



Biography of Gordon Saville

Gordon Saville was born on the South Coast of Kwazulu Natal on 30th August 1937. He was one of four children, two girls and two boys. His elder brother was Tom, four years older than Gordon, who also, in later life, became a celebrated angler.

Gordon commenced his education at Warner Beach Primary school, eventually completing his early education at Kingsway High. After schooling he took an apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner with a local building company, eventually passing his trade test after four years, instead of the normal five years. Once qualified, he registered as a building contractor.

Career

In the 1980's he joined a large building company in Durban as a contracts manager, specialising in the building of schools, factories and shopping centres. He progressed to the position of senior contracts manager, eventually becoming a director of the company. Later when he moved to the Western Cape he continued as a building contractor until his retirement at 71.

Gordon the Angler

At the age of five his greatest wish was to become an angler like his father and elder brother, but at that stage they would not take him with them on their fishing outings. This drove him to fish instead for the fowls in the fowl run, by wrapping a crust of bread onto his fishing line. The prime target was the large Rhode Island Red rooster. This activity diminished the family egg supply and finally led to discovery and a warm backside on numerous occasions. His angling enterprises finally progressed to dogfish fishing in the rock pools and fishing with dipstick of hedge bamboo and number 10 cotton. He was, however, part of the family team who produced their personal fishing cord, as normal fishing line, as we know it, was unobtainable at that time. Their method was to twist 3 strands of butcher's string using a bicycle wheel and frame and then rubbing it down with bees wax.

In his early teens, due to the breakup of the family, he moved to a hotel on the beach front of Doonside and supplemented his board and lodging payments with the sale of various fish species, which were caught from a canvas paddle ski during the day and the surf at night.

At this time he joined the **Warnedoone** lifesaving club where in 1962 he was awarded the South African Proficiency Award from the Surf Lifesaving Association of South Africa, as well as the Award of Merit from the Royal Lifesaving Society.

In July 1963 and 1964, as a Warnerdoone lifesaving member, he participated and completed the Scottburgh to Brighton Beach Durban paddle ski marathons.

With the success of the paddle ski fishing, he realised that he needed a motorised ski boat. Being a carpenter, this was hastily achieved and fitted out and with brother Tom the boat was launched at Warner beach.

This was a first for Warner Beach and after a number of years, with the success this venture achieved, more ski boat anglers appeared on the scene. A group of them then started a club and the Warnerdoone Ski Boat Club was formed, which is still a healthy, respected ski boat club today.

Gordon would often launch the ski boat on his own and in order to negotiate the heavy surf, would place a sand filled sack at the bow to stabilise the boat. The sand was tossed overboard as the load of fish grew heavier. His personal record catch being 41 barracuda on a boat built to carry 10.

During all these other activities, Gordon also became a member of the **Warnerdoone Angling Club**, fishing competitively only one weekend a month, which was the light tackle competition. He only ever used a wooden Scarborough Reel and scorned those who didn't, as "they had no idea what they were missing, having a one on one battle with the adversary – the bigger the better. If you haven't had two grooves burnt into the palm of your hand or the sleeve of your jacket, then you haven't experienced the fight equally"

He was determined to catch the biggest Sharks and rays to show that it could be achieved on the allowed light tackle. This obsession caused battles of up to eleven hours and once even a battle of seventeen hours, where the ray was returned to the sea, unfortunately without being weighed.

There were many, major, successful outings in the years that he was Light Tackle captain of the very successful Warnerdoone Angling Club.

In 1968 he was chosen to represent **The Natal Angling team** light tackle division, which was fished in South West Africa, the first of many selections to the Natal team over two decades. On one notable occasion in South West Africa during a hectic spell of angling, the kob were plentiful, so Gordon came up with the idea to make a heavy trace with two hooks so that two 3kg kob could fight each other without breaking the light tackle line and when they tired, they could be dragged up the beach by the heavy trace line. At the weigh in he was told by officials and wives, who had been sitting behind him on the sand watching the slaughter, that he had caught thirty one kob in seventeen consecutive casts. His tally for that four day competition was one hundred and eighty seven Kob.

In 1971, fishing in the Natal team, he won a medal at the South African Sports Festival held in Cape Town.

In 1974 during the Inter Provincial at Border, Natal were the overall winners of the competition with Gordon getting the highest weight in the light tackle category as well as beating the heavy tackle highest weight, a feat unheard of at the time. Also in **1974** he was awarded **Springbok colours** and the competition was fished in South West Africa. Gordon won the trophy for the largest edible fish caught, being a kob.

That same year he received the **State President's Sports Merit Award** for rock and surf angling. In 1981 he fished at the South African Games as a member of the President's "A" team and also that year, fished at the South African Festival games where he received a gold medal.

In 1989 he represented the Past Springbok Angling team in Struisbaai against the South African Provincial teams. He has seventeen South African and Natal record certificates presently hanging on his wall.

Gordon the family man.

Gordon has two children, a son Clint and a daughter Jodi from his first marriage and married his second wife Lynne in 1982. He and Lynne moved to a farm on the bank of the Gourits Estuary near Mossel Bay in 1994, where he could enjoy his estuary and surf fishing in safety. In 2007 he joined the ORI fish tagging Programme and in 2017 received his certificate for his **1000th fish tagged**.

Being retired gave him the time to reminisce and write an autobiography "**Angling my way through life**". It has met with success and interest from as far as Australia, America, New Zealand and England. He is enjoying his retirement, angling on the estuary, with his beloved wooden Scarborough reel, in his 3 metre 10 horsepower dingy with the occasional trip to the rocks to be knocked into line by the sharks.

Compiled by Gordon and Lynne Saville

Edited & Final script - Nols van Zyl