



1. Preparation

1. As part of the debate on ***The London Question***, regarding the lack of naturist facilities in London, it was decided that NAG would make a 6-day Fact-finding Mission Munich. The purpose was to explore the local attitude towards naturism in this city, famous for open-air naturism in the English Garden municipal park. **Pete Knight** travelled from Gatwick early on Thursday 8 September, **John Paine** having booked at a cheaper price in July, flew on Saturday 10 September. We left Munich together late on Tuesday 13 September to return to the UK. Costs were paid by the two participants, with a £50 float drawn from NAG funds.
2. NAG had widely broadcast our intention to go to Munich and we had corresponded with two local naturists, **Richard F**, an English naturist who lives at Dorfen, a small town near to Munich, and **Alex L**, a Munich city resident who organises a range of naturist group activities. We planned to meet up with both during the trip. Another German naturist, **Jürgen B**, heard of our Mission and sent NAG a considerable amount of very valuable information. A request to the **German National Tourist Office** gave us a large bundle of general information and maps on Germany, including Munich. **British Naturism** had also given us material about naturism in Germany.
3. Our advance attempts to meet with members of two local naturist Clubs near to Munich - **BffL Munchen** and **BffL Isarland e.V.** - had been rebuffed. Neither the German naturist federation **DFK**, nor the Bavarian federation **BNV**, responded to our emails. We later found that these are all traditional Club bodies and disapprove of independent 'free range naturism' outside of fenced Club premises. Pete also contacted, by email, the Munich city officials who, whilst interested in our Mission, could not arrange a time to talk to us. This was in the period immediately before the *Munich Oktoberfest* (which started on Friday 16 September). The weather throughout the period was blue sunny skies and 24c, with one short thunderstorm on the Sunday night.
4. From this mission NAG has also compiled two other documents ***Naturism in and around Munich*** and ***The legal framework for naturism in Bavaria, Germany***. You may find these, and other interesting documents on naturism and the work of the **Naturist Action Group**, at our website naturistactiongroup.org.

2. Saturday 10 September

5. Having travelled from Oxford through the night I arrived at Munich airport, just before 10.00am, on the Saturday. Pete met me at the airport and we took the train to the city centre. On arrival at Munich city Hauptbahnhof (main station) we called into the Tourist Information Office and picked up more local information. Our hotel was nearby.
6. Munich is a well-ordered city with a calm friendly ambience, no visible tensions (even though there is a significant Muslim community of Turkish origin) quite different to the atmosphere in several large English cities. Most Germans that we met spoke very good English – which was of great benefit to us! The cost of food and beer was reasonably priced, another benefit. Jürgen had wisely told us "Never ever translate the English '*naturist club*' into German '*FKK-Club*', because that means '*a brothel*'."
7. We were amazed at how much naturist activity there is in Munich, and the clear public acceptance for this. Naturism in Munich, in contrast to the UK, is openly accepted and practised, with a large number of facilities and locations available. However there is a legal factor which Jürgen told us about. This is covered in the NAG document ***The legal framework for naturism in Bavaria, Germany***.

8. After lunch we visited **Englischer Garten** (The English Garden) a municipal park on the eastern edge of the city centre, next to the University. It is about the size of London's St. Jame's Park. The area used by naturists is at the southern end of the park, between the Japanischer Teegarten and the Monopteros monument (which is on a slight hill). A fast-flowing branch of the Isar (pronounced *Eezaah*) River flows through, and since the 1980's it has been accepted that naturists use the flat meadow on the left bank of the river.
9. At 3.00pm there were literally thousands of people sunbathing in the park and enjoying a dip in the river, families amongst them, women mainly in scanty bikinis, and some topless. On the naturist side of the 4m wide river were a significant number of naturists, of all ages in families, couples, or single (both males and females). These included 20 nude males, a few nude female naturists, and many more who were just topless. Many arrived by bicycle and some were only just arriving at 6.45pm. Textiles intermingled with the naturists. We noted that a lot of people, including families, wandered on paths through the Park, naturists were clearly visible, a children's play area was adjacent to the meadow used by naturists.
10. The atmosphere was totally relaxed in the park. We decided not to take photos on this first visit, as we intended returning the following day. I spoke to a few of the naturists to find out whether the attendance that Saturday was normal, and how frequently they came. The answer was that often there are more naturists, but numbers overall had slowly declined since the heyday in the 1980's. More women had been naked previously, but in recent years some photos of them here had been posted on *YouTube* by sightseers. Now most naturist women at this park preferred to keep their knickers or bikini bottoms on.
11. We were also told that naturism was accepted in Munich and there was no problem with the police. Those present were regular users of this Park, but other Munich naturists preferred various open-air locations within the city for their naturism. We already had these location addresses and planned to visit a number of them (see the NAG document **Naturism in and around Munich**). Pete and I left *Englischer Garten* at about 6.45pm and went to nearby Ludwigstraße, closed to traffic for a *StreetWise Festival* that week-end.

3. Sunday 11 September

12. The morning was devoted to exploring the city, doing tourist things, and identifying naturist locations. We saw a number of buildings and items, including the old Rathaus (town hall) with its famous animated Glockenspiel clock. Having bought a picnic lunch we then made our way to our first open air city naturist site of the day. This was at **Ludwigsbrücke** (bridge) and down onto a small island on the River Isar. Here on a shingle beach were many families and citizens enjoying the sun and water.
13. On one part of the island, intermingled with the textile couples, were a few naturists whom we joined. Speaking to **Erwen** we discovered that, again, there were fewer naturists here than 10 years ago. Erwen mentioned several other locations used by naturists in and near the city, which we noted. Again, there was an acceptance of naturism and no problems of unacceptable behaviour, or moral prudery leading to unwelcome reports to the authorities.
14. We had a 4.00pm appointment to meet up at *Englischer Garten* with **Richard** and **Alex**. We entered *Englischer Garten* from the southern end and walked through the naturist area. It was a hot day and there were more naturists in the meadow by the Isar River than on Saturday. We met Richard and his dog Molly at a cafe/bar just in from Königinstraße. Richard lives outside Munich and has travelled to many naturist activities in Europe. He has published a book **Active Nudists** and is compiling another. Alex, a very active '**free range naturist**' joined us. We took some photos in *Englischer Garten*, on the way to Alex's parked car. Alex then drove us to a naturist shingle beach, also on the River Isar, at nearby **Flauchersteg** (still in Munich) we arrived at 5.10pm.
15. This is a very popular naturist location and even at that time well over 100 naturists were there, singles, couples, families. Picnics and small barbecues were common. A well-used open iron-work bridge crosses the river here, from which pedestrians and cyclists mostly did not bother to look down 8ft below to the naturists laid out in the sun. **Karl** and **Angela** a couple in their 50's right next to the bridge, are regulars who told me that they had no

trouble with 'meerkats'. I took several photos of Pete, also Alex, sunbathing on a shingle beach near the bridge. We were open about this and clearly were taking personal photos (rather than general scene shots). No naturists objected to this at all. A local couple **Stan** and **Eva**, in their 30's, had their dog with them. Eva was happy to pose for a photo in the shallow water playing with her pug dog, adjacent to Richard playing with his dog Molly.

16. We had detailed discussions with Alex, who organises naked activities for 'free range naturists' and is not a fan of local hide-bound Landed Clubs. Local police do not object or interfere with naturists. Once Alex had 30 naked cyclists (of both sexes) on the River Isar bridge at Flauchersteg, the police came through looking for a petty thief and did not turn a hair. Alex told us that the DFK president, **Kurt Fischer** is on record as stating that naturism outside Landed Clubs is wrong. Fischer strongly disapproves of the activities organised by Alex. Fischer's views were also mentioned, separately, by Jürgen and Richard.
17. Alex had to leave but dropped us off at a bar in central Munich. Here Pete and I continued to talk to Richard about a number of naturist matters. Richard mentioned that he knew of groups similar to NAG in other countries - NAC (north America), ADAN (Spain), APNEL (France). NAG will explore making contact with these groups. Before leaving at 8.00pm Richard gave us a copy of his illustrated hardback book *Active Nudists* published in three languages. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Richard in the future.

4. Monday 12 September

18. This morning John did some shopping, Pete caught up on emails, and we visited the *Oktoberfest* Showground not far from our hotel. The site is large, with many fairground attractions, stalls, and the essential beer tents being installed ready for the Friday opening. After lunch in the **Gasthaus** bar nearby we made our way to the large local authority **Dantebad Leisure Centre** (at Postillonstraße 17, north-west of the central area). We had arranged to meet Alex here at 3.00pm.
19. This was the last day of the season for the open-air naturist pool and grass sunbathing area part of the complex. Admission was only €3.50 and the fenced naturist area has an open entrance, with a sign showing that clothes are not allowed for men, women or children. Alex told us that the city council had recently installed a larger pool (25m x 10m) to replace a previous smaller one in the naturist area, and had done other upgrade works. I estimate that the council had spent at least €200k on the naturist area upgrade. Alex took a photo of me by the new pool and I spoke to a few naturists who were regulars at Dantebad.
20. Under the sunny blue sky there were well over 80 naturists, of various ages, in the Dantebad naturist section that afternoon. The sexes were evenly balanced, including many lone females and some children with their mothers. I spoke to a few of them, and they all said that they came to Dantebad regularly. Alex prefers places which are not fenced, so does not visit Dantebad often. The enclosed naturist area is larger than many Club grounds in the UK, and has nice grass, a few trees for shade, and free sun loungers. A life-guard look-out booth straddles the joint fence with the Children's Pool next door. Also within the main leisure complex is a sauna suite, in which nudity is the rule. The main leisure centre is open all year, including winter swimming in another of its five open-air pools.
21. Alex gave us photos from the free-range activities that he organised. These included a naked indoor bowling session, but most were outdoor in the countryside. The majority of naturists involved had no problem with being photographed, even if they were to appear on Alex's website or in books like Richard's. Alex had a novel way of disguising the shy people who did not want to be recognised – the wearing of 'Father Christmas' type beards!
22. We said farewell to Alex and made our way by underground across the city for another visit to *Englischer Garten*. On the way there **Jocken** helped us with the underground train directions. He had noticed us earlier in the Dantebad naturist area. Jocken (aged about 45) mentioned that as soon as he gets into his flat he strips off to live in a naturist environment as much as possible. After saying goodbye to Jocken on the underground train Pete and I arrived at *Englischer Garten* at 7.10pm, just as the sun was going down, so the few remaining naturists were just leaving the park.

23. Our next naturist destination was **Müller'sches Volksbad**, a leisure centre built by a local philanthropist called Müller in the 1920's and now run by the city Council. Müller'sches Volksbad is by the Ludwigsbrücke bridge, where we had been on the naturist shingle beach on Sunday. After a pleasant meal on the restaurant terrace we went inside to have a sauna. The original art-deco building has been retained by the city council and had recently been refurbished. It has a sauna suite, a separate swimming pool, and areas for massage.
24. Entrance fee for the Sauna Suite is €9.50, as we had our towels with us. After changing upstairs we went down into the sauna area, which includes 3 heated rooms of varying hot, hotter, extremely hot, temperatures (and very hot stone floors!). These rooms open onto an area with showers, a large circular pool for cooling off, and a plunge pool. Next to these are a Turkish steam room and a Finnish wooden sauna cabin. Nudity is the rule in this area. Upstairs is a quiet lounge area with swing chairs to relax on. Wearing of towels, or robes, was the norm in that area.
25. It was just before 9.00pm when we entered the complex, service in the restaurant had been very slow. There were about ten other people in the Sauna Suite, young couples, male and female singles of various ages, all totally naked. No-one was at all self-conscious, as nudity is the norm in such facilities. Wearing only my towel I also explored through a door into the separate swim hall, where there were another ten people – all in costumes. I managed to get myself on the wrong side of a locked connecting door, and had to summon the Centre staff to get me back into the sauna suite!
26. It was very quiet in the Müller'sche Volksbad sauna suite and we did not want to disturb the peace by asking questions. However, people were friendly and helpful when we could not find our way around the section. It is quite likely that at an earlier time, and on a different day of the week, the facility would be quite crowded. We had to leave at 10.15pm to make our way back to our hotel.

5. Tuesday 13 September

27. We had to book out of hotel Atlas City this morning, but left our bags to collect at 6.00pm. We had earlier booked to go on a very informative visit to Dachau Concentration Camp. Located at the town of Dachau, about 15km from Munich, this was the pilot German concentration camp, opened by the Nazis based in Munich in 1933. It was started by the Bavarian State even before Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power in Germany. The organised tour from the city centre was €21 which covers the cost of administration and transport, by train and bus, and an English-speaking guide. Our very knowledgeable guide was Richard Norris, a young Canadian who had extensive history of that period.
28. Dachau Concentration Camp only exists today because the last inmates actually insisted, when hundreds of concentration camps were being dismantled, that Dachau be kept to show the world the reality of how awful the Nazi policy was. Entry is free, it was a sombre visit, very educational, and well worth making.
29. After a late lunch back in the city we paid a final visit to *Englischer Garten*. Arriving at 4.15pm we saw about twenty naturists (both sexes) in the sun. One man (in his 40's) was taking a break from work in his office nearby. Train driver **Wolfgang** (40's) works nights and usually visits *Englischer Garten* to sunbathe on Monday and Tuesday. **Ricardo** and **Carmen** (50's) were Spanish naturists from Las Palmas (Canary Islands) where they use the naturist beaches. They had been unaware of *Englischer Garten* until they arrived at Munich, and relished the chance to be naturist in the open air in the city centre. Sadly, we had to leave at 5.30pm, retrieve our luggage from the hotel and start our journey home.

John Paine 24 October 2011

You may find other interesting documents on naturism, and the work of the **Naturist Action Group**, at our website naturistactiongroup.org