**Eulogy given by friend and One Fly Team Member Peter Cullinane at Simon’s funeral**

Adi, Chloe, Eloise, Clementine. Thank you for the honour of inviting me to speak about Simon and his fishing exploits. He was I know, a wonderful partner and father and loved you all to bits. I just hope I can do justice to him.

Without question, Simon was the man to bring happiness and unbounded enthusiasm to everything he did and to everyone he was with and fishing was no exception.

His smile said it all. Everybody remembers the first time they met Simon.  All smiles, personality and a firm handshake…

Simon was passionate about fishing.

Who else but Simon would go fishing for the legendary golden mahseer in Bhutan, and this being Simon, having as his fishing companion, His Royal Highness of Bhutan?

Simon was introduced to His Royal Highness by Mike McClelland, an American who has done more than anyone to bring American fishermen to New Zealand.

And of course, Simon lead the charge here, too. His creation of Poronui, so ably headed by Eve, without doubt, the best fly fishing destination in the world, is a tribute to his vision and tenacity. Poronui has been a magnet for the world’s most committed fishermen, so many of them being the American clients of Mike McClelland.

Simon knew every square inch of Poronui and looked upon it with a proprietorial eye. Whenever we flew across it on our way to our latest fishing camp, Simon would have a running commentary with Tony or Ben or Sam or Riley on the state of the forestry, the grasslands, the stock and of course the waters. I remember doing a tour of the property, along with Al and Chris with Simon in his Range Rover and his proudly pointing out the original hut, featured as part of the logo, which was where George Wilder, the legendary escapee, who captured the hearts of NZers in the 60s, had holed up.

In a curious way I think Simon and George would have been kindred spirits.

It was the common thread between Simon, Mike McClelland and America that lead to Team Kiwi. It was Mike who invited Simon to put together a team from   New Zealand to compete in the Legendary One Fly competition held every year in Jackson Hole.

With Simon as our team leader, members included one of his oldest mates, Sean Colgan, captain of the US rowing team, Chris Alpe, Al Brown and me. Mark Aspinall was an honorary team member, too.

Sean, Chris and Mike are all caught on the wrong side of the world and have been unable to find flights to get them back here today for Simon’s funeral. I know they are shedding a tear and having a cheer for Simon this afternoon. In fact Chris is pulling the cork on a special bottle of Mouton Rothschild he’d been intending to share with Simon on the next fishing trip.

Sean describes Simon as our quarterback, the guide, the leader, the organiser. One trip with Simon and you knew why he won all those medals he never mentioned..

We had a few cracks at the One Fly over recent years and usually failed to cover ourselves with glory on the water but we made up for it by winning hands down the after-match celebrations. Simon’s ability to work a room was simply legendary. His recall of people’s names was extraordinary.

Al Brown, who has made hospitality a career, says it was an absolute pleasure to watch Simon host a gathering, always putting people ahead of himself, making them feel comfortable, relaxed and above all special.

And we were the best dressed team by far!

Simon dressed for the part always. His knotted kerchief was as much a part of his fishing rig as his rod.

Even when he couldn’t fish last year because of an ankle injury which had him in a plaster cast, Simon remained the ring leader, waiting anxiously for our return each day with our tales of flies lost and opportunities wasted. ‘Never mind boys’ he’d say, ‘tomorrow’s another day!’

With Simon not able to actively compete last year, we finished at the top of the fifth quintile!

This year was a totally different story.

Holy Toledo!!! (Simon’s favorite expression). The team, this time lead by Simon came in third overall (I didn’t fish!) and not only third overall; we saw our nemesis, Team Australia, who had beaten us in every previous event, come last!

The previous year’s losers, an American team, gave a very graceful address. One of our favorite quotes, oft repeated amongst the team, came from that address. When they realized they were losing, the team leader said, ‘Boys, time to fire up the jets – we’re outta here’

Simon, as we know was a great competitor and prepared to go the extra mile to win. Who else but Simon would buy a $1000 worth of specially tied flies for a competition that only allowed you to choose one?

I emailed Simon after he had left Jackson Hole to meet up with Adi in Hawaii. Naturally I asked him how it was going to which he replied ‘Pete, I had forgotten how nice it is to just relax around the pool at a resort with the best company in the world --- Adi!’

Putting exotic locales like Bhutan and Jackson Hole aside, it was right here, in the hills and our high-country rivers that I will forever associate with Simon.

For Simon, the fishing was but a part of a bigger, more exciting and comfortable ritual. Like putting on your favourite well-worn jacket.

Our trips would start with the planning. ‘yeah, gidday Pete’, delivered in a deep monotone baritone. If there was the likelihood of rain in the hills, Simon would take the opportunity to slip in one of his favourite descriptors -hellacious. ‘Hellacious rain up there Pete.’ By the time things were well and truly underway, it was more normally, ‘Pete, Pete, did you see that? Hear that? Notice that etc.’ His enthusiasm just kept building and knew no bounds.

He loved fishing but loved the whole experience more.

Simon turned every experience into an adventure. As Sean Colgan says, ’When I am having a bad day, I just think of a Simon adventure, and unknowingly, even reluctantly, a small smile starts in the corner and slowly, ever so slowing, creeps across my face, thinking of the impish twinkle in his eyes and the huge smile on his face….’

Every picture we have between us of Simon, has him with that same great smile on his face. He was always so exuberant.

Choosing and building a new camp was always a grand adventure, albeit a reassuringly predictable one. We had a routine about who did what and in what order.

I’d always be in charge of site clearing, under Simon’s supervision, including the removal of a native bush called mingi-mingi. Either of us only had to mention the word and we’d collapse in fits of laughter. We were easily amused!

While I cleared the site, Simon would focus on building the fireplace. I still marvel at the skill he displayed and at the size of the smooth river stones we hauled into position.

Simon was a master at putting up tents but we were hopeless at putting the camp beds together. We never learnt. A hallmark of the camps, and such a Simon thing was the camp wine rack, nailed to a nearby tree at every camp site and filled with grunty reds and dry whites.

Our camps were ‘Hiltons by the Water’.

We had the same broad conversation every time.

A praise of the food; usually fillet steak, potatoes, peas, in the evening, a massive fry-up every morning.

A discussion about cigars, wines, a light once over about the future of kiwifruit.

Then a catch up on what our families were up to – the latest about Chloe, Eloise and Clementine who meant so much to him.

No conversation was complete without a commentary on the lack of birds, ‘Pete, did you notice?’ Then plotting about the next improvement to the camp and the next camp site. Then a repeat.

And always, life was full of potential.

Simon loved the very idea of being out there in the hills building or enjoying the camps. Thrilled that he hadn’t chosen to be sedentary.

When Simon told a funny story, his humour would get well ahead of the storyline so that by the end he was a ball of laughter, unable to complete the story in a single telling.

He often talked about his white-baiting experiences and as soon as we got onto that topic, Andy Lowe’s experiences with an instantly inflatable life jacket was a never-fail story.

We talked and talked and there was never a cross word. We never got through a night without Simon saying, ‘Pete, aren’t we lucky?’

And no evening was complete without an acknowledgement of Adi. Adi, he loved you beyond measure.

And finally, on the water. His natural element (unless he was rafting!). Simon took as much pleasure walking the river, observing the scenery, talking away about whatever and choosing the perfect spot for lunch as he did catching fish.

No lunch was complete without a glass or two of wine to go with the sandwiches, poured into his precious pewter goblets, a 21st present from his parents. Simon always carried a spare mug, too. Why? ‘Pete, you never know who you’re going to meet’. And on occasion we would meet the odd trekking group with whom Simon would have a long chat. To hell with the fishing, people were always more interesting.

When I told my son Jamie of the tragic news about Simon, Jamie wrote me a note and I’d like to finish with it.

*Hi Dad,
I wanted to send my deepest condolences as I learned today that Simon Dickie has passed. I know he was a great friend and a steadfast fishing companion whose company and comradeship meant an enormous deal to you.
I will always remember Simon for our time together fishing in the Kaimanawas, which I regard as some of my very fondest memories - fishing or otherwise.
It was a privilege to be included and to get to know Simon a little, who in turn welcomed me with open arms. He was gregarious company. It's deeply saddening to think those days are never to be repeated.
You've lost a true and irreplaceable friend, and I'm very sorry.*

*The rest of us have lost a true gentleman and a great bloke. When I'm next sitting on a big smooth rock beside a gin-clear river on a warm summer's day, listening to rolling waves of cicadas, and mulling over a big, not-quite-chilled chardonnay, I'll think of him.
Cheers Jamie*

And now farewell Simon. You’ll always be with us because you’ll always be a part of our most treasured memories.  Enjoy your next adventure in heaven. Just think of the mates, the camps, the fish you’ll discover up there in heaven. We love you.