PIED PIPER

Fact or Fairytale?
Resources & Learning Pack
Created for Norwich Puppet Theatre
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Background reading for teachers

Introduction to the Legend of the Pied Piper

The Pied Piper of Hamelin (German: Rattenfänger von Hameln) is the main character of a legend (and later a fairytale story) recounting the disappearance of many children from the town of Hamelin (Hameln, Germany), in the Middle Ages.

The earliest known account of the story comes to us from an inscription on a stained glass window on the Market Church of Hamelin itself c. 1300. Unfortunately, the window was destroyed in 1660, however the window was described in several accounts between the 14th century and the 17th century and was copied into the Exodus Hanelensis, a book dating to 1634, just before the window was damaged.

The inscription on the top of the window reads, in medieval German,
"On the day of John and Paul 130 children of Hamelin went to Calvary and were brought through all kinds of danger to the Koppen mountain and lost."

This window is generally considered to have been created in memory of a tragic historical event for the town.

A similar inscription is recorded in the Lüneburg Manuscript, written in the 15th century:
"In the year of 1284, on the day of Saints John and Paul, on June 26 130 children born in Hamelin were seduced by a piper, dressed in all kinds of colours, and lost at the place of execution near the koppen."

An unknown scribe added the story to the back of a fourteenth century chronicle, Catena Aurea, written by the monk Heinrich Herford.

This account gives the date of the Hamelin event as June 26, 1284, and describes a stranger thirty years old, "handsome and well-dressed," entering by the Weser Gate and playing a silver pipe. He leads 130 children out the East Gate to Calvary. The writer briefly mentions that the mother of a deacon, Johann von Lüde, witnessed the event.
Also, Hamelin town records start with this event. The earliest written record is from the town chronicles in an entry from 1384 which states:

"It is 100 years since our children left."

In the 13th century, the words, “The Children of Hamelin”, could also have simply been referring to all people of Hamelin, not necessarily just the juveniles, but all residents.

Based on the surviving descriptions, a modern reconstruction of the church stained glass window has been created by Hans Dobbertin (historian). It features the colourful figure of the Pied Piper and several figures of children dressed in white.

The terms from the stained glass inscription and the Lüneburg Manuscript used to describe the place of the children’s disappearance (Calvary, Koppen), have been interpreted in several different ways. Historian Hans Dobbertin assimilated the word Calvary ‘place of the skull’ to the word Koppen, meaning head.

In the Bible, Calvary or Golgotha was the place of the execution of Jesus – a mountain or a hill. To some, this might suggest that the children of Hamelin were executed, but the word Calvary may be used to describe the skull-like shape of a hill, like the biblical Golgotha. The reference to Calvary may also allude to the later resurrection of Christ, implying that the children were led over the hill to a new beginning.
Theories behind the story

It is widely believed that the story reflects a true, historical event in which Hamelin ‘lost’ its children. There are many theories and snippets of evidence to suggest what may have happened to the ‘children of Hamelin’.

Many believe that the Pied Piper myth was created as a symbol of the children’s death by plague or catastrophe.
Some believe that the children may have died as a result of the rat-borne bubonic plague, commonly known as the Black Death. However, the peak of Black Death in Europe was between 1348 and 1350, that is, more than 64 years after the date of Hamelin’s children disappearing.

The possibilities of an outbreak of bubonic plague in Hamelin in 1284 are certainly limited. In addition, the plague would have swept away the lives of many people – not just of one town, and not just of its children.
It is likely that oral story-telling traditions gave the Piper the identity of a rat-catcher after the plague had struck.

Many sources suggest that the rat infestation wasn’t added to the legend until sometime around 1559, suggesting that the real reason for the disappearance of Hamelin’s children had nothing to do with the rats.

Other theories liken the Pied Piper to figures like Nicholas of Cologne, who is said to have lured away a great number of children on a disastrous Children’s Crusade to expel Muslims from the Holy Land.
This crusade was started by European Catholics in France in 1212. Large groups of adults and children set off to try to reach the Holy Land.

The Children’s Crusade appears in medieval sources, but historians now question its authenticity. The crusade was said to have been led by a young shepherd named Nicholas, from Cologne, Germany, who preached that the purity of children would allow them to conquer the Holy Land. Allegedly 20,000 children left their homes. A few were persuaded to return but the majority just disappeared, the legend says that they starved and died along the way.
It is easy to see why people linked this story to that of the Pied Piper.

CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CHILDREN’S CRUSADE
It has been suggested that the Piper could have been an emissary sent by the ruling nobility to promote a campaign for the colonisation of lands to the East. The expression “children of Hamelin” could have been a general term for all the inhabitants of the town and their exodus a response to politico-economical factors.

A number of theories tie the departure of Hamelin’s children to the Ostsiedlung (also known as the German Eastern expansion), in which a number of Germans left their homes to colonize Eastern Europe.

The Brothers Grimm, at the end of their version of the story, add that “some say that the children were led into a cave, and that they came out again in Transylvania,” a conclusion retained by Robert Browning in his 1842 poem The Pied Piper of Hamelin.

Romanian legend takes up the thread and tells us that the children did re-emerge from underground, through the Vaghis cave and into Transylvania.

In Romania this legend has been passed down through the generations as an explanation for the blond haired, German speaking Saxons inhabiting the region.

The Transylvanian Saxons came to Romania in the 12th Century, many settled in Transylvania, lured by its beauty and economic potential. They eventually built strong cities and developed powerful guilds, bringing along the spirit and development of the West.

Another historical account that shares features with the Pied Piper events, took place in 1237 in the town of Erfurt, 271km south-east of Hamelin. A group of children marched in a dancing procession towards Arnstadt, 15km to the south, where they were said to have collapsed with exhaustion. Unlike the children of Hamelin, the Erfurt youngsters were rescued by their parents, who took them back to their homes. Still, some of them were said either to have died or remained afflicted with a permanent tremor.

The events at Erfurt are considered to be one of the first manifestations of the medieval phenomenon known as the Dancing Mania, usually interpreted as a form of mass hysteria related to religious fervour. Those affected were described as unable to control their movements, or to stop their endless dance, and many were said to have died of exhaustion.

The Dancing Mania is also known as the Dance of St John, whose festival is celebrated on 24 June, or the Dance of St Vitus, whose day is celebrated on 15 or 28 June depending on the calendar. These dates are close to the date of 26th June- attributed as the date the children disappeared in Hamelin. The dates are also set around Midsummer and coincide with the Summer Solstice.

Early descriptions of Dancing Mania strongly suggest that its origin is Pagan and it is related to Midsummer and Summer Solstice celebrations, it was much condemned by Christians: “No Christian on the feast of St John [the Baptist] or the solemnity of any other saints performs solestitia [solstice rites] or dancing or leaping or diabolical chants.” Those affected by the Dancing Mania were thought to be possessed and therefore consigned to mass exorcisms.

CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE DANCING MANIA
Metaphor and allegory: The Piper as The Trickster

The enigmatic reports of the loss of an entire generation in Hamelin reverberated down the centuries.

Literal interpretations of the story present the Piper as a kidnapper. Other underlying ideas (first expressed five centuries ago, in the work of German physicist and Humanist Jobus Fincelius - De miraculis sui Temporis, 1556) express the Piper as the Devil in disguise:

“Of the Devil’s power and wickedness will I here tell a true history. About 180 years ago, on St. Mary Magdalene’s Day, it came to pass at Hammel on the Weser in Saxony, that the Devil went about the streets visibly in human form, piped and allured many children, boys and girls, and led them through the town-gate towards a mountain”.

This idea is repeated in Robert Burton’s The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), where the Piper turns up as an example in episode two, A Digression of the nature of Spirits, bad Angels, or Devils, and how they cause Melancholy.

This characterisation of the Piper as a demon/devil always represents him as possessing malevolent intentions and, crucially, supernatural abilities: he is able to lure animals and children with the music of his pipe.

Such musical skills and supernatural abilities also recall characters from the Greek myths, such as Pan and Orpheus. The Greek God Pan, played melodies said to inspire panic and other uncontrollable reactions, both positive and negative. The character of Orpheus has the ability to charm all living things and even stones with his music.

One of the most popular retellings of all is Robert Browning’s 1849 poem, where the children of Hamelin seem happy to leave a town governed by greedy, dishonourable adults and the Piper can be interpreted as offering a fresh start for a new generation. In this version of the tale, the allegorical lesson of keeping promises is certainly made clear.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin has become an archetype Trickster figure known for challenging the establishment, breaking the rules and spreading anarchy. In his dual nature, The Trickster can be seen as a malignant or mischievous character, but he is also a messenger of the gods and an agent of transformation who seems to exist somewhere between the worlds of fact and fiction.

The Pied Piper, like the Trickster, wears a number of different masks (hero, rebel, murderer, saviour, Death, The Devil). He spreads enchantment and leads us to other worlds. Whether the ‘other world’ is a new country to colonise, a state of consciousness or the land of the dead is unknown...
Versions Of The Story

There are several story versions and accounts of the legend of The Pied Piper and the children of Hamelin.
The earliest references describe a piper, dressed in pied (multicolored) clothing, leading the children away from the town never to return.

In the 16th century the story was expanded into a full narrative, in which the piper is a rat-catcher hired by the town to lure rats away with his magic pipe. When the citizens refuse to pay for this service, he retaliates by turning his magic on their children, leading them away as he had the rats.
This version of the story spread as a fairy tale and appeared in the writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the Brothers Grimm and Robert Browning with an emphasis on paying those who are due and keeping your promises.

The earliest English account of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, is that of Richard Rowland Verstegan in his work “Restitution of Decayed Intelligence”. He does not give a source but his account includes the reference to the rats and the idea that the lost children turned up in Transylvania. The phrase 'Pide Piper' occurs in his version and seems to have been coined by him. He uses a different date for the story— that of July 22, 1376 rather than the 1284 date used in other versions, this may suggest that two events, a migration in 1284 and a plague of rats in 1376, have become fused together.
Verstegan’s account was copied in Nathaniel Wanley’s “Wonders of the Little World” (1687), which was the immediate source of Robert Browning’s poem The Pied Piper of Hamelin”

Summary Of Main Events In The Story

The town of Hamelin was suffering from a rat infestation; a man dressed in pied clothing appeared. He promised the mayor he would get rid of the rats. The mayor in turn promised to pay him for the removal of the rats. The man accepted, and played a musical pipe to lure the rats into the Weser River, where they drowned.
Despite his success, the mayor broke his promise by refusing to pay the piper. The piper was angry and vowed to get his revenge. He played his pipe again, this time attracting the children of Hamelin. The children followed him out of the town and were never seen again.

Depending on the version, 1 child remained behind. The child was sick and unable to keep up.
In other versions, 3 children were left behind- one lame child who could not follow quickly enough, a second deaf child followed the other children out of curiosity but was not entranced by the music and the last child was blind and unable to see where they were going. These three inform the villagers of what had happened.

Other versions relay that the Pied Piper leads the children to the top of Koppelberg Hill, where he takes them to a beautiful land or to a place called Koppenberg Mountain.
There are also versions of the story which state that the Piper returns the children after payment, or that he returned the children after the villagers paid several times the original amount of gold.
The Brothers Grimm Version

Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, known as the Brothers Grimm, included the tale in their collection "Deutsche Sagen", first published in 1816. They called the story The Children of Hamelin (Die Kinder zu Hameln) and set it in the year 1284. The story is followed by a short extract called Der Rattenfänger (The Rat Catcher).

Below is a copy of the actual story in old German—followed by a translation on the next page.
The Children of Hameln by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

In the year 1284 a mysterious man appeared in Hameln. He was wearing a coat of many colored, bright cloth, for which reason he was called the Pied Piper. He claimed to be a rat catcher, and he promised that for a certain sum that he would rid the city of all mice and rats. The citizens struck a deal, promising him a certain price. The rat catcher then took a small file from his pocket and began to blow on it. Rats and mice immediately came from every house and gathered around him. When he thought that he had them all he led them to the River Weser where he pulled up his clothes and walked into the water. The animals all followed him, fell in, and drowned.

Now that the citizens had been freed of their plague, they regretted having promised so much money, and, using all kinds of excuses, they refused to pay him. Finally he went away, bitter and angry. He returned on June 26, Saint John’s and Saint Paul’s Day, early in the morning at seven o’clock (others say it was at noon), now dressed in a hunter’s costume, with a dreadful look on his face and wearing a strange red hat. He sounded his file in the streets, but this time it wasn’t rats and mice that came to him, but rather children: a great number of boys and girls from their fourth year on. Among them was the mayor’s grown daughter. The swarm followed him, and he led them into a mountain, where he disappeared with them.

All this was seen by a babysitter who, carrying a child in her arms, had followed them from a distance, but had then turned around and carried the news back to the town. The anxious parents ran in droves to the town gates seeking their children. The mothers cried out and sobbed pitifully. Within the hour messengers were sent everywhere by water and by land inquiring if the children -- or any of them -- had been seen, but it was all for naught.

In total, one hundred thirty were lost. Two, as some say, had lagged behind and came back. One of them was blind and the other mute. The blind one was not able to point out the place, but was able to tell how they had followed the piper. The mute one was able to point out the place, although he [or she] had heard nothing. One little boy in shirtsleeves had gone along with the others, but had turned back to fetch his jacket and thus escaped the tragedy, for when he returned, the others had already disappeared into a cave within a hill. This cave is still shown.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, and probably still today, the street through which the children were led out to the town gate was called the bunge-lose (drumless, soundless, quiet) street, because no dancing or music was allowed there. Indeed, when a bridal procession on its way to church crossed this street, the musicians would have to stop playing. The mountain near Hameln where the children disappeared is called Poppenberg. Two stone monuments in the form of crosses have been erected there, one on the left side and one on the right. Some say that the children were led into a cave, and that they came out again in Transylvania.

The citizens of Hameln recorded this event in their town register, and they came to date all their proclamations according to the years and days since the loss of their children.

According to Seyfried the 22nd rather than the 26th of June was entered into the town register.

The following lines were inscribed on the town hall:
In the year 1284 after the birth of Christ
From Hameln were led away
One hundred thirty children, born at this place
Led away by a piper into a mountain.
And on the new gate was inscribed: Centum ter denos cum magus ab urbe puellos
duxerat ante annos CCLXXII condita porta fuit.

[This gate was built 272 years after the magician led the 130 children from the city.]

In the year 1572 the mayor had the story portrayed in the church windows. The accompanying inscription has become largely illegible. In addition, a coin was minted in memory of the event.
The Rat Catcher by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

The rat catcher knows a particular tone, which he sounds nine times on his pipe, and then all rats follow after him, wherever he wants them to go, into a pond or a pool.

Once a village could not be rid of its rats, and finally they sent for the rat catcher. He prepared a hazel stick in such a manner that all rats were drawn toward it. They would then have to follow anyone who took hold of the stick. Waiting until a Sunday, he laid it in front of the church door. As the people were going home after the worship service, a miller came by, saw the good-looking stick lying there and said, "That will make a fine walking stick for me." He picked it up and left the village, walking toward his mill.

Meanwhile a number of rats began to leave their cracks and corners and came running and jumping across the fields toward him. The miller, still carrying the stick, had no idea what was happening. When he came to a meadow, they ran from their holes and ran across the fields and pastures after him. Running ahead, they were inside his house before he himself was, and they stayed there as a plague that could not be overcome.

The Brothers Grimm, Jacob (January 4, 1785 – September 20, 1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (February 24, 1786 – December 16, 1859), are amongst the most well-known storytellers of European folk tales. They were German academics, linguists, cultural researchers, and authors who collected folklore and traditional stories.

Their interest in folklore grew into a lifelong dedication to collecting German folk tales. Their first collection of folk tales, Children's and Household Tales (Kinder- und Hausmärchen), was published in 1812.

Their work popularized such stories as "Cinderella", "The Frog Prince" (Der Froschkönig), "Hansel and Gretel" (Hänsel und Gretel), "Rapunzel", "Rumpelstiltskin" (Rumpelstilzchen), and "Snow White" (Schneewittchen).
The Robert Browning Version

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was an English poet and playwright whose mastery of dramatic verse, especially dramatic monologues, made him one of the foremost Victorian poets.

Robert Browning’s poem The Pied Piper of Hamelin was published in 1842. Browning’s verse retelling is notable for its humour, wordplay, and jingling rhymes. The poem uses a simple rhyme scheme and the length of each stanza varies so that the story's rhythm is constantly changing.

The poem delivers a clear moral message in the final verse: "If we’ve promised them ought, let us keep our promise." Simply put, a man ought to keep his word.

Browning cites his source for the poem as Nathaniel Wanley's “Wonders of the Little World” (1687) and he also sets the story in the year 1376.

A full transcript of the poem follows: lines are numbered.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN
by Robert Browning

I.
1 Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
2 By famous Hanover city;
3 The river Weser, deep and wide,
4 Washes its wall on the southern side;
5 A pleasanter spot you never spied;
6 But, when begins my ditty,
7 Almost five hundred years ago,
8 To see the townsfolk suffer so
9 From vermin, was a pity.

II.
10 Rats!
11 They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
12 And bit the babies in the cradles,
13 And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
14 And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
15 Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
16 Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
17 And even spoiled the women's chats,
18 By drowning their speaking
19 With shrieking and squeaking
20 In fifty different sharps and flats.

III.
21 At last the people in a body
22 To the Town Hall came flocking:
23 "'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;"
24 "And as for our Corporation -- shocking

25 "To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
26 "For dolls that can't or won't determine
27 "What's best to rid us of our vermin!
28 "You hope, because you're old and obese,
29 "To find in the furry civic robe ease?
30 "Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains aacking
31 "To find the remedy we're lacking,
32 "Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
33 At this the Mayor and Corporation
34 Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV.
35 An hour they sat in council,
36 At length the Mayor broke silence:
37 "For a guildler I'd my ermine gown sell;
38 'I wish I were a mile hence!
39 'It's easy to bid one rack one's brain --
40 'I'm sure my poor head aches again,
41 'I've scratched it so, and all in vain
42 'Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
43 Just as he said this, what should hap
44 At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
45 "'Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
46 (With the Corporation as he sat,
47 Looking little though wondrous fat;
48 Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
49 Than a too-long-opened oyster,
50 Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
51 For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
52 'Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
53 "Anything like the sound of a rat
54 "Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"
V.
55 "Come in!" -- the Mayor cried, looking bigger
56 And in did come the strangest figure!
57 His queer long coat from heel to head
58 Was half of yellow and half of red,
59 And he himself was tall and thin,
60 With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
61 And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin
62 No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
63 But lips where smile went out and in;
64 There was no guessing his kith and kin:
65 And nobody could enough admire
66 The tall man and his quaint attire.
67 Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
68 "Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
69 "Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

VI.
70 He advanced to the council-table:
71 And, "Please your honours," said he, "I'm able,
72 'By means of a secret charm, to draw
73 "All creatures living beneath the sun,
74 "That creep or swim or fly or run,
75 "After me so as you never saw!
76 "And I chiefly use my charm
77 "On creatures that do people harm,
78 "The mole and toad and newt and viper;
79 "And people call me the Pied Piper."
80 (And here they noticed round his neck
81 A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
82 To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;
83 And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
84 And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
85 As if impatient to be playing
86 Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
87 Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
88 "Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
89 "In Tartary I freed the Cham,
90 "Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats,
91 "I eased in Asia the Nizam
92 "Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats:
93 "And as for what your brain beholders,
94 "If I can rid your town of rats
95 "Will you give me a thousand gilders?"
96 "One? fifty thousand!" -- was the exclamation
97 Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII.
98 Into the street the Piper stept,
99 Smiling first a little smile,
100 As if he knew what magic slept
101 In his quiet pipe the while;
102 Then, like a musical adept,
103 To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
104 And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
105 Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
106 And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
107 You heard as if an army muttered;
108 And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
109 And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
110 And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
111 Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
112 Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
113 Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
114 Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
115 Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
116 Families by tens and dozens,
117 Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives --
118 Followed the Piper for their lives.
119 From street to street he piped advancing,
120 And step for step they followed dancing,
121 Until they came to the river Weser
122 Wherein all plunged and perished!
123 -- Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,
124 Swam across and lived to carry
125 (As he, the manuscript he cherished)
126 To Rat-land home his commentary:
127 Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
128 "I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
129 "And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
130 "Into a cider-press's gripe:
131 "And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
132 "And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
133 "And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
134 "And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:
135 "And it seemed as if a voice
136 "(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
137 "Is breathed) called out, 'Oh rats, rejoice!
138 ""The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
139 ""So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
140 ""Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!"
141 "And just as a bulky sugar-nuncheon,
142 "All ready staved, like a great sun shone
143 "Glorious scarce an inch before me,
144 "Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
145 " -- I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII.
146 You should have heard the Hamelin people
147 Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple
148 "Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
149 'Poke out the nests and block up the holes!'
150 "Consult with carpenters and builders,
151 "And leave in our town not even a trace
152 "Of the rats!" -- when suddenly, up the face
153 Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
154 With a, "First, if you please, my thousand gilders!"
IX.
155 A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
156 So did the Corporation too.
157 For council dinners made rare havoc
158 With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
159 And half the money would replenish
160 Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
161 To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
162 With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
163 "Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
164 "Our business was done at the river's brink;
165 "We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
166 "And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
167 "So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
168 "From the duty of giving you something to drink,
169 "And a matter of money to put in your poke;
170 "But as for the guilders, what we spoke
171 "Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
172 "Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
173 "A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X.
174 The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
175 "No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
176 "I've promised to visit by dinner-time
177 "Bagdad, and accept the prime
178 "Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
179 "For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
180 "Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
181 "With him I proved no bargain-driver,
182 "With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
183 "And folks who put me in a passion
184 "May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI.
185 "How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
186 "Being worse treated than a Cook?
187 "Insulted by a lazy ribald
188 "With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
189 "You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
190 "Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII.
191 Once more he stept into the street,
192 And to his lips again
193 Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
194 And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
195 Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
196 Never gave the enraptured air)
197 There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
198 Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
199 Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
200 Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
201 And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
202 Out came the children running.
203 All the little boys and girls,
204 With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
205 And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
206 Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
207 The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII.
208 The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
209 As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
210 Unable to move a step, or cry
211 To the children merrily skipping by,
212 -- Could only follow with the eye
213 That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
214 But how the Mayor was on the rack,
215 And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
216 As the Piper turned from the High Street
217 To where the Weser rolled its waters
218 Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
219 However he turned from South to West,
220 And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
221 And after him the children pressed;
222 Great was the joy in every breast.
223 "He never can cross that mighty top!"
224 "He's forced to let the piping drop,
225 "And we shall see our children stop!"
226 When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
227 A wondrous portal opened wide,
228 As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
229 And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
230 And when all were in to the very last,
231 The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
232 Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
233 And could not dance the whole of the way;
234 And in after years, if you would blame
235 His sadness, he was used to say, --
236 "It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
237 "I can't forget that I'm bereft
238 "Of all the pleasant sights they see,
239 "Which the Piper also promised me.
240 "For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
241 "Joining the town and just at hand,
242 "Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
243 "And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
244 "And everything was strange and new;
245 "The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
246 "And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
247 "And honey-bees had lost their stings,
248 "And horses were born with eagles' wings;
249 "And just as I became assured
250 "My lame foot would be speedily cured,
251 "The music stopped and I stood still,
252 "And found myself outside the hill,
253 "Left alone against my will,
254 "To go now limping as before,
255 "And never hear of that country more!"

XIV.
256 Alas, alas for Hamelin!
257 There came into many a burgher's pate
258 A text which says that heaven's gate
259 Opes to the rich at as easy rate
260 As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
261 The mayor sent East, West, North and South,
262 To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
263 Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
264 Silver and gold to his heart's content,
265 If he'd only return the way he went,
266 And bring the children behind him.
267 But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
268 And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
269 They made a decree that lawyers never
270 Should think their records dated duly
271 If, after the day of the month and year,
272 These words did not as well appear,
273 "And so long after what happened here
274 "On the Twenty-second of July,

275 "Thirteen hundred and seventy-six:"
276 And the better in memory to fix
277 The place of the children's last retreat,
278 They called it, the Pied Piper's Street –
279 Where any one playing on pipe or tabor,
280 Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
281 Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
282 To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
283 But opposite the place of the cavern
284 They wrote the story on a column,
285 And on the great church-window painted
286 The same, to make the world acquainted
287 How their children were stolen away,
288 And there it stands to this very day.
289 And I must not omit to say
290 That in Transylvania there's a tribe
291 Of alien people who ascribe
292 The outlandish ways and dress
293 On which their neighbours lay such stress,
294 To their fathers and mothers having risen
295 Out of some subterraneous prison
296 Into which they were trepanned
297 Long time ago in a mighty band
298 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
299 But how or why, they don't understand.

XV.
300 So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
301 Of scores out with all men – especially pipers!
302 And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
303 If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!
References & Useful Links

This Pied Piper information pack was researched, compiled & designed by Gemma Khawaja for Norwich Puppet Theatre.

Please click on the links below to visit source websites for information in the pack.

**University Of Pittsburgh (Education Website)**

http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hameln.html

**Wikipedia (Pied Piper page)**


**Examiner.com**


**Anthony Deleon**

http://anthonydeleon.hubpages.com/hub/piedpiperhistory

**Squidoo.com**

http://www.squidoo.com/oh-rats

**Fortean Times**

http://www.forteantimes.com/features/articles/3805/the_lost_children_of_hamelin.html