitter Dockyard	Lakenham
Esther Dark		34		Purbrook, Hampshire
Esther R Dark		6	Scholar	Portsea
Frederick W Dark		5	Scholar	Portsea
Henry Chiverton	Nephew	16	Seaman "St Vincent"	Jersey, St. Martin

The presence of Henry Chiverton, who would have been the nephew of Esther, gave a vague clue of her provenance. Much more information was provided by the certified copy of the marriage certificate. Thomas Dark and Esther Vannes were married on 20th June 1873 at Portsea, after the calling of banns. Their ages were given as 33 and 25, and their places of residence prior to the ceremony were King Street and Sussex Terrace respectively. Thomas was a bachelor but Esther was a widow, which would have made finding her maiden name difficult if her father had not been named in the certificate as Thomas Spencer, Carpenter. Interestingly, Thomas described his late father rather grandiosely as "Engineer"! The ceremony was conducted by one Norman Clement and witnessed by Isaac Shaw and Deborah Young.^v Before tracing Esther's family, we know where Esther Vann(e)s was for the 1861 census. She was working as a domestic servant in the interesting household of Henry Rose at Sussex Terrace, Portsea.^w

Henry B Rose		47	Capt East India Company (Retd), Governor of Portsea Convict Establishment	India
Evander S Rose		35		India
Mary Rose		19		India
Louisa Rose		15	Scholar	India
Emily Rose		9	Scholar	Jersey
Ethel M Rose		2		Portsea
Frederick J Rose		5 mo		Portsea
Bertha P Price (Vis)		15		Rugby, Warwickshire
Elizabeth Sullivan		34	Cook/Domestic Servant	Cornwall
Emily Page		26	Housemaid	Surrey

Deborah Young	22	Lady's Maid	Durham
Esther Vanns	23	Nurse	Hants

From this listing we learn that Esther was born in Hampshire and was widowed at a very young age. Nothing has been yet found to establish who Mr. Vann(e)s may have been. As we have seen, Deborah Young was one of the witnesses to Esther's marriage.

Now back to Henry Chiverton. He is found in the 1861 census, living with his mother, at St. Martin, Jersey.^{vi}

Elizabeth Chiverton	26		England
Henry Chiverton	5	Scholar	Jersey, St Martin
Ette Chiverton	3		Jersey, St. Martin

The vague place of birth for Elizabeth as "England" is not very helpful, but from the census information it can be reasonably assumed that Elizabeth Chiverton and Esther Dark were sisters and before their marriages were Elizabeth and Esther Spencer. In Elizabeth's case this has been confirmed by a record of a marriage between one Luke Chiverton and Elizabeth Spencer in the Alverstoke district of Hampshire between Jul and September 1852.^{vii} At this stage, despite a search of the census records using a multitude of parameters, the sisters have not been found prior to the records so far identified, apart from an 1851 one for an Esther Spencer of Purbrook Hants, which is the place of birth given by Esther Dark in the census returns from 1871 onwards. This Esther is working as a domestic servant in the household of Richard Smart of 23 North Street, Portsea.^x

Richard Smart	38	Brewer and Beer Seller	Cowes, Isle of Wight
Maria Smart	36		Kent
John Smart	14		Portsea
Emily Smart	12		Portsea
Alice Smart	3		Portsea
Esther Spencer	15	House Servant	Purbrook, Hampshire

However there is an age discrepancy. "Our" Esther, judging from the other records, would have been 13.

Again we have a naval connection with Luke Chiverton who was not at home for the 1861 census as he was listed along with the other "Officers, Crew and Marines as well as Passengers and Visitors on Board (HMS Dasher) on the night of April 7th 1861".^x

Name	Rank and Rating	Cond	Age	Birthplace
Luke Chiverton	Armourer	Married	39	England, Brading Isle of Wight.

Nothing further found for Elizabeth and Luke Chiverton or daughter Ette. However we have a little more information for son Henry Chiverton. Not only was he listed with the Dark household for the 1871 census but he was also listed separately as Boy Two Class of the Blockhouse Fort Portsmouth Harbour.^{xi}

Name and Surname	Rank and Rating	Cond	Age	Where Born
Henry Chiverton	Boy 2 Class	Single	15	Jersey, Channel Islands

A Boy 2nd Class was boy aged 15 to 17 rated as such on entry to a training ship of the Royal Navy. Such entry was conditional on a boy being of adequate physical height, weight and medical fitness and who possessed evidence of being of 'good character'. The boy's parents or guardians would sign a declaration that the boy would serve in the Navy for a minimum period (usually 12 years). HMS St Vincent was a boys' training ship moored in Portsmouth Harbour which, before becoming a training school, had a fairly illustrious past.^{xii} Before continuing with Thomas and Esther Dark, I will complete the 'story' of Henry Chiverton as far as it has been revealed so far. He appears twice in the 1881 census, and has now reached the rank of Stoker.

Name	Rank and Rating	Cond	Age	Birthplace
Henry Chiverton	Stoker	Single	25	(sick Haslar) Jersey, Channel Islands

He had been posted to HMS Asia^{xiii} but on the census night of 3rd April 1881 was not on board as he was a patient at the naval hospital, Haslar, Alverstoke.^{xiv}

Henry Chiverton	Patient	26	Stoker Royal Navy	St Heliers, Jersey, Channel Islands
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The only other possible reference in subsequent census returns that I have found for Henry, who presumably recovered from whatever ailed him in 1881, is a scrappy return for the 1891 census for the registration district of Brompton, Gillingham, Medway, Kent. It records a Henry T Chiverton in a part-list of the crew of HMS Hotspur. However there is nothing entered for him in the Condition, Age or Where Born columns. There is an entry under the Profession or Occupation which is difficult to decipher but seems to read "Cooks Mate", the earlier census returns did not suggest that Henry had a middle name, and of the 19 men listed on the same page, 9 have a line ruled through them, including the Henry T Chiverton entry.^{xv}

Thomas and Esther Dark are still living at 10 King Street, Portsea, for the 1881 census.^{xvi}

Thos Dark	50	Ship Fitter	Norfolk
Esther Dark	43	Ship Fitters Wife	Purbrook, Hampshire,
Esther R Dark	16		Portsea,
Fredk W Dark	15		Portsea

Ten years later Thomas has retired and children Esther R and Frederick W are not at home as they had married, but they do have a young granddaughter staying with them at 10 King Street.^{xvii}

Thomas Dark	60	Retired Locomotive Engineer	Lakenham
Esther Dark	52		Purbrook
Ethel Mary Smith (GDaug)	4		Brixton, London

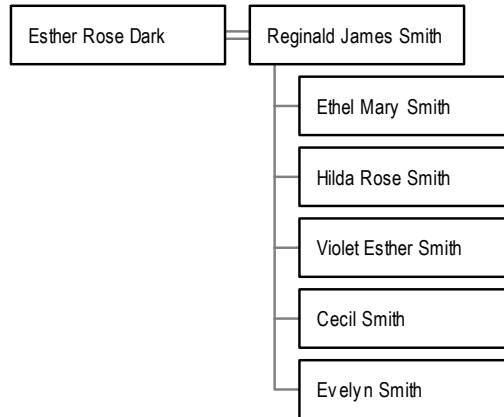
Thomas's death at age 68 is registered for the Jul-Sep quarter in the Portsea Island (1837-1900) district^{xviii} his widow, Esther, is listed in the 1901 census, still living at the family home in King Street. The only other person in the household was a boarder.^{xix}

Esther Dark	50	Living on own means	Purbrook
Thomas Clark	21	Leather Bag Maker	Birmingham, Warwickshire

Esther Dark survived her husband by just over ten years, with her death at the age of 69 registered for the Portsmouth (1900 onw) district in the Oct-Dec quarter 1908.^{xx}



Esther Rose Dark



The birth of Esther, elder child and only daughter of Thomas and Esther Dark, was registered in the Apr-Jun quarter 1864 at Portsea Island.^{xxi} Her childhood was spent at Portsea and it was here she was married in the Jul-Sep quarter of 1885 to Reginald James Smith who was ten years her senior, having been born in 1854.^{xxii} After the wedding the couple moved to London where, according to the 1891 census they were living at 35 Bollerton Road Lambeth.^{xxiii}

Reginald J Smith	36	Solicitors Clerk Law	Marylebone
Esther R Smith	26		Portsmouth
Horta* R Smith	3) Twins		Lambeth
Violet E Smith	3)		Lambeth
Cecil Smith	Under 1 yr		Lambeth
Mary Smith (Mother)(W)	75	Living on own means	Addington, Hertfordshire
Mary E Smith (Sister??)	50	Living on own means	Pimlico
Mary Parrish	51	Monthly Nurse Sick	Welshpool, Montgomeryshire

*Hilda



HMS Boadicea 1877



HMS Tourmaline



Boys of HMS "St Vincent" in 1868

An older child, Ethel Mary Smith, born in 1886, is not at home as she is visiting her grandparents Thomas and Esther Dark at Portsea.^{xxv} But even with one child out from under her feet, Esther would have been a very busy wife and mother with three-year old twins and a baby under 1 year old. It is hoped that her visiting in-laws were a help to her rather than adding to her workload. However, unlike many of the Dark family, it is likely that Esther had married into a more wealthy family, so perhaps her burden was not as heavy as may be thought. Edward came from a large family with an abundance of sons. His parents were Edward Smith, who was an employee in the royal household, and Mary Smith. In 1861 they were residing at 26 Upper George Street, Marylebone which, judging from the number of families living there must have been accommodation for palace workers and their families.^{xxv}

Edwd Smith	45	Marshallman	Felstead, Essex
Mary Smith	48		Addington, Kent
Sarah Smith	21		Marylebone
George Smith	16	Dentist	Marylebone
Alfred Smith	14		Marylebone
Edward Smith	12		Marylebone
Arthur Smith	10		Marylebone
Reginald Smith	6		Marylebone
Ada Smith	3		Marylebone

In 1871 they are still at the same address, with only three of their children now at home, and with both boys now following a profession.^{xxvi}

Edward Smith	55	Queen's Marshallman	Felstead
Mary Smith	58		Addington
Arthur Smith	20	Draughtsman	Marylebone
Reginald Smith	16	Clerk to Barrister	Marylebone
Ada Smith	12	Scholar	Marylebone

Ten years later the address given for the family is at shared accommodation at 62 Cumberland Court, Westminster. Now only son Reginald is at home, and further advanced with his legal career.^{xxvii}

Edward Smith	65	Queen's Marshallman	Felstead
Mary Smith	68		Addington
Reg. James Smith	25	Solicitor Chancery Court	Marylebone
Charlotte Tigwell (Lodger)	69	Retired	Hampshire

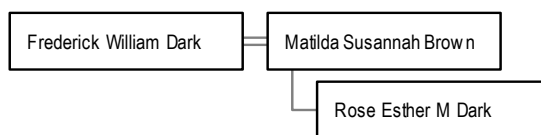
For the last available census the Smith family is living at 16 Gladstone Road, Acton, Middlesex.^{xxviii}

Reginald James Smith	36	Solicitor's Clerk	Marylebone
Esther R Smith	36		Portsea
Ethel Mary Smith	14		Middlesex
Hilda R Smith	13		Middlesex
Violet Smith	13		Middlesex
Evelyn Smith	7		Middlesex

It is interesting to note that Reginald's brother Arthur (now an architect) and family are living next door. This time Ethel Mary is at home. If Reginald came from a male-dominated family, the tables were turned when he married Esther, as it seems that of their known five children only one, Cecil, was a boy. And Cecil was not at home with the family in 1901 as he was a boarder at a boys' school at Teddington.^{xxix} This is as far as I have gone with this family but for the record the births of the Smith children were registered as follows:

Name	Registration	District	County	Vol	Page
Ethel Mary Smith	1886 Apr-Jun	Marylebone	London	1a	592
Violet Esther Smith	1888 Jan-Mar	Lambeth	United Kingdom	1d	20
Hilda Rose Smith	1888 Jan-Mar	Lambeth	United Kingdom	1d	526
Cecil Smith	1891 Jan-Mar	Lambeth	United Kingdom	1d	548
Evelyn Smith	1895 Apr-Jun	Marylebone	London	1a	547

Frederick William Dark



Frederick was, as far as is known, the second of two children born to Thomas and Esther Dark, and their only son. His birth was registered for the Oct-Dec quarter of 1865 at Portsea Island^{xxx}. He was at home with his family for the both the 1871 and 1881 census, but by 1891, at age 25, he had moved out of home and was residing the Mr. and Mrs. Coke at 18 Marlborough Row, Portsea.^{xxxii}

Henry Coke	77	Porter	Bristol
Winifred Coke	72		Bath
Frederick Dark (Boarder)	25	Tailor	Portsmouth

Frederick married Matilda Susannah Brown in the Jul-Sep quarter of 1893 at Portsea Island.^{xxxiii} By 1901 they have a young daughter, Rose Esther M Dark, and are living in the same house as Frederick was boarding in ten years before. It is likely that the Cokes had died and Frederick had either bought the house at 18 Marlborough Road or had taken on their lease.^{xxxiii}

Fredk W Dark	34	Naval Outfitters Manager (at home)	Hampshire, Portsmouth
Matilda S Dark	24		Hampshire, Portsmouth
Rose E M Dark	3		Hampshire, Portsmouth

Matilda's birth was registered at Portsea Island in the Jan-Mar quarter of 1876. She was the daughter of was the daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Brown, and was with the family for the 1881 census, living at 11 Finsbury Street, Portsea.^{xxxiv}

Henry J Brown	27	Blacksmith Journeyman	Gosport, Hampshire
Elizabeth J Brown	25		Portsmouth
Julia C Brown	7	Scholar	Portsmouth
Matilda S Brown	5	Scholar	Portsmouth
Henry G Brown	3	Scholar	Portsmouth

A check on the 1891 census shows that the Brown family had increased, but Matilda was not with them at 54 Duke Street, Portsea, for the census night.^{xxxv}

Henry J Brown	38	Blacksmith HM Dockyard	Portsmouth
Elizabeth J Brown	37		Gosport
Julia C Brown	17	General Servant (Domestic)	Portsmouth
Henry G Brown	13	Scholar	Portsmouth
George C Brown	11	Scholar	Portsmouth
Olive E D Brown	3	Scholar	Portsmouth
Ethel B V Brown	1		Portsmouth
Henry W Ward (Boarder)	40	Builders Store Keeper	Portsmouth

Like her elder sister Julia, Matilda was also in service, and on the night of 5 April 1891 she was counted as one of the household of Mary Payne and her children (Payne and Wales) at 43 Tottenham Road, Portsea (with her age inflated by a year or so).^{xxxvi}

Mary J Payne	33		St Johns, Newfoundland
William H A Payne	10	Scholar	Portland, Dorset
Sidney J E Payne	6	Scholar	Sheerness, Kent
Frederick K T Wales	2	Scholar	Malta
Matilda Brown	16	Servant	Portsmouth

Her employer had certainly traveled around and it is likely that the absent husband was a mariner. And the sea is again a theme in Matilda's life with her father working at the dockyard and her husband earning his living as a naval uniform outfitter.

Just to complete this section, the birth of Rose Esther M Dark was registered at Portsea Island in the Jul-Sep quarter of 1897.

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- ⁱ While in the pre-1861 Census returns his place of birth is Norwich, he later refers to himself as having been born in Lakenham which may have been a suburb of the city.
- ⁱⁱ HO107/2318/p23.
- ⁱⁱⁱ RG9/637/pp5-6. As both William and Thomas were listed under the same the census Piece reference (637), they would have been living in close proximity to each other.
- ^{iv} RG10/1143 p1.
- ^v Certified copy of marriage certificate MXC833278.
- ^{vi} RG9/644/pp34-35.
- ^{vii} RG9/4403/p17.
- ^{viii} FreeBMD Marriage Index.
- ^{ix} HO107/1658/p7.
- ^x RG9/4540/p2. The Dasher was a wooden hulled, paddle driven packet ship, boasting 1 gun. She was launched on 5th December 1837 and decommissioned in 1885.
- ^{xi} RG10/1137/p4.
- ^{xii} She was a first rate ship designed to carry 120 guns. But by then the Napoleonic Wars were effectively over, and with plans in hand to reduce the fleet she was laid up until her first commission in Feb 1831 for Service with the Mediterranean fleet. She was almost wrecked during a storm off Malta in February 1834. The warship was re-commissioned for the channel Squadron in 1841 and was frequently in Portsmouth Queen Victoria visited her twice in 1842 and 1847. During the first visit the vessel acted as flagship to the experimental squadron at the last Royal Review of a fleet in which the major ships were under sail. After the second royal visit she took part in the war in the Baltic in 1854. It was her last active engagement before she became a training ship for boys and was given a permanent mooring off the entrance to Haslar Creek. She was broken up at Falmouth in 1906.
- ^{xiii} HMS Asia was a 2289, 84 gun, wooden sail ship of the Ganges class, launched on 19th January 1824. She saw service in the Mediterranean and the Pacific and was finally decommissioned in 1908.
- ^{xiv} RG11/1149/p18; RG11/1166/p22.
- ^{xv} RG12/667/p2.
- ^{xvi} RG11/1157/p1.
- ^{xvii} RG12/871/p12.
- ^{xviii} Free BMD Death Index.
- ^{xix} RG13/1005/p13.
- ^{xx} Free BMD Death Index.
- ^{xxi} FreeBMD Birth Index.
- ^{xxii} Free BMD Birth Index; FreeBMD Marriage Index.
- ^{xxiii} RG12/408/p18.
- ^{xxiv} RG12/871/p12.
- ^{xxv} RG9/77/p8.
- ^{xxvi} RG10/166/p10.
- ^{xxvii} RG11/106/p46.
- ^{xxviii} RG13/1204/18.
- ^{xxix} RG13/672/p5.
- ^{xxx} FreeBMD Birth Index.
- ^{xxxi} RG10/1143 p1; RG10/4515/p22; RG12/862/p22.
- ^{xxxii} FreeBMD Marriage Index.
- ^{xxxiii} RG13/993/p2.
- ^{xxxiv} RG11/1143/p51.
- ^{xxxv} RG12/856/p21.
- ^{xxxvi} RG121/866/p37.