

Translated by Richard Foley - <http://www.nakedeurope.org/>

During the last couple of years more and more people are getting naked, outside of their own homes and outside of nudist clubs and camps. They are naked while wandering in woods and fields, working in their gardens, jogging in parks, cycling along abandoned farm tracks and on country roads. This phenomenon is particularly strong in Germany, but can also be seen in England, Spain and other European countries, as well as in the USA and Australia.

The most well known 'naked walker' is Steve Gough. In 2003 he was naked for the entire 2 months of his walk from Lands End, in the south of England, to John'O'Groats, in the north of Scotland. He regards his walk as a human-rights demonstration, and wants to reduce the anticipated paranoid reaction to public nudity.

Anita and Wolfgang Gramer wish to dedicate their Naktiv book to this phenomenon. In over 176 pages they describe various people who spend the greater part of their lives naked, people who do not simply swim naked or sunbathe naked, but who are both naked and active (Naktiv) at the same time. We let these naktivists describe themselves going for naked walks, naked cycling tours and naked horse riding.

The history of nudism is covered briefly. We comment on social reform movements, such as the legendary Monte Verita, and on famous authors such as Goethe and Hesse, who were well known for their naked walks. However, the authors avoid getting into heavy theoretical and sociological arguments and instead focus in detail on the naked activities of individuals and groups.

The book was written and published in Germany and therefore focuses on naked activities in Germany. Klaus Hartmann in North Eastern Germany reports on his naked living style, on working naked at home and in the garden, and the reactions of his neighbours. The sex-therapist Dr Peter Niehenke is presented who, through provocative action in Southern Germany, has come up against both the authorities and the police for the right to be naked in public. We also describe two naked cyclists. There is Sabine who does her housework completely naked, Jenny who describes her feelings when she shows herself naked, and Julie who talks about her naked activities from Frankfurt to Australia.

Particularly interesting are the developments in Spain. In one of the most conservative and catholic dominated countries in Europe, there are many places where it has become accepted, or tolerated, for people to be naked in otherwise normal situations, where nobody needs to be covered up. In Barcelona a local nudist group has, with the support of the City administration, been giving out information sheets which explicitly explain that in Barcelona anyone may be naked anywhere. In Zaragoza too, the annual World Naked Bike Ride (WNBR) is held, and the participants are like nowhere else on earth: more than a hundred people take part and cycle through the city streets completely naked.

The subject is explored through the aphorisms and the text of many respected authors who have written on the subject of nudity and shame. Why do so many people have such a fear of being faced with simple nudity, when instead they could have a chance of a higher quality of life. Foolishly blind is the one who walks straight ahead with no sense of true joy, who must hide himself to be without shame.

Anita and Wolfgang Gramer.