

The anniversary events ended with a sightseeing tour in Tartu: the society's members visited St John's Church, the Dome Hill, the Botanical Gardens of the University of Tartu, and other sights of Tartu. The next year's plans will include a summer field trip to the islands of Saaremaa and Ruhnu, an expedition to Lake Onega, and several exhibitions. It is high time someone started compiling the chronicle of the society's members' experiences, and, fortunately, Eve Selisaar has taken on the task.

Enn Ernits
Väino Poikalainen

2008 PRESIDENT'S FOLKLORE AWARDS

On 27 February 2009, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves presented the Folklore Awards of the President of the Republic of Estonia to Urmas Haud and Taisto-Kalevi Raudalain, the best voluntary folklore collectors of 2008. The head of state's award to the best folklore collectors was reinstated in 1993 on the initiative of the Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum and with the support by the President's Cultural Foundation.

In 2008, a call to compile a Kalevala-metric song to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia was made by an initiative group in Viru County (Rein Sikk, Urmas Tamm, Marge Lepik, Viivi Voorand, Kai Tingas, Kadri Mägi, and Igor Tõnurist). In response to the call, 650 people sent self-authored verses and the result was a long and beautiful song which was performed in Rakvere Church of the Holy Trinity on Independence Day, February 24, 2008. The sent verses and the composed song text were handed over to the folklore archives.

Today's keywords are family, reflections, and the lost worlds. The laureates of this year's President's Awards sent to the archives lore material connected with their family and kinship, their roots. This material reflects the rather sad fate of small nations, villages and farms in the 20th century. It is inevitable that the old is replaced by the new and settlement patterns change, but difficult to accept when this happens by force or violence, destroying people's lives and homes.

The material collected by Urmas Haud comes from the villages of Riisa and Tõramaa, situated between Pärnu and Viljandi County in central and southern Estonia. Urmas Haud, astrophysicist by profession, has collected and systematised the folklore of his home region and family, and has made it available online for the general public (<http://www.aai.ee/~urmas/riisa.html>). Haud handed over the website and its source material – local historical studies and 222 photographs with captions – to the Estonian Folklore Archives. The photos mainly come from the collections of Urmas

Haud's mother Leili, but also of others, who have complemented the material with personal recollections. Urmas Haud authors another website of lore material (<http://www.aai.ee/~tarmo/index.htm>), and both sites feature a large number of lore narratives.

Taisto-Kalevi Raudalainen has handed to the Folklore Archives audio and video materials collected since 2005. The collected folklore material represents the life histories of Ingrian Finns living mostly in Ingermanland, but also in Estonia and Finland. Raudalainen has also recorded material from Ingrian Finns, Votians, Izhorians, also Hungarians in Transylvania, and the Khanty in Kazym.

The work of other voluntary contributors to the archives is also remarkable. Kaie Humal has recorded stories about the history of the Valma village and the life of fishermen, oral history from Põltsamaa from the beginning of the 18th century to 1917 and later, family lore, etc. Anni Oraveer collected material from the Seto and the hearing-impaired. Terje Puistaja described events which took place at the camps and courses of Tartu Folk University. Larger bodies of material were sent by already experienced voluntary folklore collectors: expressions, practical beliefs, jokes, creative work, etc. by Leida Oesalg; tales, riddles/conundrums, newer folk and author songs by Tiit Birkan; rituals, jokes, song lyrics, proverbs, phrases by Kaleph Jõulu; and visual, audio and video material by many others.

Student fieldwork materials handed over to the Estonian Folklore Archives are from an expedition to Vihula, North Estonia (supervised by Marju Kõivupuu, Tallinn University, and Risto Järv, University of Tartu); from students studying Estonian and Estonian as a foreign language (supervised by Pille Kippar, Tallinn University); video material from a 2007 joint field trip to Estonian villages in Siberia by students of the Estonian Academy of Arts and folklorists from the Estonian Folklore Archives.



*Urmas Haud, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Taisto-Kalevi Raudalainen.
Photo by Alar Madisson 2008.*

Also, professional Estonian folklorists have given collected material to the archives: Anu Korb and Andreas Kalkun (from 2007 field trips to Seto villages in Siberia and the material recorded in Estonia), Eda Kalmre (material recorded in Sõrve in August 2008), Mall Hiimäe (fieldwork materials from Kuusalu parish in 2008), Aado Lintrop (photos of the Viljandi Folk Music Festival in 2007 and 2008, and a cultural event in the Seto region), Mairi Kaasik, Piret Voolaid, Rein Saukas, Taive Särg, Kanni Labi, and others.

The reasons why people collect folklore and hand the material over to the archives are always different and some collectors are more personally involved in the material, while others distance themselves from it. In addition to the significance of folklore collection to our society, it has a certain value to the collector. Some collectors like the emotional connection from communicating with another person, some rejoice over a new piece of information. As President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said while expressing gratitude to those who are dedicated to collecting and preserving oral lore: “This may be salaried work, but it is purely a calling, without any grand embellishments.”

At the event President Ilves also announced a writing contest for schoolchildren and university students on the topic “What can I do for Estonia?” The event’s entertainment was provided by folk musicians Marju Varblane and Toivo Sõmer.

Astrid Tuisk