

TRACKING THE BORROWING HABITS OF THE NATION

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* 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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