



ASK LEWIS

Tracking the Borrowing Habits of the Nation

LEWIS (Loans Enquiry Web Information Service), PLR's sophisticated database, provides us with fascinating information on UK book loans across hundreds of subject categories for 2010-11.

Cookery

The UK's favourite cookery book was Jamie Oliver's *Jamie's 30-minute meals* (pushing last year's N° 1, Delia Smith's *How to Cheat at Cooking*, down to 7th place). But library users in Scotland preferred Yotam Ottolenghi's vegetarian recipe book – *Plenty*. Rachel Allen's *Bake* came out top in Wales, Yorkshire and the North East of England. The South West found *Tana's Kitchen Secrets* (by Tana Ramsay) more to their tastes.

Gardening

Books on fruit and vegetable growing predominate. N° 1 nationwide was Carol Klein's *Grow your own veg!* Jo Whittingham's *Vegetables in a small garden* was top in Yorkshire and Alan Titchmarsh's *Vegetables and herbs* won the day in the North West. London and Scotland bucked the trend with Katherine Swift's *The Morville Hours: the story of a garden* proving most popular north of the border, and James Wong's *Grow your own drugs: easy recipes for natural remedies* taking the prize in London.

Biography/Autobiography

LEWIS has thrown up some interesting differences in taste in borrowers' choice of biographies this year. Show biz personalities proved most popular in the North East (Denise Welch's *Pulling myself together*) and in the South West (Dawn French's *Dear Fatty*), and the UK's most-borrowed title across the UK was *At my mother's knee* (Lily Savage writing as Paul O'Grady). Elsewhere library users in Northern Ireland took out Tony Blair's *A Journey* most often, and in London Barack Obama's *Dreams of my father: a story of race and inheritance* proved to be the autobiography of choice.

Health and Personal Development

The Driving Standards Agency's *Official DSA theory test for car drivers* proved to be the nation's most popular read in this subject area. In the East borrowers preferred *Money magic: seven simple steps to true financial freedom* (Alvin Hall, with Karl Weber) and in the South East *Wills and probate* led the way. In the North West *New toddler taming: a parents' guide to the first four years* topped this category, and in the South West *The worry cure: stop worrying and start living* (Robert L Leahy) proved most popular.

Travel and Holidays

Top this year in London, Scotland, the South East, the West Midlands and across the UK as a whole was Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love. One woman's search for everything across Italy, India and Indonesia*. But readers in other regions preferred titles written from a more local perspective. In Northern Ireland Fiona Davenport's *Discover Ireland* led the way; *The best of Lancashire* proved most popular in the North West, while *Cornwall from the coast path* (Michael and Merryn Kent) found favour with most borrowers in the South West. In the North East and Yorkshire Emma Kennedy's *The tent, the bucket and me* came out top.

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

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