

# Back in the First Class

Rituals connected with the  
finishing School

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# School calendar feasts

The school calendar in Estonia consists roughly of 9 working months and 3 summer months. The school feasts consist of three layers and there the formal and informal ways of celebration are interwoven.

**1. National holidays.**

**2. Several national and folk calendar feasts** are celebrated (Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Easter, Saint Martin's Day or Saint Catherine's Day, and e. g. Valentine's Day since the end of 1990's).

**3. School feasts** related to merely the status of a pupil. Some of them are adapted from the students' lore.

## School calendar feasts

Beginning of school, **Knowledge Day**  
(mostly the 1<sup>st</sup> of September)

**Fresher party** (Fox dubbing)  
(September, gymnasium, first and last grade)

**Teachers' Day**  
(for all older classes)

**Hundred Days' Ball**  
(last grade of gymnasium, 100 days before graduation)

**Headbow Day** (Last Schoolbell)  
(last grades of the basic school and gymnasium, from the end of April until the first days of June)

**Graduating party**

## Aim & Methods

Observations, interviews, internet resources (mainly school galleries)

To investigate the informal celebration of schoolfeast, informal element in formal environment.

Informal learning occurs in a variety of places, such as at home, work, and through daily interactions and shared relationships among members of society. It is the way how people learn cultural norms and manners, and it is connected with socialization,.

Recollections of previous years;

Collective memories - Last time together (before examination),

Informal part is without leader, and has some basic common patterns /scripts

Continuity and changes in dress code, behaviour, etc.



# Headbow Day

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## Headbow Day

In many schools, the pupils of the first grade walked the pupils of the last grade to the hall by holding hands. This was like an opposite feast to the 1st of September when the pupils going to the first grade had honour of walking to the hall accompanied by graduates.





# Headbow Day

Celebration meeting was a festive ceremony depending on the school and graduates of one year. There the speeches were held and the start in independent life was sworn.



## Headbow Day

The festive and playful atmosphere continued when the signatures were written on balloons and inflammable toy animals (to be retained for ever!). Signatures and verses were also written on each other's white blouses and on photos and into notebooks and albums.





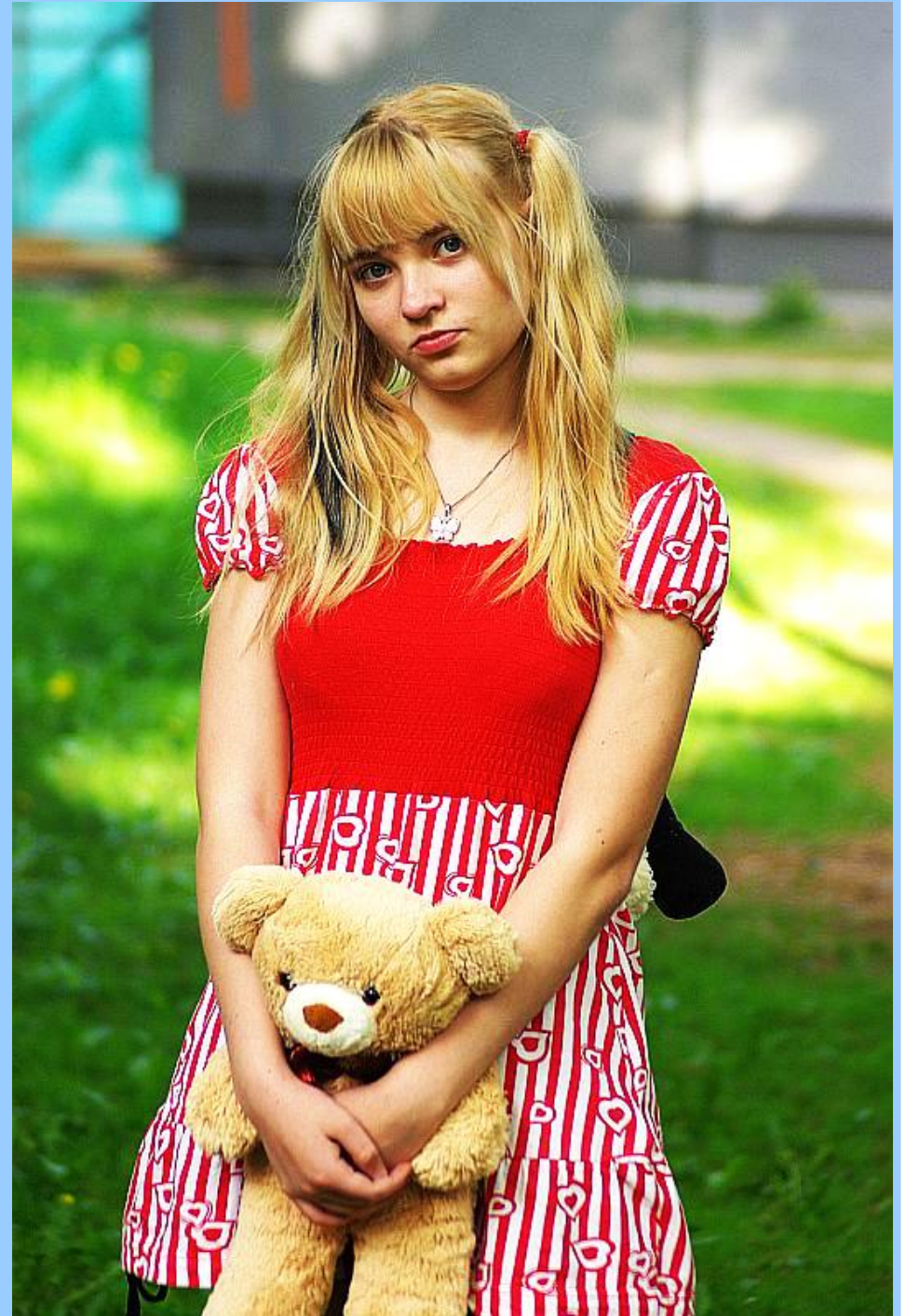
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In 1970's the water games were played at the Headbow Day at school and pupils splashed each other with water.

This was the adoption of an older calendar tradition to the school calendar. Before the watering was done earlier in the year and with not so good weather but for important events and beginning of works, at a critical time: shepherds were watered at the herding day, ploughers at the ploughing day, workers in manure at the end of the works, wedding guests at the wedding party, etc.







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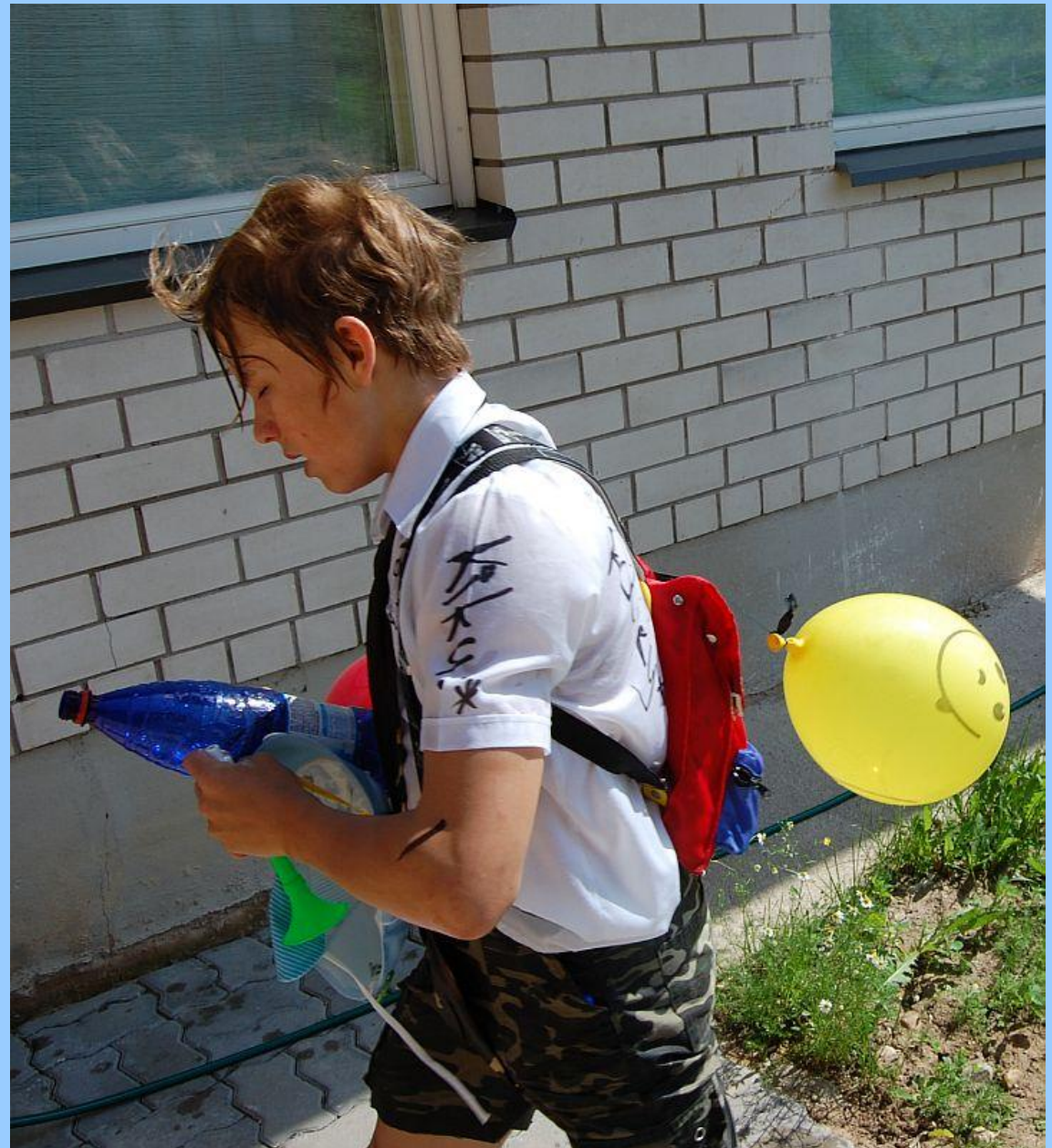
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By 1990's the teachers were so tired of the water games that they began to forbid the watering and splashing by referring to the damaged walls and children fallen into ponds. Also the negative media noise had its share in it.

However, the watering has survived all prohibition periods and schools where it was strictly forbidden and the watering continues outside the schoolhouse.









# Headbow Day in Kalmetu Basic School

**Celebration**  
games

In the first grade

Planting the tree

Water

<http://kalmetu.vil.ee/pildid/thumbnails.php?album=273>





# Headbow Day in Kalmetu Basic School

In the first grade





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# Headbow Day in Kalmetu Basic School

Celebration  
games

In the first grade

Planting the tree

Water

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# Conclusions

Headbow Day is an informal way of celebration initiated by pupils and it has been switched into the formal school feast system. Liberalisation allowed to replace the formal clothing by free and playful clothing characteristic to the primary school. Teachers have accepted the funny clothing, toys, childish behaviour as the manner of saying goodbye to the childhood as school.

Basic structure of event is

Celebration meeting  
(opt Planting the Tree)

School

Recollection and Revisiting (Back into the Past)  
Having Fun

School, outside

A lot of differences – date, action, dresscode



## Conclusions

Schools celebrate the Headbow Day at different times. As this school feast has been extended to the basic school, the schools actually have two Headbow Days: one for the graduates of basic school and the other for the graduates of gymnasium, for which the similarly dressed young move around at different days.

The whole event outside the school lacks a more specified structure, leaders and rules. The pupils just have fun, joke, play water games, etc.

There are certain characteristic items like favourite toys that are recently bought especially for this event (giant teddy bears) and baby teats and feeding bottles are used in order to accentuate the happy childhood.

The informal side continues to include also the oaths of friendship, presents, signatures, etc.



# Conclusions

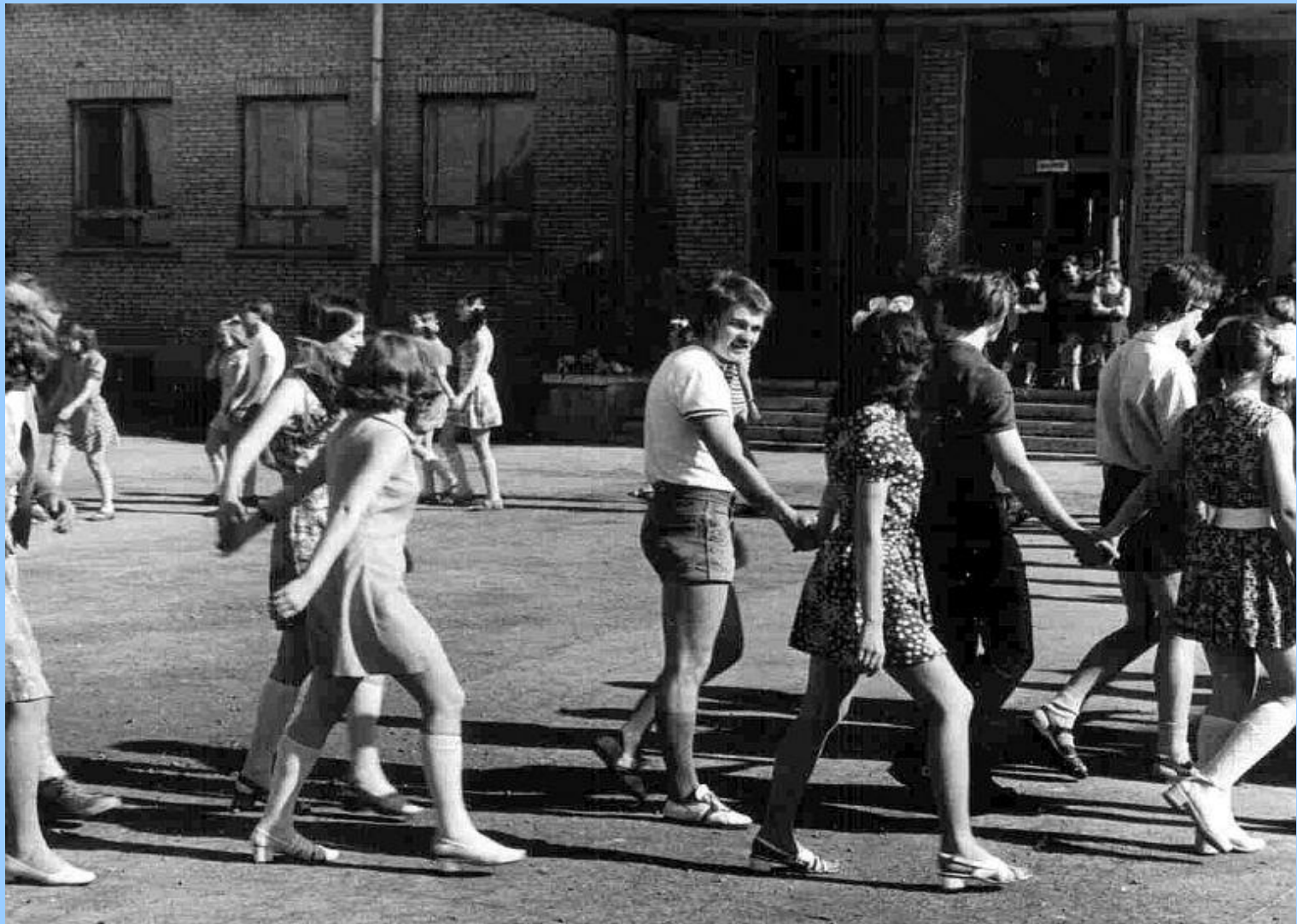
## Changes, Mustla Secondary **1968**





# Conclusions

Changes, Tallinn Kadrioru **1974**





# Conclusions

Changes, Tallinn Kadrioru **1974**





# Conclusions

Changes, Mustla Secondary **1976**





# Conclusions

Changes, Mustla Secondary **1980**





# Conclusions

Changes, Tartu X Secondary **1992**





# Conclusions

## Changes, Mustla Secondary **2002**





# Conclusions

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# Conclusions

The last change is addition of the masking elements.







Ljubljana 2011



# Thanks!

