

4 September

Fr JOHN DIAMOND

25 March 1904 – 4 September 1973



‘Jack’ Diamond was born in Leeds and spent three years in a business firm in Buenos Aires before entering the novitiate in 1929.



After ordination in 1938 he was to do a biennium in Rome on Moral Theology

but the war intervened and he did it, at the old Heythrop as a sort of apprentice to Henry Davis. The apprenticeship never seemed to end as Davis never retired until he died at the age of 85. This was frustrating for Jack who was kept from the coalface, as it were. Freddy Copleston, who admired him said he was ‘hardly exciting as a lecturer, wooden and keeping to the expected.’

Then he was made rector in 1952 but in this role, he was cautious, shy and unable to make decisions. Yet he was a good listener, one to one, and obviously wanted to help. He began Friends of Heythrop, a periodical that informed the wider public about the work of the college and raised funds. It eventually morphed into *To Our Friends* and the *Jesuit Development Fund*.

He extended the chapel by building many side alcoves where individual Masses could be celebrated in those pre-Vatican II days. This involved some burrowing into the rock and inevitable became known as the Diamond Mines.

In 1959 he moved to the Regional Seminary in Chishawasha (where the picture shows him welcoming Cardinal Montini, later Pope Paul VI, to the seminary) and in 1965 he became rector. A big man, he was described as ‘unnecessarily tall’. Again he was slow to introduce change but over time he became unhappy about his old legalism and could laugh at it. He was a victim of his time.

When his term was up, he returned to England but had a heart attack and was advised to lose weight. At the same time he began to relax, partly with the help of time at the Richmond Fellowship. He became more open and confident and was able to laugh at his old image. He enjoyed the scholastics play about himself at the old Heythrop in 1954 in which, in response to a simple request, he says, ‘Well now, come back in three months and the answer will be “no”.’ When it was retold to him in 1973, he had a great laugh at himself.