

ASK LEWIS

Tracking the Borrowing Habits of the Nation

LEWIS (Library Enquiry Web Information Service), PLR's new enhanced database provides us with fascinating information, across hundreds of subject categories on exactly which books are being read where, and with it, a snapshot of our national, and regional preferences.

Here is just a taster from LEWIS, relating to borrowings for 2004-5:

- **COOKERY**

The favourite cookery book for the UK as a whole was Jamie Oliver's "Jamie's Dinners". However, borrowers in Wales and the South-West preferred Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's "The River Cottage Year", whilst London borrowers favoured Nigella Lawson's "Feast: Food That Celebrates Life".

- **HOLIDAYS**

"The Rough Guide to France" was top of the travel guide list nationally. Top for borrowers in the South-West however was "The Rough Guide to Spain", whilst those in Wales preferred to stay closer to home with "The Rough Guide to Wales".

- **PETS**

Across the UK, the most borrowed individual pet books were those on tortoises. But in Scotland, books on snakes were more popular. In the "Insects as Pets" category, "Guide to Bees and Honey" takes the top slot for the UK as a whole, but in London, the most borrowed book is "The Tarantula Keeper's Guide".

Where dog breeds are concerned, books on Labradors were the most borrowed in the UK as a whole. In Scotland, however, books on the West Highland Terrier were more popular; with those on Yorkshire Terriers preferred in Wales, and those on the Jack Russell in the North.

- **HOBBIES**

The most borrowed book in the handicrafts category across the UK was "The Complete Guide to Card-Making". In London it was "Crochet for Beginners". Northern borrowers favoured "Tea Bag Folded Greetings Cards".

- **HEALTH**

Across the UK, the most borrowed book in the complementary medicine category was "Self Help for Backs". As far as more conventional medicine goes, the top book in Scotland was "How to Lower High Blood Pressure", whilst in the South-East "Diabetes: A Practical Guide" was most in demand with borrowers. In Northern Ireland however, the most borrowed book was "Stress and Nervous Disorders".

If you would like to ask LEWIS a question, please contact the Press Team (contact details below):

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