

## **PRESIDENT'S FOLKLORE AWARD AND FOLKLORE COLLECTING IN 2013**

On February 28, 2014, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, handed out folklore collection awards at the Estonian Literary Museum. The best collectors were recognised for their good work with letters of gratitude and keepsakes, and a competition for the collection of local lore was announced. This year the President's folklore award went to Hillar Palamets, Ado Seire and Terje Puistaja.

Hillar Palamets, a historian and educator, renowned for his good narration skills, has authored several books and radio programmes; for example, a series called 'History



*Laureates of the President's folklore collection award with the President. From the left: Ado Seire, Hillar Palamets, Terje Puistaja, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2014.*

Class', which has lasted for 18 years. Since 1991, Hillar Palamets has nearly annually visited our museum, bringing us a notebook or an envelope full of sheets of paper filled with calligraphic handwriting. He has mediated his own and his family's traditions, donating to the archives his family's personal poem collections and photographs of festive occasions.

Ado Seire has collected village and place lore in one of the oldest Estonian villages – Kareda village in Järva County – and its neighbourhood in the years 1994–2012. He has conducted interviews with 34 people, the materials of which are recorded on 68 cassettes. Part of the material is provided with detailed content descriptions and registers of place and personal names. The topics discussed involve several important events in which the inhabitants of Kareda village have participated and which are still remembered by the villagers: the Russian-Japanese War, the War of Independence, the First and Second World Wars. The interviewees also recall the history of Kareda village school and community centre, as well as the history of Esna, Kodasema, Öle, Öötla and Köisi estates, the Järva-Peetri parsonage and the church.

Terje Puistaja as a teacher of folklore and artistic production at the Estonian Folk Tradition School is in daily contact with heritage. Her studies for a master's degree are also related to folklore. Interviews conducted in Mahu village, which have been handed over to the museum, constitute a part of her studies. Terje Puistaja has carried out interviews with three generations of the same family. This family lore gives an overview of their traditions: weddings, funerals, remembrances of their kin and village people.



*Participants of the collection competition for children's games, members of the jury, laureates of the President's folklore award and other folklore collectors with President Toomas Hendrik Ilves. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2014.*

There are 415 pages of transcripts written down from recordings, which in all make up 18 hours. Although many degree candidates collect material, Terje Puistaja has been the only one to arrange and systematise it so thoroughly that it could also be used by other people who are interested in this subject. Also, she has collected stories from the people who have had to do something novel in their lives. Her interviewees include, for example, Mikk Sarv, Mall Hiimäe, Ingrid Rüütel, Ene Lukka, Malle Mutso, and others.

Although year after year the management of the Estonian Folklore Archives has become more and more complicated, the year 2013 for both the archives and many folklore collectors passed under the theme of games and play. Within the framework of the Heritage Year, a competition for collecting children's games was organised; yet, cooperation with folklore collectors continued in other spheres as well.

As a result of the efforts made by professional folklorists, university students and volunteers, the collections were considerably supplemented. The manuscript collection of the folklore archives increased by 4017 pages (61 volumes, 24 of them digitalised); the sound recordings collection obtained 343 new museals (2691 pieces altogether); the photographic collection was supplemented by 3188 frames and 64 film rolls. The Internet-based file repository Kivike currently includes descriptions of 20,613 museals from the folklore archives and 30,002 descriptions of music pieces, a third of which were added in 2013.

A major part of the incoming materials was place lore related sound recordings and digital photos from the fieldwork on Vilsandi Island and in Matsalu, and the lore of Lau village in Juuru parish, which were handed over by the place lore working group of folklore archives. Material was also obtained from Anu Korb, who carried out fieldwork at the Estonians of Krasnoyarsk Krai, and from Helen Kõmmus, who made videos at the Viljandi Folk Music Festival.

Last year another innovation was introduced by the folklore archives: the collection module called Kratt, in which contributions, photographs and video files can be entered. We hope that this will facilitate the life of folklore collectors, as after logging in one can have a look into all the contributions, continue those pending and start new ones. In the archives the collection module facilitates the archiving of materials and communication with correspondents. Currently the module also includes materials of the collection competition of 2014, which is dedicated to the stories of our homes.

The competition for children's games collection within the framework of the Year of Cultural Heritage attracted 77 participants, who sent their childhood memories and descriptions of games on 650 pages, as well as photographs, drawings, paper board games, paper dolls, etc. Memory institutions have collected game descriptions also formerly, and they have been published as well. The peculiarity of this particular competition was that the participants were asked to describe the games through their own playing experience, which especially clearly manifests the influence of the era on children's activities.

The jury members of this competition were Mall Hiimäe, Risto Järv, Kadri Tamm, Astrid Tuisk and Piret Voolaid from the Estonian Literary Museum, writer Tiia Toomet, the founder of the Tartu Toy Museum, Karin Konksi from the Estonian National Museum, and Heli Poolakese from the Tartu Toy Museum.

The jury decided to single out twelve best writers, to recognise another twelve, and award special prizes to eight participants.



*Girls-playmates in a yard in Keskk Street, Tartu. The house had a big garden with plenty of space for playing. Each girl had a doll, a teddy-bear, a doll's pram, and also a wooden horse on wheels. Photograph by Maie Erik sent to the collection competition of children's games.*

The collection competition was financially supported by the Cultural Endowment of Estonia and the Year of Cultural Heritage; the prizes came from the Science Centre Ahhaa, the Ludo board game shop, and publishing houses Hea Lugu and Koolibri.

Astrid Tuisk