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Illness heaped on agony for Martin's mum

By Victoria O'Hara

31 July 2006

The mother of missing Co Down man Martin Kelly faces treatment for a heart condition after carrying out her "mission of hope" journey across the British Isles in a bid to find to her son.

Karen Kelly (49) was set to arrive back in her Holywood home yesterday after completing a four week tour in a camper van with her partner Drew Craig.

However, during the last week she took ill with chest pains and was treated in the coronary care unit of St George's Hospital in London for a minor heart attack.

Speaking to the Belfast Telegraph last night while travelling home, she spoke about her health scare. "The doctors were fantastic. I think it was just the stress of everything over the past months mounting up.

"They found out that 50% of two of my arteries were blocked. So I have to get further treatment back in Belfast when I get home."

The poignant trip was tinged with more sadness when Karen and Drew found out one of her son's best friends Clifford Forde died in a tragic accident while on holiday in Ibiza.

"We were devastated when we heard Clifford had died and were going to come home, but we just felt we had to continue," she said.

Looking back at the trip Karen said although they did not find Martin, she felt she had to do it.

"It has been a very long, lonely struggle but it was something that I had to do.

"When we were in London I was disappointed by the lack of help, and felt that to them, we were just a number."

Martin has not been seen since leaving Pat's Bar in the docks area of Belfast on New Year's Day.

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