Travelling with Herb – a picture gallery

by Brigitta Ammann

Herb was a great traveller and he always had at least two things with him in his mind and his (old) backpack: one or more interesting scientific questions and one or more manuscripts to edit.

1989 Informal discussions can help a lot, be it on scientific or personal levels.

1990 We Europeans used to think that forest fire was a phenomenon occurring only in Mediterranean and boreal regions but not in central Europe. Then Jim Clark, after completing his thesis in Minnesota, showed us that we were wrong (Clark et al. 1989). At Schleinsee, Jim Clark found a remarkable fire history! Herb asked question 1: “Do you have a fire history in the Alps?” The answer was: “Sorry, we do not know”. So Herb helped to write a proposal to the Swiss NSF – which enabled Willy Tinner to work out the Holocene fire history for the southern Alps (Tinner et al. 1998, 1999) and Madlena Beckmann reconstructed the fire history of the central-Alpine dry valley of Valais (Colombaroli et al. 2013).
Herb cycling around Schleinsee, southern Germany.

1990 My first of many visits to 1426 Hythe Street, St Paul – a wonderful place for MANY reasons.
1991 Herb started to like the “International Moor Excursions” initiated in 1975 by Gerhard Lang, described by Gerhard as: “For advanced students”. But since the sentence “bonus vir semper student” is also valid for women, we all felt happy and inspired by these excursions (http://www.botany.unibe.ch/imoorex/index.php). This XV International Moor Excursion (IME) was led by Roel Janssen, Paula Queiros, José Mateus, Jacqueline van Leeuwen, and Pim van der Knaap. Herb asked question 2: **What can we learn from steep gradients such as elevational transects? For example from the coast to the Serra de Estrela?**

1992 Isle of Skye, XVI Moor Excursion

Herb and Andy Lotter listen to John Birks.
In 1992 we visited Andy Wright in Adelaide and enjoyed the beauties of the Australian south coast and canoeing on the Mighty Murray River.

1993 Herb’s first statement: “Dirk Verschuren needs a new core” – so we cored in the Crescent Island lake of Lake Naivasha (Verschuren et al. 2000). Herb’s second statement: “Always keep the corer vertical”. We had to be back in camp by noon because the hippopotami become active and do not like shadows over their heads!

Herb’s question 3: How similar or how different are various amphi-atlantic phenomena (Wright 1977, 1989)? And Herb discussed it with Gerhard Lang.

As a follow-up from question 2, Herb helped us to core five sites in the Central Alps in 1992 (from 600 to 2290 m a.s.l., Ammann et al. 2000).
That same summer Herb also cored three lakes in the Slovak Tatra with Kamil Rybníček (Rybníčková & Rybníček 2006). During the excursion of the ‘History of Mountain Flora’ Conference to the Bulgarian Pirin Mountains, Herb stated: “These lakes deserve proper coring” – so he did in 1994, 2002, and 2006.

1994 This was the summer when Herb cored six lakes in five days in the Rila and Pirin Mountains of Bulgaria guided by Elisaveta Bozilova. We also travelled in Greece, e.g. to Githio in the southern Peloponnese. Herb’s fascination with the eastern Mediterranean possibly had its roots in his early work in the Levant: the coast of Lebanon (1947), Kurdistan (1961), Zagros Mountains (Wright et al. 1961, 1963, 1967, Stevens et al. 2001), Mycenaean Greece (1968), early food production in Mesopotamia (1968, 1970, 1976, 1993), the Minnesota Messenia expedition (1972) and more. Previously I had thought that “Kalamata” was just a very fine type of olive, but Herb showed me the place and the landscape with its great archaeology.
1995 The Açores are in a way a stepping stone between North America and Europe and are biogeographically very special. On Flores, are two lakes – Lagoa Funda and Lagoa Rasa – which mean profound lake and shallow lake. Of course we could not core Lagoa Funda, but we did core Lagoa Rasa (second attempt in 1998; Connor et al. 2012).

What secrets do these lakes on the Azores hold?

1995 Herb was always strong in overcoming obstacles.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA)
Since 1990 we enjoyed the serenity of the BWCA every summer

1996 Jorge Rabassa in Ushuaia wanted a piston corer but did not want to pay for the air freight. Herb replied: “I no longer send corers by ship – but we will bring one!” Also in 1996: Herb receives his third Honorary Doctoral Degree – from University of Minnesota 😊. The Moor Excursion went to Germany, led by T. Litt, S. Schloss, A. Hölzer, J. Kalis, M. Rösch et al.

Herb in Punta Arenas, Chile.

1997 Madeira, a beautiful crater lake became a reservoir 😊
Lake of the Clouds is a lot better!

1997 First coring trip to Georgia.

Sign reads Bazaleti
1997 Herb’s 80th birthday

Herb and Hilary Birks in the village of Wengen (Bernese Oberland).

Herb and Kerry Kelts on Jungfraujoch near the research station.

1998 Second coring trip to Georgia (Great Caucasus and Caucasus Minor).
1998 First coring trip to the Russian Altai. Herb’s original question (no. 4) was based on his transatlantic interest: In the Upper Mid-West of the US there was during the Holocene an east-west swing of the prairie-forest border. Were there similar changes in continental Eurasia? Unfortunately the potential sites in the Kulundinskaya steppe were hopeless. So the question of the elevational gradients was addressed, as well as the fancy drowned pingos.

Dzhangyskol with pingos (Blyakharchuk et al. 2008)
Questions 5 and 6 concern many landscapes with patterns: **What processes produce such patterns?** At small spatial scales (e.g. pingos or patterned peatlands (see 2004)) and at large scales (e.g. the huge river terraces of the Katun River or the giant ripples in the Kuray Basin in the Altai). Ripples remind us of the Channeled Scablands in Washington US (picture in Wright 2005). Pavel Borodavko is a great geomorphologist and can explain the various hypotheses.

1998 The Moor Excursion went to Ontario (guided by Jock McAndrews & Jean-Nicolas Haas).
In September, a second coring trip to Lagoa Rasa on the Azores (Connor et al. 2012).

Herb with André Pugin, Stéphanie Girardclos and Michael Wehrli

In **1998** Herb visited the famous Aletsch Glacier in Switzerland and its moraines of the Younger Dryas and 1850.
1999 Was a busy year. First: spring on La Palma together with Elisabeth Grönlund – working on texts....

Coring in the CSSR (Czech Republic) (Pokorný 2002; Pokorný et al. 2010; Hošek et al. 2014)

Willy Tanner, Petr Pokorný and Herb in Svarzenberk
A second trip to the Russian Altai in 1999, where we cored three sites close to the timberline: Uzun Kol (1985 m), Kedgelju (2050 m), and Tash Kol (2150 m) (Blykhartchuk et al. 2004). One evening when we were all sitting around the campfire one of the students asked me: “Is it not strange for the American professor to sit by an open fire?” No, he does that on at least 300 days of the year, be it indoors or outdoors 😊!

Near Uzun Kol we met N. Lashchinsky from Novosibirsk and three colleagues from Göttingen, B. Meyer, F. Lehmkuhl, F. Schlütz
Herb manages to communicate with his blue eyes and a smile!


The 1999 Moor Excursion goes to The Netherlands. The most popular means of transport in this country is also used during the excursion. Bas van Geel was somewhat worried and asked: “Is it not too much for Herb?” Answer: “Herb is a more experienced biker than most of us – from Hythe Street to Pillsbury Hall he makes 2 x 7 km per day 😊”

Herb and Dan Engstrom explaining the landscape history of the St. Croix River to me
2000 January saw coring of West Twin and Steel Lake, Minnesota: August saw coring of Ak-Kol and Grusha in the Tuwa Republic, Siberia, >2000 m a.s.l. - but not as cold as Minnesota! (Westover et al. 2006; Blyakhartchuk et al. 2007; Ilyashuk & Ilyashuk 2007; Stefanova & Oeggl 1993). The Moor Excursion went to the Southern Alps.

Coring Lake Grusha

2001 More coring – Moody Lake in February
In September 2001, the Moor Excursion visited Poland. Leaders were M. Latałowa, K. Tobolski, K. Milecka, M. Makohonienko, et al.

The IME group at the northern coast of Poland

Krystyna Wasylikowa comes from Kraków to see Herb
2002 Bulgaria, coring in the Pirin mountains. Popovo 2 and 6, Kremensko-5 (2124 m), Besbog (2250 m), Praso (1900 m) (Atanassova & Stefanova 2003; Stefanova & Oeggl 1993; Stefanova et al. 2006 a,b).

The Moor Excursion 2002 brought us to western Norway under the guidance of Hilary and John Birks. Great landscapes, great science, and a relaxing boat trip on Sognefjord.
Hilary Birks at Kråkenes during the IME to western Norway

2003 Herb and Vania at Hythe Street. This is a wonderful symbiosis. Herb: “Yes, we are like a lichen, and you are the algae who capture the sunshine 😊”
In **2003**, Herb taught Elisa Vescovi and Mike Tanner how to subsample a short core. Northern Apennines, Abetone, Lago di Greppo (Vescovi et al. 2010)

![Image of Herb teaching Elisa and Mike](image1)

**2004** What better place than the BWCA to do some editing?

![Image of person sitting by lake](image2)

Here, in the early morning, whilst others are still asleep...
When I got my manuscripts back from Herb they were often sprinkled with marks (like grated cheese over spaghetti) but more concise and much clearer!
But editing also took place at home.


Also in 2004 there was a nice visit to Barbara and Dean Hansen in Stillwater.

.....and on a special table the tickets are ready for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra.
The **2004 Moor Excursion** went to Estonia: leaders were Tiiu Koff, Mihkel Kangur and Jaan-Matti Punning.

*Herb and Tiiu Koff looking over the patterned Männikjärve bog*

Patterned peatlands (included in question 5) are extremely vast in northern Minnesota (Red Lake peatlands, edited by Wright et al. 1992), large and impressive in Hammarmosse, Sweden (Foster et al. 1983, 1988, 1990), and a lot smaller and rarer in the Alps. Herb helped with the coring and writing of Ammann et al. 2013.

*La Grande Tsa, Switzerland*
Fondue with Barbara Coffin, Paul Glaser, and Emi Ito

Dan Engstrom wielding a sword

2005 Hospitality at Hythe Street is always great!

Though potentially dangerous!

But everyone survived!
The 2006 Moor Excursion brought us to northern Italy – to Accesa or the museum in Bergamo (leaders E. Vescovi, D. Colombaroli, W. Tinner, P. Kaltenrieder).

IME group and woolly mammoth at Bergamo Museum, 2006
Herb and Vania core Sucho Breznisko in the Pirin Mountains in 2006. BA remains in Bern for sweet family reasons.

Photo: V. Bozukov

Herb teaches the next two generations how to core sediments

Pirin Mountains (photo: V. Stefanova)
In 2007 we celebrate Herb’s 90th birthday on both sides of the ocean.

In Sils, Engadin. Brigitta, Jim Almendinger, Henry Lamb, Björn E Berglund, Herb, Dan Engstrom
The first day was filled with symposium lectures, the second day with an excursion to the Morteratsch Glacier, and somewhere in between there was cake!
Herb’s 90th birthday symposium excursion to the Morteratsch Glacier, Switzerland

And more celebrations at Hythe Street
2008 Birthday at Hythe Street

2008 also saw a visit to Bogota for the wedding of Christopher and Ingrid.

2011 Yay! More cake! Birthday at Hythe Street

photo: Vania Stefanova

2012 March, visit to Jim Smith, the machinist who made Herb’s corers for many years (and still does)
Visit to the Science Museum and its great omnitheatre show in **2012**

We enjoyed the hospitality of Barbara Coffin and Dan Engstrom
2013 Many came to Minnesota for the ESA Conference

Herb, Jacqueline van Leeuwen, Feng Sheng Hu, Willy Tinner, Marco Conedera (Photo: Pim van der Knaap)

September 13th 2013 – a nice birthday at home
and at the Bell Museum

2014 Birthday with Carrie Jennings and Vania and….

....at Barbara’s and Dan’s place with Eric Grimm, Jim Almendinger, and Paul Glaser
Thinking back all these years, I realize: Herb has shown the world to me – and he explained the landscapes! I am most grateful to Herb.

Herb on his 98th birthday. Question: “Herb, what composer would you like to listen to?” Herb’s answer: “Today, well, Schubert!”
References


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