

Reports on the Death of Lord Brooke, 2 March 1643

Report A ~ From 'A History of the Civil War in England' by Lord Clarendon, written in 1759

"On Thursday the 2nd March, the gunners were in fierce action against the small Dam Street gates. Lord Brooke came forth in a plush cassock, with a headpiece of steel on, having before his face five bars of steel gilt for protecting his head and face from the fierceness of a sword. He came to Walter Francey's house in Dam Street, which house had a very long entry and which was opposite a gun. His Lordship saw his gunner fire once or twice. After these shots, he takes his hand and, lifting up his beaver (= face guard) from before his face so that he might see more clearly what was done, he was espied by some of the besieged. They let fly at him, by which he was fortunately shot in the head. By what hand it is not certainly known, but it is certain that the shot was his death, for suddenly he fell down and died. His death was kept very secret for as long as possible from the common soldiers. It was announced that one of Lord Brooke's servants was slain."

Report B ~ written in Lichfield on 2 March 1643

"Lord Brooke marched with his forces against the Earl of Chesterfield at Lichfield. Having taken the town and forced the enemy into the Cathedral, and having offered them terms of surrender, Lord Brooke went into an upstairs room. He was going to tell his soldiers not to injure or plunder the town. Looking out of a window, he was espied by one of the Earl of Chesterfield's soldiers, a papist (= Roman Catholic) who was in the Cathedral. This man immediately shot the Lord through the eye with a brace of bullets (= two bullets), whereupon he immediately died. His death is much lamented."

Report C ~ written in Lichfield on 2 March 1643

"We have had the honour in this area to bring my Lord Brooke into a quiet condition. That enemy to our church was slain in his quarrel against our church, by the God of our church, with a shot out of the Cathedral, by a bullet made of church lead, through the mouth."

Report D ~ from 'Loyal and Ancient City' by Howard Clayton, written in

"Early on the morning of March 2nd the bombardment (by the Parliamentarians) against the South Gate began. . . . After some time, Lord Brooke decided to make an assessment of the situation and he left his headquarters in Saddler Street. Making his way across the Market Place he . . . passed under cover along the back of the houses until he came to the house of Walter Francey. Here he passed through an entry which led to Dam Street close to the gun position of the gun called 'Black Bess'.

Lord Brooke was wearing a purple tunic 'with a headpiece of steel, having before his face five bars of gilt steel'. He stood there watching while the gunners fired twice and then, the better to see the effect of their fire, he leaned forward out of the porch in which he was taking cover.

Two men in the Cathedral tower were watching. One of them was a deaf and dumb man called John Dyott. He was armed with a fowling piece or punt gun, the sort of firearm which was usually loaded with small shot and used for shooting ducks. A fearsome looking weapon, about seven feet long, with a calibre (= the diameter of the barrel of the gun) of about an inch and a half; it still exists in the possession of the Dyott family in Lichfield.

On this occasion it had been loaded with a lead ball made from some of the lead taken from the Cathedral roof. John Dyott was watching as Lord Brooke came out of the entry; he took careful aim and, as Lord Brooke leaned forward, he fired. The shot struck Brooke in the left eye and he fell down dead."