

# 25th birthday appeal for missing Martin

by Bernard Johnston

b.johnston@spectator  
newspapers.co.uk

**THE father of missing Martin Kelly has made a fresh appeal for information about his son's disappearance on the eve of his birthday.**

It was the missing young Holywood man's Martin 25th birthday this Saturday, March 14.

But tragically, he disappeared without a trace on January 1 2006 after celebrating the New Year with friends in Pat's Bar in Belfast's Clarendon Docks.

Dad Raymond said of his son's imminent birthday, "It seems like a big age, 25, considering Martin went missing when he was just 21, coming 22.

"Quite a length of time has passed but it will always be my intention to keep Martin's name in the public domain. He is still in all our thoughts and he always will be.

## MYSTERY

"We never know what is up the road or just round the corner with Martin's case because what has happened to him remains a mystery.

"The only thing for certain is

that to simply let Martin fade from the public spotlight would be the wrong thing to do before we know for certain what happened."

Martin's father still believes someone may have information about what became of his son the night he disappeared and for some reason has still not come forward.

He said, "In particular I would appeal to the witnesses who were with Martin in the bar that night to revisit the scene in their minds to see if they can jog their memories.

"We don't want people to think that because it is now over three years that there is no point in coming forward, that it is too late in some way or another to do anything.

"Everything is still to play for here and I would appeal for anyone with any scrap of information, no matter how small, to let us know about it, whatever it is.

"It could be that someone considers what they know, or have seen, to be of little or no importance or even irrelevant, but they should let others be the judge of that.

"If anyone has a problem with doing so to the police for any reason they can still give the information through a variety of other channels.

"For example they could go to a

priest or a minister or contact the Missing Persons Helpline. The free phone number for that is 0800 700 700."

Police investigating the disappearance of Martin recently issued their latest appeal for information about his case as a missing person.

Their appeal began with a brief outline of the facts which are already known about his movements in the hours prior to his disappearance outside a Belfast bar.

It said, "Martin, who worked as a plumber and a part time bar man in the Priory Inn at Holywood, worked on New Year's Eve 2006 and then went on to two house parties.

"On New Year's Day he and his friends went to Pat's Bar in Garmoyle Street to watch a football match.

"The friends left and Martin remained in the bar talking to other customers. He left at about 7.10pm and has not been seen since.

"Martin, who is about 6ft 1in tall and of a slim build with short dark hair, was wearing a black 'Guinness' T-shirt and blue jeans.

"Police have carried out a full and thorough investigation into Martin's disappearance and have carried out extensive underwater and land searches.

"Police remain committed and

determined to discovering what happened to Martin and to bringing closure to his family.

"Detectives will continue to follow up all new lines of enquiry and any new information.

"Anyone who can assist police or anyone with information who has not yet come forward is asked to contact the detectives at Musgrave Street on 0845 600 8000."

Despite exhaustive searches and a publicity campaign police and Martin Kelly's family have been unable to unearth any clues as to what happened to him.

The family are desperate to know did he fall into the docks and tragically drown or lost his memory after innocently getting injured or perhaps attacked.

His mum Karen, who has now moved to Galway to start a new life to be near her daughter, also carried out a month-long search in England, Scotland and Wales.

She visited 14 cities across the mainland to have his case publicised in the local media, including radio interviews.

However, the family's relentless campaign to discover what happened to him has yet to bring any clues.

Anyone with information can also send it to the campaign website: [www.ourmartykelly.com](http://www.ourmartykelly.com)