



Hansestadt Uelzen

→ The buyer of owls

One Sunday morning a peasant walked through the town of Uelzen carrying a bag in which something was swarming and moving. A merchant asked him what he had in his bag. „Some without socks“ (= ‚Barftgaans‘), said the peasant. The merchant understood ‚hethcocks‘ (= ‚Barkhahns‘). He gave him much money while concluding the bargain.

When he was back home three young owls flew out of the bag. The merchant grew angry and sued the peasant to the mayor. The peasant, however, said that he had sold „without socks“ and not „hethcocks“. „Nobody can deny the fact“, he added, „that - night and day - owls walk barefeet - without shoes and stockings. The mayor laughed and agreed with the peasant.

From this day the people of Uelzen were called „the buyers of owls“ (= ‚Uhlenköper‘).

