Ask LEWIS

LEWIS (Loans Enquiry Web Information Service), PLR’s database, provides us with fascinating information on UK book loans across hundreds of subject categories for 2015-16.

Domestic Animals and Pets
Across the UK Tom King’s cat book *Close Encounters of the Furred Kind* came top and was also the preferred choice for readers in the North West & Merseyside. Cat books also came out top in the East (*Toby the Cross-eyed Stray* by Celia Haddon), Northern Ireland (Dorling Kindersley’s *The Complete Cat Breed Book*) and the South West (*A Cat Called Norton* by Peter Gethers). Dog books, however, prevailed in Yorkshire & The Humber, Scotland and London where the number one choice was *The Puppy Bible* by Claire Arrowsmith & Alison Smith. Doggie books were also the most popular choice in the North East (Dorling Kindersley’s *Complete Dog Care*), South East (*Dog Manual* by Carolyn Menteith), Wales (*Buster: The Dog who Saved a Thousand Lives* by Will Barrow and Isabel George) and the West Midlands (*Idiot’s Guides – Dog Training* by Liz Palika).

Cookery
The UK’s favourite cookery book for the third year running was Jamie Oliver’s *Save with Jamie: Shop Smart, Cook Clever, Waste Less* (and came out top in the East, North East, North West & Merseyside, Scotland and South East). There were some regional variations where borrowers preferred Mary Berry titles. These were *Mary Berry Cooks the Perfect* in Northern Ireland and *Mary Berry’s Absolute Favourites* in Wales.

Biography/Autobiography
LEWIS has thrown up some interesting differences in taste in borrowers’ choice of biographies. Show biz personalities proved most popular in Yorkshire & the Humber (*David Jason: My Life*) and in Scotland (*We Need to Talk About... Kevin Bridges*), and the most-borrowed autobiography title across the UK (and the North East, North West & Merseyside and West Midlands) was *Open the Cage Murphy* by Paul O’Grady. Elsewhere library users in London took out *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, in the East *Miss Savidge Moves Her House* by Christine Adams and Michael McMahon proved to be the biography of choice.

Health and Personal Development
The Driving Standards Agency’s *Official DSA Theory Test for Car Drivers* proved once again to be the nation’s most popular read in this subject area. In the South West borrowers preferred *First Steps Out of Smoking* by Simon Atkins and in the South East *Gut* by Giulia Enders (translated by David Shaw) led the way. In the West Midlands *Mind Over Mood* by Dennis Greenberger and Christine A Padesky topped this category.

History
Top this year in the North West & Merseyside, Northern Ireland, Scotland and across the UK as a whole was Antony Beevor’s *Ardennes 1944: Hitler’s Last Gamble*. Borrowers in the capital preferred *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari. Elsewhere library users in Wales and the East took out *One Summer: America 1927* by Bill Bryson, in Yorkshire & The Humber they preferred a book on local history, *Black Diamonds: The Rise and Fall of an English Dynasty* by Catherine Bailey. Borrowers in the South West also went for a local choice, *The Book of Poole Quay and the Waterfront* by Andrew Hawkes.

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