

watershed; yet these events meant no return to stability at local level. The king and his favourites now embarked on the wholesale seizure of those 'Contrariant' estates not already forfeited. In Warwickshire as elsewhere this was a major operation involving the properties of some two dozen disgraced barons, who met a variety of fates. The leading magnates were executed, including the leader, Thomas of Lancaster, and Henry Wylington, lord of Cherington, who had been active at both Bridgnorth and Burton and was said to have deployed troops openly, with unfurled banners. Roger Damory had been killed in action, while others had fled, ready to resume hostilities (John Wyard, Peter Lymesey, William Trussell). But for most of those captured or who had surrendered, the reprisals were not unduly harsh by the standards of the day: indeed, the king rebuked his chief justice early in 1323 for laxity in dealing with trouble-makers. Most of the rebels in Warwickshire were taken into custody for a time before being released after paying fines, swearing loyalty or accepting military service in France (John Bishopsdon, Thomas Baddesley, Richard Whitacre, Thomas Blankfront, Saer Rochford, John Wylington). Some, like William Grevil at Burmington, recovered their estate quite quickly, with the king's 'special grace', for reasons not immediately obvious. Those merely suspected of disloyalty could be fairly treated, as in the case of the parson of Chesterton, Nicholas Guildford, who had his goods returned to him from Stoneleigh Abbey, where they had been placed in custody, after he found friends willing to testify to his innocence. Finally, a conspicuous few, like Robert Holland, John Hastings, Roger Beler and, perhaps, the three-time former sheriff, John Dene, defected to the king at the eleventh hour, saving their estates and being handsomely rewarded: Beler received custody of the manors of his former lord, Thomas of Lancaster, was appointed justice charged with investigating the attacks against the Despensers, and eventually made baron of the exchequer – in which capacity retribution came when he was ambushed and murdered on the road near Leicester a few years later by unforgiving former associates.<sup>38</sup>

Whatever the fate of individuals, the overall result of the mass forfeitures was twofold: to create a vacuum of authority which could

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<sup>38</sup> The fate of the rebels after Boroughbridge is conveniently summarized in G.L. Haskins, 'A Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II', *Speculum*, xiv, 1939, pp. 74-5; *Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, IV*, pp. 154-7. Guildford: CCR 1318-1323, p. 458; Beler: *PW*, ii, 2, pp. 282, 285; *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society*, xi, 1913-14, p. 460; *CCR 1318-1323*, p. 432 etc.