



# *Coroners Inquest Reports*

## *Castle Eaton*

### *Inquest Mrs Ada Winfield 1942*

By the Stroud Divisional Coroner (Mr R R Smith)

The victim of the tragedy was Mrs Ada Winfield, widow of Mr Henry Winfield, a gardener. She and her grandson lived at 21 Coxwell Street, Cirencester.

It was stated that she had had several falls, and medical evidence was given that she probably had a fainting turn and fell into the fireplace, and that death was due to shock following severe burns. The coroner returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

John Henry Winfield, The Street, Castle Eaton, Wilts, said that his mother was 72 years of age. He called at his mother's home in Coxwell Street, Cirencester, early on Thursday morning. She seemed to be in fair health. Witness knew that his mother had had a fall and had been attended by a doctor.

James Henry Winfield, a grandson, said that he had been living with his grandmother. She had not been very well. Sometimes she fell out of bed. There was no one else living in the house. On Sunday May 10 she fell down in the street and had to be helped indoors; a neighbour had told him she had fallen down in the house several times after that. On Thursday morning she seemed to be about normal, and when he returned for his midday meal she was sitting in her chair by the fire.

When he arrived home from work a few minutes after five o'clock he found the room full of smoke. His grandmother was partly in a sitting position on the hob of the fireplace, with her head across the chair. He got help and moved her, but she seemed to be dead. It was the habit of his grandmother to make tea for herself about 3 o'clock, and she had done so on this occasion, for there were tea things about and a pot

of tea in the oven. In reply to the Coroner, witness said that it seemed as though his grandmother had reached up for something in the cupboard, or to put the sugar basin back, and had then fallen into the fireplace.

Dr H J M Adams said that he had attended Mrs Winfield a few times before her fall on May 10. She was rather unstable on her feet. When he saw her on the day after her fall in the street she was quite normal mentally and was resting. He advised her to continue to rest, and because he believed it was dangerous for her to be in the house alone, he suggested that she should go into the infirmary, and she would not consent to that.

On the evening of the accident he arrived at the house about 5.25 pm. Mrs Winfield was dead. Her clothing had been burnt and she herself was severely burnt about the body. She probably had a fainting turn and fell into the fire place. Death was due to shock following the severe burns.

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