

pleaded that ‘the king’s escheators do no destruction or damage’ to her dowry, the chosen executors were promptly side-lined while the king prevaricated and, pressurized by the Despensers, according to the authoritative Warwickshire historian William Dugdale, began appointing his own custodians. Within weeks, on 28 September 1315, arguing that ‘it was excepted in the covenants made’, Edward granted custody of Warwick Castle to Richard Damory, a current court favourite married to the king’s niece although not, in fact, as events would soon show, a consistent royalist. While the royal advisers themselves were expressing misgivings over such interference, unrest broke out in the castle serious enough to warrant the king’s sending a trusted envoy, John Walwyn, to investigate and punish unspecified ‘outrages’ being committed against him there.<sup>16</sup> Beauchamp properties everywhere were now being redesignated officially as ‘in the king’s hands’ and their custody granted to reliable allies: Sutton Coldfield to the tyrannical John Somery, lord of Dudley and Weoley, on whom the king was relying for control of north Warwickshire; the Templars’ manor at Sherbourne to a prominent Warwickshire loyalist, John Pecche; and Warwick Castle soon transferred to the dependable Walter Beauchamp of Alcester, an estranged cousin of Guy of Warwick. The biggest rewards of all, however, went to Hugh Despenser senior, who received the bulk of the estates, including the most profitable, Brailes, on absurdly advantageous terms. Widow Alice’s dowry of manors (Lighthorne, Haseley, Beausale, Berkswell and Claverdon) was eventually granted, but otherwise only the late earl’s goods, and crops sown on his manors, were to remain to

---

over many years. The sole exception to their general obscurity (though the Hamleyns, Hastings and Blounts were substantial midland gentry) is Adam Harvington, a high-profile lawyer-cleric closely associated with Guy at first but later becoming king’s clerk, chancellor to the exchequer in Dublin, abbot of Pershore, canon of Hereford and vicar of Tredington. He was one of a select few able to reconcile the conflicting loyalties and thrive seemingly without blemish under all three Edwards. See M. Hodgetts, ‘Adam of Harvington, prelate and politician’, *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, xxxvi (3), 1959.

<sup>16</sup> *Calendar of Chancery Warrants (CChW) 1244-1326*, i, pp. 420, 425, 431-2. On the Despensers, Dugdale writes: ‘so much was the king wrought upon by them whose miscarriages afterwards gave the discontented nobles opportunity to work his own ruine’ (*Antiquities*, p. 393). It is unclear whether Damory actually took up the post offered: *CChW*, i, p. 432. The affronts to the king are not specified: ‘... aucuns grantz outrages et despitz ...’ which are to be ‘bien et reddement puniz’ (*CChW*, i, p. 431).