

Michael Joseph Volp. May 1954 – May 2015.

Mike was born in 1954 in Liverpool. His father was in the RAF and so in his early life involved frequent moves to places in Germany, Wales, Yorkshire and Singapore. During this time he developed his love for Music and the outdoors. In 1966 he moved to Leeds and started at the local grammar school where he made life long friends. He then went on to train as a PE teacher and was renowned for his athletic attributes and rugby skills.

His teaching career was not followed up on; instead Mike took up a post as assistant groundsman at Leeds University and then went on to train as an Arboriculturist with Wakefield City Council and at Reaseheath College in Cheshire. He spent a short time employed as an Arborist in Munich in the early '80s and then moved back to Yorkshire where he worked as a self employed Arborist between 1982 and 1984.

In the mid '80s he moved to Norwich where he started his first period of work with Norwich City Council as their tree inspector with the operations team. This was also the time he met his beloved wife Pat and started his family.

After a short time away Mike returned to Norwich City Council in 1992 as their Tree Protection Officer, the post he held for the rest of his professional career. During his time at Norwich Mike transformed the systems the Council operated for protecting trees, the result being the protection and retention of many thousands of trees that would otherwise have been lost. He oversaw the planting of many thousands of new and replacement trees all round the city and was respected by consultants, contractors and fellow tree officers alike. He also supported many of his colleagues through his work as a UNISON representative.

As Mike's career developed his reputation spread nationally as well as locally. In 1999 he became a director of the National Association of Tree Officers (NATO) and in 2006 he became a director and trustee of the Arboricultural Association (AA). He also sat on the committees that reviewed British Standard 5837, 3998 and helped to produce British Standard 8545 and Trees in Towns 2.

Mike worked tirelessly to protect trees and improve standards nationally and was a champion of collaborative working to achieve these aims. To do this he hosted meetings with organisations as diverse as local tree nurseries and the magistrates association. His colleagues at NATO, the AA and Norwich City Council have all separately stated that he will be sadly missed and impossible to replace.