



■ The present minister, the Rev. Colin Evans, with a portrait of the first pastor and founder of Rodborough Tabernacle, Thomas Adams

Church displays its past

IT was service as usual in the midst of an historical exhibition marking the 250th year of Christian witness at Rodborough Tabernacle.

Surrounding relics tracing the church's history from the days of the 18th century evangelist, George Whitefield, to whom the church owes its origin, to the present day, there was a wedding and two baptisms.

"Step inside our buildings," says the minister, the Rev. Colin Evans, "and you'll think you're in a museum.

"Ours is a fascinating history and we've got many artifacts to illustrate it."

Enhanced by an array of floral decorations by the ladies of the church, the tour began with Whitefield's chair, the most cherished relic dating from the earliest days and used by the great man himself, moved through a complete rebuilding of the premises in 1836 — all done in nine months with worship in Stroud Brewery malt-house! — the building of Kingscourt School by the church a year later, to the peak years of the 1930s and a unique youth organisation, the Guild of the Tri-Sigma, symbolising Sincerity, Self-Surrender and Service.

This moved visitors, a number

from considerable distances, into the Tabernacle's delightful Little Chapel converted from the old coach house and built for the guilds, a lasting memorial to the founder, longest serving and one of the most remarkable ministers, the Rev. Charles Ernest Watson (1909-1942).

Here was to be found the latest addition to the church's "museum" — a plaque specially sculptured to commemorate the 250th celebration, dedicated by the Rev. Colin Evans during morning service on Sunday. At the concluding evening service accompaniment was by the Christ Church orchestra from Nailsworth.