

## ASK LEWIS

### Tracking the Borrowing Habits of the Nation

LEWIS (Library Enquiry Web Information Service), PLR's sophisticated 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 2005-6:

- **COOKERY**

The favourite cookery book for the UK as a whole was Gillian McKeith's "You Are What You Eat". However, borrowers in Wales preferred "Jamie's Dinners" by Jamie Oliver, whilst in Scotland, the most borrowed cookery book was "Kids in the Kitchen: 60 Fun and Easy Recipes for Children". In Northern Ireland borrowers favoured Ainsley Harriott's "Low Fat Meals in Minutes".

- **HOLIDAYS**

"Coast" by Christopher Somerville was the most borrowed travel book nationally. Top for borrowers in the South-West and Northern Ireland however was "The Rough Guide to Spain", whilst borrowers in the North and in Scotland preferred to stay closer to home with "Peak District: Walking on the Level" and "The Fife Coastal Path" respectively.

- **PETS**

Across the UK, the most borrowed individual pet book was Jan Fennell's "The Dog Listener". In the "Insects as Pets" category, "Guide to Bees and Honey" takes the top slot for the UK as a whole, followed by "Step By Step Book About Stick Insects", but in London and Northern Ireland, the most borrowed books are about tarantulas ("The Tarantula Keeper's Guide" and "The Tarantula").

Where dog breeds are concerned, after the "RSPCA Book of the Mongrel", books on Cocker Spaniels were the most borrowed in the UK as a whole. In London, the South-East, Northern Ireland and Wales however, books on Labradors topped the lists.

- **HOBBIES**

The most borrowed book across the UK in the handicrafts category was a "Compendium of Cardmaking Techniques". In London it was "Creating Superheroes and Comic Book Characters", whilst borrowers in the South-West favoured "The Papercrafter's Bible". "Making Welsh Quilts" was, not surprisingly, the most borrowed book in Wales, whilst borrowers in Northern Ireland preferred "Flowers for the Home".

- **HEALTH**

Across the UK, the most borrowed book in the popular medicine and health category was "Diabetes: A Practical Guide to Managing Your Health". The top book in both Scotland and the South-East was "Menopause", whilst in Wales, "The Natural Health Bible" 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):

**09/02/07**

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