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Missing Martin's mum on a mission of hope

By Debra Douglas

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The mother of a missing Co Down man is today setting off on a mission of hope to search for him across the UK.

Martin Kelly (21) from Holywood, has not been seen since leaving Pat's Bar in the docks area of Belfast on New Year's Day. Today his heartbroken mother Karen and her partner Drew Craig are heading off on a 14-city tour to look for him, and raise awareness of his disappearance in a motor-home they have named the 'Marty-mobile'.

Karen explained: "This is something I feel I really have to do. I could sit back in my chair and just live a life of nothingness, but I have to do this. I have to keep looking.

"I think he may have got on a boat to Stranraer and may now be suffering from amnesia - that is my biggest hope and that is why we are doing this."

Karen and Drew will visit 14 cities including Dundee, Edinburgh, Cardiff and London and will raise awareness of Martin's disappearance through local media outlets before returning home on July 30.

"I'm frightened and I'm very nervous about what lies ahead, but this is the only thing we haven't done and we have to go for it," she explained.

Karen said the search would not have been possible without the help of the people of Holywood.

"Holywood residents raised £12,500 at two concerts which were held in the town recently. That was great and I would really like to thank everyone for their support," she said.

"If we find Marty, the money we have raised will be used for any treatment he might require. If we don't, it will be used to build an orphanage in Sudan."

Earlier this week, police made a fresh appeal for information, urging a middle-aged couple who were in Pat's Bar with an elderly woman on the night Martin disappeared to come forward.

They also want to hear from a woman who may have exchanged phone numbers with Martin in the Priory Inn, Holywood, on December 31.

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