

## Who Wants To Be A Lock Keeper?

For the last three years volunteers have been assisting our Lock Staff on the Thames at the 45 locks along its length between Lechlade and Teddington. Now, ahead of our fourth



season, we invite you to apply to become a Volunteer Assistant Lock Keeper at a lock near you.

### **Our Stretch of River**

The Environment Agency, which is the navigation authority for the Thames, is recruiting for the 2014 season and is looking for volunteers who can commit to assisting at least one day a week between May and the end of September.

Volunteers can agree their hours with lock keepers but need to be available from at least 11am to 5pm. Volunteers are particularly needed along the river between Reading and Lechlade.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people and to find out more about the Thames, its history, wildlife and management. At the same time volunteers know that they are doing something worthwhile that is really appreciated.

Our Volunteer Assistant Lock Keepers work alongside paid lock keepers. They help boats pass through the lock safely; taking ropes, directing traffic, and operating sluices and lock gates. They help maintain the site; painting, tidying and gardening. They provide information

to visitors, on foot or afloat, to help them make the best of their time on the river. Visitors really appreciate the local knowledge that volunteers can provide.

All applicants

are invited to an assessment at a local lock. You will have the role explained and be shown what it involves in practical terms. You will also be assessed to decide which site may be most appropriate for you and to ensure that you have the physical capabilities required. After successful completion of the assessment, you will attend an induction course which focuses on safety and preparing you for the lock side.

### **Lock side Training**

On the lock side the volunteers follow a documented training programme before being signed off to take charge of the lock on their own. This will only be for short periods, while the paid keeper is at lunch for example. Volunteers are there to augment the service provided by paid staff rather than to replace them. Some uniform is provided and mileage for travel to and from a lock local to them is paid. If you would like to find out more about volunteering on the Thames and receive an information pack and application form, please contact the Volunteer team on: 01491 828360 or email [thames.volunteers@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:thames.volunteers@environment-agency.gov.uk)