

		<h2 style="text-align: center;">Maurice Colbourne - Old Reptonian, not one of the Cybermen</h2> <p>Colbourne with Anne Grey in the 1932 film <i>Arms and the Man</i>, a screen adaptation of the play by George Bernard Shaw, who Colbourne knew well</p> <p>The stage and film actor/producer MAURICE COLBOURNE (1894-1965) is one of that special breed of 'Famous Residents' whose links with Derbyshire were forged by their time spent at boarding schools in the county.</p> <p>Colbourne was a pupil at Repton School, where in 1912, when aged 17, he was instrumental in establishing the school's first Dramatic Society. Today his name may not be widely-known outside specialist circles, but his local links are certainly worth recording, for in his day Colbourne was an influential figure, especially in Shakespearean theatre.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Maurice Colbourne as Brutus in William Shakespeare's <i>Julius Caesar</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Colbourne with Anne Grey in the 1932 film <i>Arms and the Man</i>, a screen adaptation of the play by George Bernard Shaw, who Colbourne knew well</p>	

Maurice Colbourne was born in Cuddington, Cheshire, on 24 September 1894. He arrived at Repton not long after Basil Rathbone, who was a couple of years his senior, and their paths must undoubtedly have crossed during their time there. In the fulness of time Rathbone became the more famous of the two budding thespians, and his iconic screen portrayal of Sherlock Holmes has made his name much more enduring than Colbourne's.

Colbourne showed his rather more high-brow colours while still at Repton. After he established the Dramatic Society in his last year at the school, its first performance was a series of extracts from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. That seemed to set the tone for his distinguished career in dramatics.

On going up to Oxford University he became President of the Oxford Union Dramatic Society, and afterwards the Governor of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. Subsequently he achieved fame as an actor, author, playwright and theatrical manager.

In 1928 he formed a partnership with fellow actor Barry Jones (1893-1981) in order to tour Canada. They put on many Shakespeare productions there and were given the express blessing of George Bernard Shaw in staging his own plays 'so long as they are well done'.

As an actor himself, Maurice Colbourne became best-known for his Shakespearean roles, but he also appeared in at least seven films between 1932 and 1962. Some were period dramas, but the best-known is *I'm All Right Jack* (1959), in which Colbourne, then in his sixties, was cast as 'missiles director'.

He also appeared in a number of TV productions from the experimental days of 1946 right up to 1963. And between 1933 and 1945 he found the time to write a dozen or so books, the most lasting of which was *The Real Bernard Shaw* (1939).

A certain amount of confusion has been inclined to occur because a later British actor (1939-1989) adopted the pseudonym Maurice Colbourne after reading the obituary of the older actor and noticing that they shared the same birthday.

The second Maurice Colbourne appeared in films and on television and was twice in episodes of *Doctor Who*, including the classic 'Attack of the Cybermen'. Even allowing for the sensationally scary storyline, the 'genuine' Maurice Colbourne would have been sadly miscast in the cult series, since when the Cybermen episode was broadcast in 1985 he had already been in the grave for two decades.

Maurice Colbourne died at Perelle, Guernsey, in the Channel Islands, on 22 September 1965, two days before his 71st birthday. He may not be the most famous Old Reptonian - indeed he has been routinely overlooked - but he is an interesting one all the same.

Below: 1932: Anne Grey, Maurice Colbourne (1894-1965) and Barry Jones (1893 - □ 1981) star in 'Arms And The Man', a screen adaptation of the play by George Bernard Shaw, directed by Cecil Lewis for Wardour.

