

## Martin Ince, 1946–2024

Martin was born on 5 March 1946 in Birmingham, the only child of Lilian and Stanley Ince. A latch-key kid, he learnt to be confident, self-assured and independent which would hold him in great stead throughout his life. He gained his love of smoking, drinking, and gambling from his vivacious mother and his steady, trustworthy nature from his father. He also inherited his father's love of tinkering and collecting tools.



Martin left school and became a graduate apprentice studying mechanical engineering. He joined the 'Shirley Mob' with his beloved cousins, Susan and Patty, who have always been there for him with endless love and he for them. The Shirley Mob was where he met his first wife, Valerie. He joined Austin Morris at Longbridge in 1970 and rose to be Rover Group's Quality Control Director at Cowley, Oxfordshire, and he and Val moved to Deddington. Martin was honoured by Land Rover with a certificate of recognition for his major role in the building of Land Rover and Rover cars' success. He was also enrolled as a member of the Fellowship of the Motor Industry. Martin decided to take early retirement at 53 due to Val's failing health.

To keep himself occupied, outside of caring for her, he joined the parish council and took up bell ringing – which he couldn't get the hang of. He was a valued member of the parish council as he had integrity, wisdom and he spoke his mind and questioned, rather than going along with the general thoughts. 'He was a bit of a disrupter but not in a disruptive way.' He had a no-nonsense way of getting things done. Martin was well known for the mischievous sparkle in his eyes and those in the parish who knew him could tell that, when the sparkle arrived, he was probably going to launch the cat among the pigeons.

In 2001, he was hit by a bus. His life was saved but his right leg was shattered and he arrived home needing a walking stick. Val passed away in 2005 and, after grieving for her, he took to travelling the world and had great fun. Some years later, fate intervened – we met and fell in love. We married in March 2012 and our lives entwined. Throughout his life he always had dogs and he doted on the three that we have.

In 2018 Martin's journey as a medical miracle continued. He was diagnosed with cancer and whilst on the operating table he had a heart attack ... and five cardiac arrests. Afterwards he joked that if you must have a heart attack, have it in hospital. Then in 2021 he had an excruciating pain in his leg. When the surgeon told him that his left leg had to be amputated, Martin swiftly said: 'You can't take that one – it's my best leg!' Once again, he physically and psychologically adapted with a motto of 'Every day is a bonus day!' Regularly seen scooting around the village in his electric wheelchair wearing a fedora and brightly coloured clothing, when offered help, he'd reply, 'I'm not an invalid, you know.'

Martin had a generosity of spirit, time and patience: he taught computer classes in the library for some of the older ladies in the village, became financial director of the Deddington Festival and could be found selling tickets at many village events. To the end of his life, he continued to donate every month to our church – a building he loved and believed should be protected. He continually loaned money, via Kiva, to some of the poorest

women in the world – he stood by the belief that instead of giving someone a fish – you should give them a fishing rod. His sense of humour, dry and delivered with a deadpan look before breaking into a smile, was uplifting and made many people happy. He was a masterful enabler, guiding where needed and standing back when the praise was due to someone else. Martin was a larger-than-life personality with a stoicism to be admired, and feisty with a heart of gold. An era draws to a close and he will be sorely missed. The Deddington community has been a force field of protection and support for me and Martin. I'm so grateful.

*Elli Ince*