



## Cockington Lakes Restoration

Located within a steep sided valley, accessed by very narrow roads, the restoration of these historic lakes was always going to be a big challenge. Here the very same micro climate that has protected the many rare trees and plants for hundreds of years is by contrast the biggest benefit and the greatest challenge. The value of the restoration lies in enhancing the landscape and waterscape, whilst minimising the impact on a popular tourist attraction dating back to Victorian times, gaining access into dense woodland and a public space.

Challenges aside – this historical value prompted the need for action. Constructed in medieval times by the monks of Torre Abbey (the lakes originally provided carp as food for their table) – more recently their value was raised following the nomination for Grade II listing in the English Heritage 'Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest'.

Years in planning, the restoration has involved fundraising and support of Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund, Green Heart Appeal (of which Sue Barker is patron) and local volunteers keen to see their park revived. A masterplan was developed with local designers to restore the lakes, creating a sustainable environment with the three lakes offering different functions –

1. Upper lake as a silt trap to reduce future maintenance
2. Middle lake as a wildlife haven for insects, plants and amphibians
3. Lower lake as an ornamental pond with fish and ducks.

The solution was further developed with preferred heritage and environmental contractors WM Longreach, based on an innovative pumping solution in which 6000 tonnes of silt was pumped 500m up the steep valley from the lakes to storage lagoons. Engineering excellence was demonstrated in overcoming challenges: access, timings of works (weather, temperature and light constraints of Autumn/Winter period), stakeholder engagement and partnering with volunteers to meet programme and budget constraints.

