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Mother of missing man Martin to erect a plaque as search goes on

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 By Victoria O'Hara

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The devastated mother of missing Co Down man Martin Kelly is planning to erect a plaque in the area where her son was last seen. Karen Kelly is hoping the plaque, to be placed in Clarendon Dock in Belfast, will be officially unveiled in February.

Speaking to the Belfast Telegraph the 50-year-old explained that despite not seeing Martin in over a year the plaque is not a memorial but a permanent appeal for help in finding him.

"Hopefully it will be up in February. We could put a bench up somewhere, but basically we haven't found him yet and that would be a memorial.

"With the plaque I can put his photograph in it and say 'still missing' and appeal for information.

"If you put posters up they fade and curl, but this will be a more permanent appeal."

She explained the idea of creating the plaque came about after her daughter Fiona got married.

"She got married in Galway and whenever there is a celebration you plant a tree and a plaque is then placed beside it to mark the occasion. I thought it was a lovely idea," she added.

Martin went missing on New Year's Day 2006 after drinks with friends in Pat's Bar in the docks area of Belfast.

He left Pat's Bar and CCTV footage shows him walking towards the Prudential Building at Clarendon Dock around 7.15pm. He has not been seen since.

Karen has searched relentlessly for her son. Last July her hunt took her on a month-long trek around the UK.

However her search was cut short after she had a heart attack. But she said she has not been strong enough to have the life-saving double bypass operation.

"I haven't been well enough physically or mentally to endure the operation. But hopefully it will be scheduled for March," she said.

Karen described the year since Martin disappeared as "hell".

"At times it just seems like yesterday that I was talking to Martin and other times I feel that I'm not even alive that I've died and just living this limbo of a hell.

"We just want to create awareness that he is still missing and get the

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tinest bit of information that can lead to us finding Martin.  
She added: "There's maybe very little hope, but there is still a chance that we will find him."

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