

Downton Abbey fans descend on Bampton

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Robin Shuckburgh, chairman of Bampton Archive, with some memorabilia which is on sale in the village

COACHLOADS of tourists from around the world have descended on a small village made famous by Downton Abbey.

The ITV period drama, which began its third series two Sundays ago, is partly filmed in the streets of Bampton in West Oxfordshire. And increasing numbers of fans from as far away as America, Holland and Australia are flocking there.

[Pubs](#) , cafes, B&Bs and shops have all benefited from the influx in trade and even the village library now sells Downton memorabilia.

Villagers have welcomed the Emmy award-winning show, which attracts about nine million viewers.

Robin Shuckburgh, chairman of preservation society Bampton Archive, said: “We are getting five coaches a week at the moment.

“Bampton has become the centre of a media storm. It really is quite fun.

“The worry of course is if it scales up, but Bampton will cope. It is an extremely innovative place. We have to try to work out some way of making sure we do not just get lots and lots of tourists with absolutely no benefits of any kind.”

Yasar Iletmis, owner of Bampton Coffee House in Market Square, said: “It has definitely boosted trade – maybe by 25 to 30 per cent.”

Alan Clarke, owner of The Horseshoe pub in Bridge Street, said: “What amazes me is the people that have come from abroad.

“I had a couple of sisters from California and Oregon just to see where the show is all filmed.”

Bampton resident Jenny Jenkins’ field was used by the Downton Abbey production crew to create a grave for character Lavinia Swire in series two.

She said: “The effect of the show has been great and we have benefited, but we do not seem to have anything organised for the people that visit.

Ron Malone, 76, is one of many Bampton residents who are set to appear in this series as extras after flyers were handed out in the village.

He said: “It was an absolutely amazing experience.”

Several tour companies are now running regular trips to Bampton and Highclere Castle in Berkshire, where the series is also filmed.

[Lewis](#) Swan, director of Brit Movie Tours, said: “This year our Downton Abbey tour has been very, very popular.

“We sold out every single one. We spend an hour in Bampton and the residents are beginning to cotton on to it. People can now buy memorabilia souvenirs.

“We do not want them to change anything in the village too much because that is part of the appeal.”

Tourists John and Vivien Cooney, 62 and 65, travelled from Brackley in Northamptonshire to visit Bampton’s Downton Abbey sites on Wednesday. Mr Cooney said: “We follow the series very closely and we had the opportunity to come and see where some of the shots that are in the series are filmed.

“It is quite interesting to see how the production team uses the surroundings in this village for the show.”

James Sutton, 37, who visited from Carterton with his wife Elizabeth, 36, said: “I am really impressed by Bampton. “It is a very sweet little place.

“I hope they do not make any changes because it would spoil it.”

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