



A dedicated headmaster: F.J.J. Macey of Albert Street School



Frederick Joseph James Macey (back row centre) was Headmaster at Albert Street School for 33 years, from 1898 to 1931. Over the years, hundreds of former pupils have reminisced about his tenure. One among them was Albert Taylor who remarked how Macey commanded great respect among male pupils as a 'stern and strict schoolmaster' who 'used his cane with good effect'. However, he rarely retained any form of grudge against a miscreant pupil and quite often revealed a common humanity towards the boys. An April fool prank would bring a smile to his face, so Albert recalled. And when Albert's brother was suffering under a lengthy illness, Mr Macey took Albert to the fishmongers to buy plaice fillets for him.

Fred Macey was born in 1870 and arrived in Ventnor after vacating the post of Headmaster of St. Luke's Boy's School in Southampton. His starting salary in 1898 was £125 p.a. with house, coal and gas provided. He was to bring an assistant master with him, properly certificated, with a starting salary of £70 p.a. It seems that discipline in the School had become lax and Macey's first allotted task from the School Managers was to apply a firm hand.

The photograph above is a family one, taken about 1926 with Fred's wife, Agnes (b. 1876) in front row centre, sons Geoff (b.1902) and Fred (b.1900) left and right to back, and daughters Betty (b.1910) and Margaret (b.1905) left and right in front.



The lower image shows Fred Macey at the master's desk about 1914, with his eldest son, FJ Macey, nearest the camera and his second son, GH Macey, sitting directly fronting his father. Very sadly, Agnes Macey died in March 1932 and her husband in July the same year, just 6 months after he had retired.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre.



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