



How long have you lived in Newquay?

About 37 years

When did you first hear about the Newquay Marine Group?

We were doing wildlife stuff with the boats and guided tours and things like that around the wildlife and we were working closely with Cornwall Wildlife Trust and we were all saying that we'd really like a marine conservation group to be set up here in Newquay. But nobody seemed to have the time, and then suddenly out of the blue, we heard about Laura and Gabbi and we thought "fantastic!" because Newquay was actually going to have some representation for the wildlife here.

Is that why you wanted to get involved with the group?

Definitely yes because there's so much going on here that people don't know about in Newquay. There's so much going on here that people don't know about in Newquay and also other areas have just started opening up their own marine groups, and we thought it would be really nice to have a say about what happens here in Newquay, to show championship and show all the wildlife that we've got here, rather than focusing on the town and make people realise what we've got and enjoy it and help save it a little bit.

How long have you been a member of the group for?

Right from the start so we were at the first meeting, where we all sat together and got to know each other and talk about what everyone wanted the group to be about. So, it was really exciting being at the start of the group and it's grown massively since then, which is fabulous.

As an individual, what work have you done with the Newquay Marine Group?

I'm actually physically disabled but at the start to the group I wasn't a wheelchair user so I was a lot more active at the beginning so I was involved with doing the rock pool rambles and stuff like that and using all the knowledge I had gained over the years of working with the marine environment was really nice to be able with other people and see the enthusiasm of people and help change the mind about cherishing what we've got. But as time went on, I became physically disabled so now probably I'm more like the 'ideas girl', although I did get involved in Trawlshare, which my husband runs a boat that I used to work on where they were gathering marine microplastics from the ocean. And looking at what we were trawling up and measuring it in an area so that we could actually see how much plastic is here in the ocean and what sort of plastic, so that we could help maybe change things and make it look different. So I wasn't really able to go on the boat very much so I'd sit in my kitchen with other marine group members, especially Liz Clark, and we'd sift through all the pots and measure. I really enjoyed that because I felt like I was able to do stuff. I was also a trustee of the Shark Trust so we used to have lots of basking sharks, blue sharks and porbeagle sharks around here which is really interesting.

What projects has the Atlantic Diver been involved with the Newquay Marine Group?

Quite a few really, mostly marine-type things so we've done lobster hatchery releases, we've done the Trawlshare projects, we do surveys with Cornwall Seal Group and Research Trust, which the local marine collage and also Newquay Marine Group are involved in – which is brilliant because that gathers data in our patch here to link up with other areas so we can see the movement of seals through all of those areas and also marine life and human activity.



Outside of the group and work, what do you do in your spare time?

I still am absolutely mad about sea watching so I come up and do Seaquest Southwest watches, but I'm also involved in Orca, which is an organisation charity that monitor cetacean, so that's like dolphins, whales and harbour porpoises, around the world from usually ferries and cruise ships. And I'm actually the first person that is disabled to be allowed to join in on that. So, I've gone from being able-bodied to being disabled but still my knowledge has been useful which is really nice. So, here in Newquay, we've done lots of stuff as well but I've been quite involved in accessibilities, so for people like myself I found quite soon that Newquay wasn't as accessible as people might think, and little tweaks helping the authorities or National Trust or the south-west coastal path we're actually talking to them about how they could make it cheap to do the works but make it accessible for lots of people that maybe struggle to walk or if they're a wheelchair-user like me or push-chairs and mums. So, there's an on-going thing in Newquay about that, I've got a few projects on, but obviously it's very hard because when you're disabled you have other health issues as well but it's really nice that I go around with Cornwall Rolling Ramblers and we go and explore other areas of Cornwall as well so hopefully that would be great for everybody.

What impact do you think the group has made?

It's just massive, the first and foremost one is that they're enthusing people to look around and see what we have here, and once people are enthusiastic about it and love it the way we all do, then it's encouraging them to look at it for future generations, cherish it and protect it. And the actual ability of the group to get members to volunteer, to measure things, so measuring is actually is an important thing to see what we're doing, when we're seeing it, what plastics there are in the ocean and what changes we're seeing because then you can monitor how healthy the environment is. And here in Newquay, we've got a big fishing industry as it is one of the main and original jobs in the area and working with them on the sustainability of the fishing here and championing the fish that they bring in is brilliant, this is quite a unique marine group because it works alongside fishers as well to make solutions to any problems that are coming up, which is great.

What would you say to someone thinking about getting involved with the group?

I'd say absolutely do it because there's just so much you can be involved with, like me it's really hard but they still make it enjoyable so they actually have meetings that I can go to so it's an accessible place to go. They'll find things for you to do, there's something for everybody no matter whether you're older, younger, disabled or a family, and it's such a sociable group that it's all done with lots of fun as well as seeing some great places around Cornwall and more around our Newquay patch here, which is fab