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ROADTEST: When it comes to Qubo, beauty really is in the eye of the beholder

At first sight you'll either laugh or grimace but, says Michael McAleer, Motoring Editor, behind its geeky image the Fiat Qubo has a lot going for it

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Wednesday, November 12, 2008

Discovery of remains that may be IRA victim a 'relief'

DAN KEENAN in Belfast and RONAN MCGREEVY in Ballynultagh

SINN FÉIN president Gerry Adams has welcomed the discovery of what appear to be some remains of Belfast man Danny McIlhone at Ballynultagh, Co Wicklow.

Mr McIlhone, one of the "disappeared", was abducted by the IRA in 1981. The IRA admitted in a statement in 1999 it had taken Mr McIlhone (19) for questioning about alleged stolen weapons.

It later said he had been killed in a struggle with those who were holding him. As the McIlhone family in Belfast began what could be a long wait for a positive identification of the remains, Mr Adams extended his condolences.

"The apparent discovery of Danny McIlhone's remains will come as a great relief for his family," he said. "It is also evidence that republicans continue to work diligently on this important issue. It will also be an encouragement to the other families who are still hoping that the remains of their loved ones will be found. I hope that the McIlhone family will now get the closure they deserve."

The McIlhone family said in a statement: "We hope and pray for good news. We also ask the media to respect our privacy and stay away from the family."

West Belfast SDLP Assembly member Alex Attwood said: "The heart of the whole community will go out to the family if these reports prove correct, and there will be every understanding and solidarity with the family who may see the return of their loved one."

But he added: "This only confirms that serious questions still continue about the conduct of the IRA in this case of abduction and death and in all the cases of the disappeared. These must be answered in the only way possible: that all information is handed over and that those who the IRA know are withholding information are also handed over."

It is not known if the IRA passed new information to the commission organising the searches for the disappeared. However Geoff Knupfer,

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an expert who is helping with the searches, has said the IRA is supportive of its work.

The four-acre site where gardai and experts from the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains searched yesterday is 5km from the nearest house, and down a track with an abandoned farmhouse at the end.

The hillside was searched for 11 weeks in 1999 and 2000 without success. Yesterday, two diggers were on site and about a dozen gardai and professional helpers working with dogs that are trained to locate and follow the scent of decomposing human flesh. Fingertip searches were carried out of an area along a small tributary that runs into the river Liffey.

It may take up to six weeks of DNA analysis before an identification can be made and it is hoped ground radar and magnetometry can assist the search.

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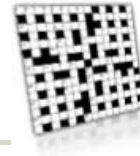
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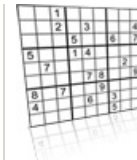
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