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PRANKSTERS renamed the village of Bampton as people got into the April Fool's Day spirit.

Signs leading into the village were changed to Downton, *pictured*, after TV show *Downton Abbey*, which is filmed in the area.

Alan Clarke, landlord of the Horse Shoes, Bridge Street, said: "I think that is marvellous. It just shows a bit of imagination and might bring a smile to people's faces."

Bampton gained national fame for being the location of *Downton*Abbey, an *ITV* costume drama set in a country house in 1912.

Meanwhile, Cotswold Wildlife Park, near Burford, was hit by the

unsuspecting victims of pranksters . . . again.

About 30 people had phoned asking to speak to Mr C Lion, Anne Teeter, Don Key, and a myriad of other puns.

Jeremy Bainbridge, who takes calls at the park, said: "We get them every year without fail.

"But they are quite fun, and we certainly do not mind. It brightens our morning up.

"The best ones are the ones we have not heard before. Anne Fibian was a new one for this year."

He said the callers were usually people at work who had been pranked by colleagues.

## The best-kept April secret

MOTORISTS entering Bampton may have had to look twice to check an extraordinary roadsign.

It was probably the only place in the country with a warning sign showing an elderly woman performing a hairpin turn on inline skates.

But to those living in Bampton, it was a traditional piece of fun to celebrate April Fool's Day.

The joke signs started a few years ago, in response to an image of a couple with walking sticks struggling across the highway above the words 'Elderly People'.

Each April 1 the sign is changed.

There has been an elderly gentleman riding a unicycle and juggling his zimmer frame, as well as a grandmother doing a



'wheelie' on her skateboard. There then followed an elderly man giving a lady a lift on the handlebars of his bicycle, and a couple riding on a

Penny Farthing machine.

The tradition is by now well established, but it is a well-kept village secret as to who is responsible for the humorous signs.



April change . . . the traditional sign (left), and this year's innovation (right)