The impact of non-fiction lending from public libraries

Patrick Timperley and David Spiller
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<td>26</td>
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<td>28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

The authors wish warmly to thank all library staff at Lincoln Central, Grantham, and Loughborough public libraries for their support in completion of the project – and in particular Roger Hundelby (Lincoln), Chris Gosgrove (Grantham) and Steve Kettle (Loughborough) for their co-operation in arranging for the interviews to take place.

They are also grateful to three members of LISU’s staff: Jane Scott, for preparing the figures and tables; and Sharon Fletcher and Mary Ashworth for preparing the work for publication.
Section 1 Methodology

This work is based upon a Masters dissertation: *A survey of the nature and extent of the impact of adult non-fiction printed items borrowed from public libraries within the East Midlands* (1). It studied the borrowing of non-fiction books at three large libraries, and investigated its impact upon the users. The investigation aimed to yield two types of result: firstly, evidence for the advocacy of public libraries; and secondly information to assist librarians in stock management.

The approach was to interview users as they returned non-fiction books to their libraries. A questionnaire was devised and piloted, and then administered by a single interviewer at three separate library sites. The interviewer was a white male student in the 25-34 age group, professionally qualified as a careers adviser, and trained in non-directive interviewing skills.

The sites were Lincoln Central and Grantham libraries, in Lincolnshire, and Loughborough library in Leicestershire. All three were busy, large libraries, serving populations of 30,000 and over, with substantial non-fiction stocks. Brief details of the sites are given in Appendix A.

Interviews took place during September and October 1998 - 126 at Lincoln, 129 at Grantham, and 145 at Loughborough, making a total of 400. Half of these were during lunchtimes, evenings (after 5 pm) and Saturdays, and the other half on weekday mornings and afternoons.

Interviews were conducted in the foyers of the three libraries. In the first instance all users carrying books were approached, with the aim of identifying a single item of non-fiction per user on which to base the interview. Many of those approached turned out to be returning fiction, and accordingly were not interviewed. Where a user was carrying more than one non-fiction book the first item noticed by the interviewer became the survey item. The books used for the interviews therefore formed a random sample.

Interviewees were approached on a random basis. Following each interview, the interviewer approached the next potential respondent to enter the library.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts: in the first part, all 400 respondents were asked a number of general questions about the item selected; in the second, there were six sections related to users’ main reasons for borrowing items, and respondents were asked questions from just one of these sections. The full questionnaire is shown in Appendix B.

Data from the interviews were entered into the software package SPSS for statistical analysis. Other information - such as the titles of the sample of non-fiction books, responses to open-ended questions and other comments - were recorded separately. These records were used to compile the analysis and report.
Section 2 The respondents

Gender
Of the 400 respondents, 53% were male and 47% female. There was a small majority of male respondents in all three libraries, with the highest percentage of female respondents (49%) in Grantham.

These proportions are substantially different from those reported in most library surveys, in which female users easily outnumber male. For instance in Book Marketing Ltd’s 1998 Household library use survey (2), seven out of ten females has visited their public library in the preceding 12 months, compared to around six out of ten men; 49% of women had borrowed ‘any adult books’ in the preceding 12 months, compared to 32% of men; and 36% of women had borrowed non-fiction books in the preceding months compared to 24% of men.

In the CIPFA PLUS archive for 1997 (3), 62% of respondents were female and 38% male. In the Aslib Review of the public library service in England and Wales (4), 34% of females were found to be ‘frequent users’ compared to 25% of males, and 43% of females were ‘non-users’ compared to 47% of males. The preponderance of female users in other surveys seems to be, at least in part, a function of the larger numbers of women borrowing fiction and recreational reading. At larger public libraries, where the borrowing of non-fiction is a major function, the gender differences appear to be eroded. One example of this is Birmingham’s survey of central library users (5), in which females comprised 48% of the sample, and males 52%.

It is also interesting to compare the findings of the current survey on gender of respondents with those of a 1998 survey of 400 pupils in state and independent secondary schools (6). Asked what types of books they enjoyed reading in their spare time (ie not connected with school work), the girls’ responses were 67% ‘mostly fiction’, 2% ‘non-fiction’, and 31% ‘a mixture’, whilst the boys’ responses were 18% ‘mostly fiction’, 17% ‘non-fiction’, and 64% ‘a mixture’. Again the implication is that a survey of non-fiction reading – even at this younger age range – would include more males than females.

In the survey, the interviewer only approached respondents whom he perceived to be of secondary school age and above – so some borrowing of adult fiction by younger children will not have been included.

Age
Fig 1 shows the age of respondents at all three locations. The 35-54 age group was the largest in all three libraries.

Comparisons with other surveys is again of interest, to ascertain whether the profile of users borrowing non-fiction is different from the profile of ‘all users’. In the CIPFA PLUS Archive for 1997, the percentages by age group of 68,000 respondents were: age 24 and under, 12%; age 25-34, 12%; age 35-54, 34%; age 55-64, 15%; age 65+, 27%. The current survey had a much smaller proportion of ‘65 and over’ users – 18% compared to 27% - and correspondingly larger proportions of all of the other age groups.

Ethnic origin and occupation
Ninety six per cent of the 400 respondents described their ethnic origin as white. Eight of the 16 non-white respondents were Indian.

Respondents were asked to say which of a short list of ‘occupations’ applied to them. Fig 2 depicts the replies: 44% were employed, 15% were students, and 28% retired. In the ‘other’ category, 4% were unemployed, 5% home and family carers, and 2% permanently unable to work through sickness (all percentages out of 400 respondents). The higher proportion of students at Lincoln library was probably due to the interviews there being carried out in early September, when many higher education students were still at home on vacation.
**Fig 1  Age of respondents**

- **Lincoln**:
  - under 25
  - 25-34
  - 35-54 (extended category)
  - 55-64
  - 65 and over

- **Grantham**:
  - under 25
  - 25-34
  - 35-54 (extended category)
  - 55-64
  - 65 and over

- **Loughborough**:
  - under 25
  - 25-34
  - 35-54 (extended category)
  - 55-64
  - 65 and over

- **All libraries**:
  - under 25
  - 25-34
  - 35-54 (extended category)
  - 55-64
  - 65 and over

Number of respondents: Lincoln 126, Grantham 129, Loughborough 144, Total 399

---

**Fig 2  Occupation of respondents, by location**

- **Lincoln**:
  - employed
  - student
  - retired
  - other

- **Grantham**:
  - employed
  - student
  - retired
  - other

- **Loughborough**:
  - employed
  - student
  - retired
  - other

- **All libraries**:
  - employed
  - student
  - retired
  - other

Number of respondents: Lincoln 126, Grantham 129, Loughborough 145, Total 400
Section 3 The sample of non-fiction books

Of the 400 items in the sample - ie the borrowed items which had been returned by the interviewees to the library - 387 (97%) were books, 11 music scores, one a journal and one a map.

Subject
Books were assigned by the interviewer - in discussion with the respondent - to one of the 40 Public Lending Right (PLR) subject categories (listed in Appendix C). Biographies were allocated to the biography section rather than to their subject - in accordance with PLR practice. For the purposes of analysis, the 40 subject categories were grouped into eleven main categories. The numbers of items returned in these eleven categories, together with the gender of the borrowers, is shown in Table 1.

Books were borrowed by both men and women in all eleven categories, but certain subjects attracted one sex more than the other: men returned over 70% of books in science and technology, history, war and transport, and sports and games; women over 60% in social science and religion, family, health and food, and crafts and DIY. This pattern was observed across users from all three libraries.

Year of publication
We analysed the publication dates of the books returned (using the date of the edition, not the impression). Fig 3 shows the results. The great majority of items had been published after 1980. 1948 was the earliest date of publication recorded, but only four books (all at Lincoln) were published before 1960: works on theology, history, anthropology and chess. The Loughborough survey recorded a much larger proportion of books published in the two years prior to the survey date, suggesting that the library there made available a larger proportion of new books.

Table 1 Subject of books borrowed, and gender of borrower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject category</th>
<th>% of female borrowers borrowing this category</th>
<th>% of male borrowers borrowing this category</th>
<th>% of all borrowers borrowing this category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History, war and transport</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, health and food</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and geography</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social science and religion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and music</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture and animals</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts and DIY</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and games</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and literature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig 3  Publication date of books borrowed, by library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>Grantham</td>
<td>Loughborough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: Lincoln 117, Grantham 127, Loughborough 143, Total 400
**Section 4 User behaviour in choosing non-fiction**

Respondents were asked: *Please think back to the day when you came to the library and borrowed this item. Which of the following statements best describes you?* Eight prompted option were given, including an ‘other’ category. Findings are shown in Fig 4.

**Fig 4 User approaches to choosing non-fiction**

Of 399 respondents, 336 (84%) said they had been looking for a specific item, or a specific subject, author or publisher. The subject approach was by far the most common: 71% had been looking for a book on the subject which they had actually borrowed; 6% had looked for a different subject or author. Twelve per cent had sought (found) the specific book that was now being returned. Four per cent had reserved the book in advance. A mere 1% had sought a book by a specific author or publisher. Only a small proportion of respondents - 6% - had gone into the library without something specific in mind.

Four subject areas - computing (21 books), business (10), transport (9) and DIY (5) - had exclusively attracted the subject approach: that is, all items had been borrowed by someone looking for a book on the subject - but not a specific book, or a specific author, or a book reserved in advance.

In Loughborough, eight respondents (5% of the Loughborough sample) had borrowed from special displays - of new books, and of second world war books.

These findings demonstrate the overwhelming importance of the subject approach for borrowers of non-fiction in public libraries, with the great majority of users searching for something on a particular subject, rather than any other search avenue. Searching for non-fiction by a particular author is negligible - a mere 1% of users. Serendipity also plays a much smaller part than it does for fiction borrowing, affecting only 12% of users in this survey: 6% who had entered the non-fiction section specifically to browse, and another 6% who had been searching for a different subject and come across the subject they eventually borrowed.

For librarians, the findings reinforce the importance of adopting a subject approach in stock management policies. They also carry a clear message about the arrangement of stock on the shelves – and write a question mark against the policy adopted by some authorities of arranging paperback non-fiction in browsing racks unrelated to the classified sequence.

No library can expect to satisfy all the users who visit to locate a *specific book*, but in fact 12% of respondents in this sample had been seeking the item they borrowed. There is further exploration of this approach reported below.

There is a relatively small literature on the success or failure of public library users in finding what they want on the library shelves (sometimes called the ‘needs fill rate’). The CIPFA PLUS surveys for 1997
Section 4 : User behaviour in choosing non-fiction

The impact of non-fiction lending from public libraries

on this theme (3) found that 43% of the respondents who had been looking for a book on a specific subject were successful. The current survey cannot shed light on success or failure at the shelf, since it is based upon titles returned to the library, and therefore reflects only the search successes, and not the failures. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare its findings with those of CIPFA PLUS.

**Previous and future borrowing by subject**

Respondents were asked: *Have you ever borrowed other items on this subject before from this library?* and *Do you expect to borrow other items on this subject again from this library?* Fig 5 summarises the responses.

![Fig 5](image)

Of 400 respondents, 324 (81%) said they had borrowed the same subject from the survey library on a previous occasion, whilst 65 (16%) were borrowing the subject for the first time. Overall, the great majority of respondents - 91% - intended to borrow other books on the same subject. Put another way, a mere 9% of respondents said that they were borrowing a book on this subject as a one-off exercise, with no intention of coming back for more.

This emphasis upon re-borrowing within a subject area is even more pronounced than might have been anticipated, and has important implications for stock management policies. There are obvious limitations upon library shelf capacity - not to mention library book funds – and it is clear that users constantly revisiting for material on the same subject area will soon exhaust the stock at a single service point, particularly at small service points, or within more specialised subject areas. In this context, the value of circulating (or rotating) stock between service points within an authority becomes very clear. An example from the Audit Commission report *Due for renewal* (7) demonstrates the impact of circulation in terms of stock cost-effectiveness.

The very heavy incidence of subject borrowing also demonstrates the need for authorities to co-ordinate stock selection centrally, to ensure that a wide variety of titles in any one subject area are represented in the stock of the authority as a whole; and to publicise those all-authority holdings at every service point, so that users are not limited to what they can see on the shelves of their nearest library.

**Previous and future borrowing of specific titles**

Respondents were asked similar questions about past and future borrowing, related to specific titles: *Have you ever borrowed this item from any public library before?* and *Do you personally expect to borrow this item again from a public library?* Fig 6 (overleaf) depicts the responses.
Thirty six respondents (9%) had borrowed the title before from a public library on at least one occasion, and 63 (16%) expected to borrow the title again at some future time - not including anticipated renewals on the day of the survey. Four per cent of respondents had both borrowed the title before and expected to do so again. It was clear from comments that some respondents borrowed the same title on a regular basis: a book on costume to help with productions of a local dramatic society; a Latin text borrowed by a retired man who occasionally taught the language informally; a book about the Arctic - a ‘favourite’ of one respondent, who borrowed it every Autumn.

These responses indicate quite a substantial amount of re-borrowing of titles, and emphasise the need for stock managers engaged in withdrawing titles from shelves to ensure that books earmarked for withdrawal are not still in demand (date stamps on labels giving a clear indication of this). Where a title still in use has to be withdrawn from open shelves because of physical condition, it should be considered for re-purchase or (if out of print) put into reserve stock rather than discarded.

Borrowing compared to buying
Respondents were asked: Did you borrow this item from the library, rather than buying a copy, for any of the following reasons? and prompted with five options, including ‘other’. Table 2 summarises the responses from the 47 respondents who had been seeking a specific title (since their views on ‘buying’ were rather more focussed than those of respondents not seeking a specific title).

The main reasons given for borrowing rather than buying were: it was a one-off use (21 responses, 45%); the cost of the book (15, 32%); the book was hard to obtain (11, 23%); and the respondent was not sure of its usefulness (11, 23%). The responses highlight the main factors which bear upon book users in their decisions to buy or borrow. Numerous other sources have commented upon the interdependence of these two functions.

Table 2 Reasons for title being borrowed rather than purchased

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons given for borrowing rather than buying</th>
<th>Number giving this reason</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-off/ limited use</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expense</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to obtain/ out of print</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure of usefulness/ relevance</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents gave more than one reason. Number of respondents: 47
Section 5 Reasons for borrowing titles

Respondents were next asked the key question in the survey: Which of the following were reasons for borrowing this item? and shown a list of six options plus an ‘other’ category. They were also asked to indicate the most important reason if more than one was indicated. The six prompted options were:

**Education/course** (Described as study below) This applied if the book had been borrowed in connection with any course of study, including full-time, part-time or distance learning in compulsory, higher or further education - irrespective of whether or not the course would lead to a qualification.

**Job** This applied if a book was borrowed in connection with present paid employment. Neither possible future careers nor voluntary work were counted.

**Information/practical/instruction** (Described as practical below) This applied if there was a need for information or instruction for a practical purpose. Examples were researching personal health issues or travel destinations, how to use tools or to train animals, planning weddings, and making decisions on the purchase of household goods.

**Hobby** An entry was recorded here if the book had been borrowed in connection with any hobby or interest - either knowledge-based (such as military history) or activity-based (such as a sport).

**Personal growth and learning** (Described below as personal learning) This category was used if the motivation for borrowing was a personal desire to learn, or to gain knowledge independent of formal areas of study. Examples included books on quantum physics, near-death experiences, psychotherapy, Irish history, and socialist political leaders.

**Pleasure** Books were recorded here if they had been borrowed simply to read for pleasure.

Of course, in terms of user motivations, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Of the 400 respondents, 208 (52%) identified only one of the above reasons for borrowing their book, 119 (30%) gave two reasons, and 73 (18%) gave more than two. Where more than one reason was mentioned, respondents were also asked to identify the ‘main’ one - and much of the analysis below is based upon the ‘main or only’ reasons given. Some reasons were apparently incompatible: no respondent gave both ‘pleasure’ and ‘study’.

Fig 7 depicts the reasons given, based on ‘main’ and ‘only’ reasons (ie not including subsidiary reasons).

The two main reasons mentioned were ‘practical’ (by 29%) and ‘hobby’ (by 27%). Fourteen per cent cited ‘pleasure’, 13% ‘study’, and 13% ‘personal learning’. Only 5% of respondents gave ‘job’.

Number of respondents: 400
Section 5: Reasons for borrowing titles

Fig 8 Reasons for borrowing non-fiction, by gender

![Graph showing reasons for borrowing non-fiction by gender](image)

Number of respondents = male 213, female 187, total 400
Note: %’s are of all respondents

### Reasons for borrowing related to gender

Fig 8 shows reasons for borrowing related to gender of respondents. The biggest differences were in borrowing for hobbies (men 73%, women 27%), personal learning (men 62%, women 38%), and study (men 32%, women 68%). A majority of women also mentioned the ‘practical’ category and ‘jobs’ (though the sample was small in the latter).

A majority of men mentioned the ‘pleasure’ motivation, by a margin of 53% to 47%. It is interesting to compare this with surveys of fiction reading in public libraries, where the main motivation (presumably) is also pleasure, but where women are invariably reported as reading more fiction than men.

### Reasons for borrowing and age

Table 3 shows reasons for borrowing related to age groups. Borrowing for recreational reasons (‘hobby’ and ‘pleasure’) tended to increase with age, and for information purposes (‘practical’, ‘study’ and ‘job’) to diminish with age. The ‘personal learning’ category was not much affected by the age of respondents - except for the under-24 group, who mentioned it rarely. Sixty-eight per cent of the under-24 and 25-34 age groups borrowed for the three ‘information’ reasons, whilst 68% of the 65+ group borrowed for the two ‘recreation’ reasons.

### Reasons for borrowing related to library sites

The pattern of reasons for borrowing shown above was fairly consistent across the three libraries surveyed. The ‘practical’ and ‘hobby’ categories were easily the largest at each location. Only the ‘study’ category (13% of items overall) showed much variation between libraries: higher levels were found in both Lincoln (17%)and Loughborough (15%), where the public libraries are within easy walking distance of a university, than in Grantham (9%), which is over 25 miles from the nearest university.

A separate study of public library use by students of the new University of Lincoln showed that 67% and 74% of the university students interviewed had used Lincoln’s public library service in 1997 and 1998 respectively.
Table 3  Reasons for borrowing non-fiction, by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for borrowing</th>
<th>% of borrowers aged under 25</th>
<th>% of borrowers aged 25-34</th>
<th>% of borrowers aged 35-54</th>
<th>% of borrowers aged 55-64</th>
<th>% of borrowers 65 and over</th>
<th>% of all borrowers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobby</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal learning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: 399

Reasons for borrowing related to subjects of books borrowed

The main or ‘only’ reasons for borrowing the books in the survey were also analysed by the subject category of the books borrowed (see Table 4). The figures in the table refer to the numbers of respondents, and not the percentages.

Table 4  Reasons for borrowing by subject category of the books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject category of the item</th>
<th>Number of respondents whose main or only reason for borrowing was:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hobby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, war &amp; transport</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; technology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography &amp; travel</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, health &amp; food</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social science &amp; religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; music</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature &amp; animals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts &amp; DIY</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport &amp; games</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language &amp; literature</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number borrowing for this reason</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: 400

The table’s findings may be analysed vertically by subject or horizontally by reason for borrowing. Vertically, we may note that:
The **hobby** category is spread across a wide range of subject areas, with ‘history, war and transport’ the largest, at 28% of all ‘hobby’ mentions.

The **pleasure** category is dominated by ‘biography’ (56%).

The **personal learning** category has three prominent subjects: ‘history, war and transport’ (26%); ‘social science and religion’ (22%); ‘science and technology’ (20%).

In the **practical** category, over 50% of books were in ‘geography and travel’ and ‘family, health and food’.

In the **study** category two subjects - ‘science and technology’ and ‘social science and religion’ - accounted for nearly half of the books.

In the small **job** category, ‘science and technology’ was most prominent.

When we analyse horizontally, across each subject area, two main points may be made:

- In most subject categories, there was a range of different reasons given for borrowing - in fact, in nine of the eleven subject categories at least five different reasons were given.

- Nevertheless, a single reason for borrowing tended to dominate some of the subjects. For instance: 69% of ‘biography’ were borrowed for pleasure; 75% of ‘geography and travel’ were borrowed for practical reasons; 69% of ‘family, health and food’ were borrowed for practical reasons.

- **Hobbies** was the strongest motivation, especially on military history (notably the Second World War), transport and genealogy.

- **Personal learning** reasons tended to be linked to history or archaeology.

- **Practical** motivations were varied and surprising, including choosing names for children, guiding visitors round a cathedral, and preparing to participate in a mission taking relief supplies to Bosnia (*Seasons in hell: understanding Bosnia’s war*).

- Borrowing for **pleasure** included local history reminiscences.

- Borrowing for **study** included texts on anthropology and history.

**Science and technology** (45 books)

- **Study** reasons covered 14 books, from GCSE level school science projects (*Patrick Moore’s new guide to the planets*) to undergraduates (*Mastering global information systems*).

- **Personal learning** covered a further 10 titles (*Quantum theory for beginners*).

- Twenty-one of the 45 books in the science and technology subject area related to computing, from choosing which computer or software to buy (**practical**), using computers at home (**hobby**) or at work (**job**), to supporting information technology evening classes or science degrees (**study**).

The following notes should give the flavour of the reasons for borrowing within subject areas:

**History, war and transport** (66 books)
Biography (45 books)

- The reasons for borrowing biographies were markedly different from all other categories, with pleasure the most important, in 31 books - 69% of the subject category. Biographies of people in film, music or entertainment were involved in 12 of these titles.
- Where they were not borrowed for pleasure, the motivations were usually hobbies (in five cases) or personal learning (five cases). In the personal learning cases, there was sometimes a desire to relate the biographee’s life with experiences of the borrower: for example, the effects upon Paul McCartney on the break in his formal education, or the career of Harry McCallion in special armed forces.

Geography and travel (44 books)

- Three-quarters of these books were borrowed for practical purposes, such as planning holidays or business trips.
- Borrowing for pleasure usually related to travellers’ tales.
- Other examples were books on meteorology (hobby), geology (work), and a guide to the Peak District used for a school project (study).

Family, health and food (42 books)

- Twenty-nine of the 42 books were borrowed for practical reasons: personal and family health, legal and financial issues, and cooking.
- Some of the other books borrowed did not always relate to the expected reasons: Empowering women (personal learning); The complete family health encyclopaedia (job); The new parent (study).

Social science and religion (41 books)

- Study motivations were mainly marketing, sociology, philosophy, and business studies.
- Personal learning reasons were about politics, or religious, spiritual or philosophical themes.
- Practical reasons included helping a dyslexic adolescent, and researching the possible use of a computer in a small business.
- The job motivation included legal issues, social skills and education.

Arts and music (31 books)

- Half of these books - mainly musical scores or art books - were borrowed for a hobby.
- Eight art books were borrowed for study purposes.
- There were three books on films and entertainment borrowed for pleasure.

Nature and animals (30 books)

- Eleven of the 30 books had been borrowed for a hobby, such as bird-watching, gardening, or keeping tropical fish.
- Practical motivations included training a dog, designing garden structures, and identifying mushrooms for eating.
- Other books included Diary of a country year (for pleasure), The encyclopaedia of the environment (for study), and When elephants weep: the emotional lives of animals (for personal learning).
Crafts and DIY (23 books)

- Not surprisingly, 16 of the crafts books had been borrowed for a hobby, and six for practical purposes. However one - on making pottery - was for a course of study.

Sport and games (20 books)

- Seventeen of the books had been for a hobby.

- The other three had been for pleasure, or for a practical reason (planning activities for a youth group).

Language and literature (13 books)

- This small category embraced a variety of reasons, including personal learning (two poetry books), and pleasure (humorous works).

- Books on foreign languages were borrowed for practical, hobby and study reasons.

The features analysed above have implications for stock management, and particularly stock selection, which has traditionally been dominated by subject coverage - chiefly because of the inescapable fact of the classification system. That there is another dimension to users’ searches for material, which stock management processes need to take into account, is clear. In some sections, the ‘classified’ subject category splits very obviously into more than one user approach. For instance in the geographical sections, there is demand for both travel writing (to read mainly for pleasure), and travel guides (for practical use in planning holidays), and the different reasons for borrowing these two types of material are usually implicit.

In other sections the various user approaches are less obvious, as examples from the survey demonstrate; a guide to the Peak District was required for a school project; a book on mushrooms was wanted to distinguish edible from non-edible fungi; a book on Bosnia was wanted by someone undertaking a relief mission to the country.

Another valuable perspective on these matters is provided by Ian Smith’s study of management information on non-fiction borrowing in Westminster Libraries (9). He makes the point forcefully that many of the most heavily used titles in the libraries were required for practical purposes, in contrast to the more theoretical titles which tend to predominate (in terms of numbers of titles, rather than issues) in public libraries.
Section 6 Use of books borrowed

Were borrowed books read?
Respondents were asked: *How much of this item did you read or use?* and prompted with eight options. The analysis in Fig 9 below omits eleven respondents who were borrowing on behalf of others.

Fig 9   Extent to which borrowed books had been read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all thoroughly</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nearly all</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all skimmed</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than half</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>images only</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than half</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of items: 389

The largest category was formed by the 113 books (29%) which had been read all through - and this also formed the largest category at all three of the individual library sites. Overall, 50% of the books had been ‘all’, ‘nearly all’ or ‘more than half’ read, and 50% fell into the other categories of less extensive use. Only one book had not been opened at all. A few had been used but not read - as with some study books skimmed through and photocopied in places.

It is accepted that this kind of question can lead to inaccurate responses, based on unclear recall or exaggeration. However in this case the interviewer asked respondents - in cases of doubt - to indicate the passages read (or unread), and it is likely that the responses given were reasonably accurate.

Table 5 (overleaf) links the extent to which books had been read with the reasons for borrowing. Only 12% of the 183 books borrowed for practical, study or job purposes had been thoroughly read, compared with 43% of the 157 books borrowed for pleasure or hobby purposes, and 47% of the 49 books borrowed for personal learning. Turning this around, we found that 68% of books for practical, study and work purposes had been less than half read, compared to 35% borrowed for pleasure and hobbies, and 32% for personal learning.

These findings were largely as might be expected. Much non-fiction was borrowed to shed light on specific matters, or to resolve specific problems, for which only part of the book borrowed was needed. The process was more akin to the use of books for reference purposes than to general reading. The responses to another question below - on the reasons why books were not read all through - bear this out. On the other hand books borrowed for pleasure were - as with the borrowing of fiction - more likely to be read all through. This was also true to an extent for books borrowed for ‘personal learning’.
Table 5  Extent to which borrowed books had been read, linked to reasons for borrowing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent to which item was read</th>
<th>% of users borrowing for practical/study/job who read to this extent</th>
<th>% of users borrowing for hobby/pleasure who read to this extent</th>
<th>% of users borrowing for personal learning who read to this extent</th>
<th>% of all users who read to this extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>less than 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few pages</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than half</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images only</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All - skimmed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than half</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly all</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All - thoroughly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>183</strong></td>
<td><strong>157</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>389</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Time spent reading books**

Respondents were also asked: *Please estimate the total time which you spent reading or using this item,* and prompted with eight options. Fig 10 depicts the replies.

**Fig 10  Time spent reading books**

In all three libraries, the two most common categories of time spent reading were ‘over 2 hours (and less than four)’ and ‘over four hours (and less than eight)’. Fifteen per cent of all books were used for ‘between 1 and 2 hours’ and a further 15% for ‘less than 1 hour’.

Fig 11 shows responses on the length of time spent reading the books, linked to the reasons for borrowing: 42% of books borrowed for practical, study and job purposes were used for ‘2 hours or less’, compared to 20% of books borrowed for all other reasons.

It is often suggested that the most meaningful measure of library ‘use’ is the time that the user spends with the book (or journal, terminal, etc). The approach is particularly helpful for measuring in-house use of materials. In this case, although many of the books were only partially read, a good deal of time was expended in reading them: an estimated 2,215 hours reading the 388 books. The average time spent per book was about five and three quarter hours. This average hides a wide variation and is based only on users’ recollections of the length of time spent studying the book. It would be interesting to compare these figures with an equivalent for fiction books.
Respondents who had not read or skimmed all of their borrowed books were asked: *If you did not read or use all of the item, please say why*. Table 6 summarises replies from 181 respondents. The respondents’ specific needs, and time factors, accounted for the great majority of replies. Five percent of responses concerned book content or style problems, examples of which were: out-of-date information; unhelpful presentation; lack of illustrations; and readers’ perceptions that the books were biased or unreliable.

Table 6  Reasons why books were not read all through

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance/ specific need</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style/ content</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information found elsewhere</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: 181

Use of books by others

Respondents were asked: *Did anyone else read or use the item at all whilst it was on loan?* and asked to specify who. Fig 12 depicts the responses. Ninety-one of the 400 books borrowed (23%) had been used by people in addition to the borrower - usually, just one other person. The ‘additional users’ were categorised as: family members, 87% of the total; friends, 10%; others, 3%.

It is useful to have information about this extra dimension of library use. It has always seemed possible that issue figures are a meaningless statistic, casting no light upon actual use. In practice we see that most of the books borrowed are used, and that use figures might well be inflated by 20% to take account of this secondary factor.
The 388 respondents who had used their borrowed books were asked: Have you recommended this item to anyone? (Please do not include people who have read the item whilst on loan.) A ‘yes’ response was recorded only when the book had already definitely been recommended to someone else. In all, 42 respondents (11%) said they had recommended the book to one or more other persons. ‘Friends’ were mentioned by 20 respondents, ‘family members’ by 14, and work colleagues by five.

**Level of borrowed books**

Respondents were asked: In terms of the level of this item, did you find it: a bit too simple/not detailed enough; about right; a bit too complicated/too much detail? Of the 388 respondents who answered, 332 (85%) said the level had been ‘about right’. Only 26 respondents (7%) had found their books too simple, and only 21 (5%) ‘too complicated’. The responses were encouraging on two levels: that material of the right level was available on the shelves, and that most users were successful in picking out books at a level which suited them. On the other hand, for many of the subject areas in categories such as ‘practical’ and ‘hobbies’, level was probably not a major preoccupation; and of course responses linked to actual books borrowed took no account of users who were unable to find material at the right level in the first place.
Section 7 Impact of borrowed books

In this part of the questionnaire, we attempted to discover what the impact of borrowing had been upon the user. Different sets of questions were asked of respondents, depending upon the ‘main or only’ reason for borrowing which had been given earlier (see page 9). The responses related to each ‘reason for borrowing’ are presented separately below.

Borrowing for pleasure
A total of 127 users mentioned ‘pleasure’ as a reason for borrowing, of whom 55 gave it as the main or only reason. The 51 borrowing for themselves (four were borrowing for other people) were asked: Which of the following was the main effect on you of reading or using this item? Cheered me up/made me laugh; depressed me/made me unhappy; bored me; interested me/made me think; scared/frightened me; relaxed/comforted me? There were also options for: other; had no effect; not sure.

**Getting it together**, the autobiography of John Harvey Jones, had been borrowed by a district judge, a man in the 55-64 age group. He had picked it out on a Wednesday afternoon, whilst browsing in the biography section of the library. He had spent 4-8 hours reading the whole book, and his wife had read it too. He had borrowed *Getting it together* once before but ‘didn’t get round to reading it’, and thought it unlikely that he would read it again. But he had read many other biographies from the library, and intended to read many more in future. The book had made him think, and he felt he would remember it in future. Harvey Jones had ‘had two careers, but was modest with it, unlike most such people’.

**Betjeman country**, by Frank Delaney, was borrowed by a man in the 35-54 age range, who worked full time as a security guard. It was the first book he had ever borrowed. He had actually come into the library looking for a different book on a different subject. He said he intended to borrow other biographies in future. He spent 4-8 hours reading ‘more than half’ of *Betjeman country* - which had interested him, though it was a bit too complicated. (‘Some parts were maybe memorable.’)

Respondents were also asked: Thinking about non-fiction items, which subjects do you most often borrow from public libraries for pleasure? Up to three subjects were recorded for each respondent. Table 7 (overleaf) shows the responses. Thirty-two of the 51 respondents (63%) mentioned biographies, and 14 of these did not borrow any non-fiction for pleasure other than biographies. Biography, history and travel were the three subjects with the most responses - comprising in all 78% of books borrowed for pleasure. This profile closely

Fig 13 depicts the responses. By far the most common, mentioned by 63% of respondents, was that the borrowed book had ‘interested’ them, or ‘made them think’. One user commented: *I read the lives of authors and theatre people - interesting individuals. Who knows - I might even learn something from them.*
matched the subjects of books which were actually returned in the survey.

Table 7 Non-fiction subjects usually borrowed for pleasure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject category</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, war &amp; transport</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography &amp; travel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport &amp; games</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; music</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature &amp; animals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social science &amp; religion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, health &amp; food</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language &amp; literature</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents often gave more than one subject category. Number of respondents: 51

Borrowing for hobbies
A total of 141 respondents were borrowing in connection with a hobby, of whom 106 said this was their main or only reason. They were asked: To which hobby does this item relate? The findings are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Hobbies of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hobby</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military history</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; crafts</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; games</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History &amp; transport</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home computing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous indoor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous outdoor</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: 106

Respondents were also asked: Which of the following statements best describes the level of your knowledge of or skill in this hobby at the time when this item was borrowed? and offered three prompted options:

- extensive/detailed knowledge of skill; some knowledge or skill; little or no knowledge or skill. Comment on the hobbies, together with the level of expertise mentioned, is made below.

- **Military history** was the ‘hobby’ most often mentioned, with the two World Wars accounting for 16 of the 21 references to it. Ten of the 21 respondents had an extensive knowledge of the subject, and all but one had some knowledge.

- Eight of the 19 **arts and crafts** books were about painting and drawing. None of the borrowers of these were beginners. Subjects borrowed by people with little or no knowledge of the topic were braiding, clock-making and woodworking.

- It is interesting to note that all 12 respondents borrowing books on **sports and games** were doing so for individual sports rather than team games - namely, mountaineering, squash, martial arts, flying aircraft (2), windsurfing (2), chess (2) and mah-jong. Even the two books about athletics were both about marathon running. The respondents with little or no knowledge of their sport were borrowing the books on windsurfing, mah-jong and the martial arts.

- The **music** hobbies mentioned were singing (2), piano-playing (4), the guitar (2) and the vibraphone, and listening to opera and classical music (3). All the respondents had some knowledge of their subjects.

- The **miscellaneous indoor activities** covered genealogy, conjuring, antiques and collectibles. The **miscellaneous outdoor activities** included fishing, bird-watching, meteorology and motorcycling. The two miscellaneous categories recorded a variety of levels of existing knowledge amongst respondents.
The pocket guide to wind-surfing was borrowed by a woman in the 25-34 age range, who worked as an estate agent. She had borrowed the title once before from the public library, but did not intend to borrow it again, nor other books on the subject. She had spent 2-4 hours reading ‘more than half’ of the book, which had also been read by her husband, son and daughter. She and her family had recently taken up the sport, and wanted this book to help develop their technique. They then went on holiday to ‘try it out in practice - and were all successful’. They did not buy a book on the subject because she ‘just wanted a basic introduction - the cost of purchasing would not be justified’.

A cross-over with the next reason for borrowing - ‘for practical purposes’ - is observable for many of the above. Whether borrowing a subject such as ‘motorcycling’ is seen as ‘hobby-related’ or ‘for practical purposes’ depends upon the precise reason for borrowing, and/or the way that the borrower views the subject. All the subjects listed here - with the possible exception of ‘meteorology’ - might generally be recognised as hobbies or interests. The popularity of ‘military history’ amongst men is well known, though the high level of interest reflected here is still surprising. The specialised nature of some of the interests mentioned - running a marathon, playing a vibraphone - point up the difficulty for public libraries in satisfying all their users.

Those borrowing for a hobby were asked: Has reading or using this item made any contribution to the development of your hobby? and prompted with five options. Responses under these headings are depicted in Fig 14. Of the 106 respondents, 23% said the borrowed book contributed a lot, and 58% that it made some contribution. On the other hand, 15% said there was not much contribution, and 2% none at all.

Respondents who said the book had made a contribution were asked: Please say what this item has most contributed to the development of your hobby, and given three main prompted options. Of these, ‘knowledge and understanding’ was mentioned by the most respondents (54, 64%). A further 16 (19%) said ‘ideas or inspiration’, and 14 (17%) ‘technique or skill’.

Claims to fame: the Lancaster had been borrowed late on a Friday afternoon by a man in the 35-54 age range. He was in full time employment in an RAF aircrew. He had gone into the library looking for this particular book, which he had borrowed three times before, and intended to borrow again (though when asked why he did not buy the book he marked the ‘one-off/limited use’ box). He had also recommended this title to a colleague. He had borrowed other books on the subject, and intended to do so again. He had spent more than 16 hours reading Claims to fame on this occasion. He described his borrowing of the book as being both for a hobby and for ‘a practical purpose’, because he used it for model aircraft making - to discover technical details of the aircraft and transfer them to his own models.

Fig 14 Contributions of books borrowed to hobbies

Number of respondents: 106
Section 7: Impact of borrowed books

Borrowing for practical reasons
More respondents indicated a practical reason for borrowing than they did any other reasons: a total of 183, of whom 116 thought it the main or only reason. Of these, 115 (one was borrowing for someone else) were asked: *Has reading this item given you useful information or instruction?* and prompted with four options. Responses to these are summarised in Fig 15. Thirty-seven per cent of respondents said they had found ‘a lot’ of useful information (a higher proportion than for any other reason for borrowing), and 51% ‘some’. Only very small numbers of respondents had been disappointed by their choice - 4% finding ‘not much’ useful information, and 3% ‘none’.

Fig 15  Usefulness of practical books borrowed
![Usefulness of practical books borrowed](image)

Respondents who reported that their book had been useful were further asked: *In which of the following ways has this item been most helpful to you?* and prompted with five options plus an ‘other’ category. Their replies are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9  Ways in which practical books borrowed were used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Way book was used</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event or holiday</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical task</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision or choice</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal project</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life issue</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: 102

*Having a baby* was borrowed by a woman in the 25-34 group, who was on long term sick leave with pregnancy complications. She had spent between 1-2 hours reading ‘less than half’ of the book - the parts which led up to the birth, but not afterwards. The book had also been read by her boyfriend. She had not borrowed this title from the library before, and was ‘not sure’ whether she would borrow it again. But she had borrowed other books on the subject before and intended to do so again. She had not bought *Having a baby* because of the cost, and because it would only be useful for a limited time-span. Asked whether the book had given any useful information, she marked the ‘yes, some’ box.

Further comment about the ways in which books were of practical use is given below:

- Of the 29 books borrowed for an *event or holiday*, 26 (90%) were travel guides - six about parts of the UK, 13 other parts of Europe, and seven places in other continents. Other examples were two books used to plan weddings, and one map. The map user explained: *I run a WEA class, and I arranged a local history trip - visiting churches - and needed a detailed map to direct the coach driver.*
• The practical tasks mentioned were extremely varied. Twelve of the 18 respondents were borrowing for household tasks such as plastering, stencilling, making garden furniture, pruning shrubs, learning to cook, and training pets. Non-household tasks ranged over such diverse subjects as taking the driving theory test, leading public worship in a church, and making a greetings card.

• The 17 books borrowed in connection with decisions or choices covered decisions on purchasing items such as cars, computers and boats (seven respondents), career choices and business (4), choosing names for children, and whether to become a vegetarian.

• The personal projects mentioned by 17 respondents reflected a wide range of concerns. Personal physical fitness, and the development of personal skills (counselling, teaching or writing) accounted for seven of these. Planning home and garden reorganisation was mentioned by four people. Others were researching on behalf of groups: tracing the families of service personnel for the Royal Air Force Association; researching population changes through time in a Leicestershire village for a local history society; and checking for the authenticity of period costumes for a local drama group.

• The nine respondents facing life issues included those who had borrowed books on pregnancy (2), cystitis, sleep problems, dreams, and hormones. A respondent returning a book on arthritis said I’ve just been diagnosed, and want to adapt my life-style.

• In the other category of practical purposes were included: identifying mushrooms safe to eat; learning English (2); making job applications (2); giving advice to friends (2); and researching possible sporting activities for a youth club.

This category of ‘practical purpose’ was the one most commonly mentioned by respondents, and the one where the material borrowed had had the biggest impact. An overlap with the ‘hobbies’ reason may be observed for some of the specific examples, but many of the subjects mentioned here are in a different category of ‘life skills’ - buying a car, passing a driving test, cooking, applying for a job, taking measures to stay in good health, and so on.

Teach yourself letter writing was borrowed by a Chinese man, a full-time student in the 25-34 age range, at 5.30 pm on a Thursday. He had not borrowed books on the subject before, but expected to borrow others in future. He had read about a quarter of the book - ‘the interesting parts only’ - and spent between 1-2 hours on it. Prior to borrowing, he had had little knowledge of the subject, and found that the book helped him a lot. (It was ‘old-fashioned, but good for me’.)

The high success rate for borrowing in this category has already been mentioned. In many ways this is the unsung aspect of public library provision, but its prominence amongst library users was noted in Ian Smith’s study of non-fiction issues (9), where he found that the most popular books in any subject area (represented by Dewey classification numbers) were practical in type - for instance, the most popular books in the literature section were those on ‘how to write reports’.

Borrowing books for a job
This was by far the smallest category of motivations for borrowing, with only 38 respondents in any way relating borrowing to their current employment, and only 20 of these considering it to be their main or only reason for borrowing. The small size of this sample means that only tentative conclusions can be drawn from the findings.
Respondents were asked: In relation to which job/career did you borrow this item? Responses, classified according to the Standard Occupational Classification, supplied by Employment Services, are depicted in Table 10.

**Table 10 Occupations of those borrowing for a work-related reason**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/cashiers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care assistants/attendants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors/journalists</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers/engineers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians/electricians</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six respondents worked as social workers or care assistants, and four were in clerical work. There were two writers, and two people in management. Only three worked in technical or scientific areas - two of whom were engaged in university research.

Examples of borrowing for work purposes were:

- a travel agency clerk finding background information on holiday destinations
- a psychiatric care assistant researching communication skills, to enhance work with the family and friends of patients
- a respondent who had recently started work in a bank, and wanted to appear enthusiastic by reading up on banking examinations
- a design engineer who felt he needed to learn computing skills, to avoid being left behind by technological developments.

The respondents were asked: Has reading the item had an effect on your job/career? Of the small sample, 56% said there had been some effect upon their job, 28% reported little effect, and 17% did not give an answer.

 Asked what sort of effect the book had had, five of the ten respondents said it had helped with a one-off task, five that it had increased enthusiasm for work, four that it had led to improved performance, and three that it had contributed to prospects of promotion.

The low use of public libraries for work-related enquiries was also referred to in the *Aslib Review of the public library service in England and Wales* (4). One reason for it is no doubt the provision of learning support materials in the workplace. A 1999 Library Association review of workplace learning schemes (10) found that most of the large companies do encourage personal development schemes amongst employees - whether directly job-related or not - and that information support is usually provided for these schemes, by the organisation’s library or by learning centres developed for this purpose. Nevertheless it is surprising that there is not more public library demand for work-related learning materials from...
employees of smaller organisations. This may represent a marketing opportunity.

**Borrowing for study purposes**

A total of 58 respondents gave ‘study’ as a reason for borrowing, 53 of whom considered it to be the main or only reason. Four of these were borrowing for other people. The remaining 49 - all taking part in a formal course of study - were asked where they were studying. The responses are depicted in Fig 16.

**Fig 16  Respondents’ place of study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Study</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE college</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE college/university</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 49 people borrowing for study purposes, 20 (41%) were in higher education. Six of these were borrowing from the public library whilst at home on vacation, and 14 were studying at institutions close to one of the survey libraries. A further 14 respondents (29%) were students at further education colleges, and ten (20%) school pupils - of whom four were in sixth forms. The types of study represented by ‘other’ responses were: a correspondence course; two local community colleges; a local community centre; and an open learning course carried out through the library in Grantham (where the survey was being done).

Respondents were asked whether their course was full time or part time (divided into ‘three or more hours per week’ and ‘less than three hours per week’). Almost three-quarters (36 respondents) were full time students. Nine (18%) were studying part time, although only one of these attended a course of three or more hours per week. The remaining four respondents were engaged in open or distance learning courses.

Of the 49 respondents, 41 (84%) were working towards a qualification. Four of the remaining eight were pre-GCSE school pupils, three involved in local part-time daytime or evening courses, and one on an art therapy course. The range and number of qualifications mentioned is shown in Table 11.

**Table 11  Qualifications for which respondents were working**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-level</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTEC/ GNVQ</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ/ City &amp; Guilds/ RSA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 19 higher education students, eight were studying for art and design (mostly related to art schools in both Loughborough and Lincoln), four for business, and three mathematics/science degrees. Other subjects were psychology, American studies, music and drama, and religious studies.
The study subjects borrowed by school pupils were science, geography, art, child development, sociology, psychology and history.

Amongst the 14 college students, three were studying computing/IT, and three beauty or holistic therapies. Other subjects mentioned were mathematics, science, building studies, media studies, philosophy, history, graphic design, and childhood studies.

The remaining students were taking courses in Spanish, business studies, counselling, local history, and sports psychology.

All 49 respondents borrowing for study purposes were asked: How, if at all, has this item most contributed to your studies?, and prompted with three options and a ‘no contribution’ option. The findings against these options are shown in Fig 17.

![Fig 17](image)

Number of respondents: 49

Nearly two thirds of the books had been borrowed as background reading, and a third had contributed to assignments and examination preparation. The college and higher education students tended to use the books for background reading - although five of the higher education students had borrowed for examination or assignment purposes. School pupils tended to borrow for the more specific purposes. Only two respondents (4%) felt the books had made no contribution to their studies.

The improbably titled ISO 9000/BS 5750 made easy - an economics/management text - was borrowed by a Greek male student in the 25-34 age range, studying full-time for an MBA. He estimated that he had spent 4-8 hours studying the book, and had read nearly all of it. It had also been used by a friend of his doing a similar qualification. The respondent was not sure whether he would borrow this item again, but he had recommended it to three other students. He intended to borrow more books on the same subject from the public library. When asked ‘Why the public library?’, he commented on the ‘lack of a real library’ at his university - where there were ‘not plenty of books’. He had used the title to help prepare for an essay of 20,000 words.

Respondents were asked whether - as far as they knew - there was a library at their place of study. Of the 49 respondents, 40 (82%) confirmed that there was a library, including all the school pupils and students from full time FE courses and higher education courses (except those from the Open University). Eight respondents - all part time or distance learning students - were not sure: they said that they had never found a library at their place of study, or that it was not available while they were in attendance. Only one student - attending a class at a community centre - was sure that no library existed there.

The 40 students from institutions which did have a library were asked: Have you used the public library on this occasion for any of the following reasons? and offered six prompted options plus an ‘other’ category. Table 12 shows the responses to these options.
Section 7: Impact of borrowed books

Table 12 Reasons for borrowing study books from public libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenient location</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider range of stock</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items more likely to be available</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer loan period</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better atmosphere</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents gave more than one reason
Number of respondents: 40

The two reasons mentioned most often (by 16 respondents each) were *convenient location* (by further and higher education students, but not by school pupils) and *wider range of stock* (including by eight of the ten school pupils in the survey).

There were various other reasons mentioned, some of these essentially justifying non-use of the study-place library, rather than use of the public library - eg the study-place library was shut when they needed it, they had left it too late to get hold of the few items available, or there were no suitable books available there. There were also some positive reasons given for using the public library: Lincoln had a better reference library; Grantham allowed users to borrow more items at one time; Loughborough had more up-to-date books, and had compact discs as well as books to borrow. A student of industrial design said: *I have a look in all possible sources: the university library has all the set texts, but I like to try here for something different.*

Respondents were also asked: *Was this item mentioned by your tutor/teacher, either in person and/or on a reading list?* Forty-three users (88%) said the book had not been recommended, while the other six (12%) had had the book recommended personally or on a reading list.

Comprehensive business studies was borrowed on a Wednesday lunch-time by a woman in the 25-34 age range. She worked full time as an accounts clerk. This was the first time she had borrowed a book on this subject, and she expected to borrow on the subject again, including this particular book - even though it was ‘not up to date’. She was studying for a GCSE in business studies, through an open learning course held at the same library where the book was borrowed. She had spent 1-2 hours reading ‘less than half’ of the book. It was also read by her step-son.

It is difficult to summarise this section on borrowing for study purposes. Fourteen per cent of the 388 respondents gave a formal course of study as their reason for using the public library, not including children under 14. This is a relatively small but important minority of total users. Though some used the public library for reasons of convenience - including higher education students on holiday - a majority found the services a valuable supplement to those of their institutional library. Where there is no institutional library (as with users taking correspondence courses) the public library has an obvious responsibility to provide material, but the other types of educational support pose tricky questions as to what type of provision is appropriate - and this is complicated by the wide range of different courses cited.

No one answer can be given to the question, and it is probably best to consider separately each type of demand - each subject area, and each level of subject - and decide what is possible. Some of the course subjects mentioned were unlikely to provide public librarians with a problem of provision: for instance, courses on Spanish, counselling, and local history. Others would certainly have caused difficulties: for instance, mathematics, building studies, and graphic design. A recent study of the impact of a new university in Lincoln upon public library use (8) showed that a majority of the undergraduates did use their public library, and that their main requirement was for...
supplementary material rather than items from core reading lists. This perhaps points the way for public librarians to aim at a useful secondary service, rather than to try and make up for any deficiencies in the libraries of educational institutions.

Borrowing for personal learning
This category was related to borrowers’ desire to learn for their own personal benefit and development - rather than for work or formal study purposes. A total of 135 respondents cited personal learning as a reason for borrowing, though it was the main or only reason for 50 of them (one of whom was borrowing for someone else).

The 49 respondents were asked: Has reading this item contributed to your personal development or learning? and offered four prompted options. Responses to these are depicted in Fig 18. Twenty per cent of the 49 respondents said the book had contributed ‘a lot’, and 65% said it had made ‘some contribution’. Only 4% said ‘not much contribution’ and 2% ‘no contribution at all’.

Fig 18 Contribution of borrowed books to personal learning

Where the book had made a contribution, respondents were asked to say, in an open-ended question, the nature of the contribution. Thirty of the 42 respondents who commented answered in terms of facts learned or knowledge gained. Many of these had borrowed books on science and technology, history and religion. Seven specifically said that they felt their knowledge of the subject - for instance, quantum theory - was lacking. Three were keeping up to date with technical subjects connected to previous employment or studies. One commented: I’ve no intention of going to sleep.

Twelve of the respondents answered this question in terms of the increased insight gained in their own life, or of society in general - in addition to purely factual information. Comments were:

- It has made me think about the way I live my life - not just having an individual focus on myself.
- I am a socialist and I wanted to work out whether we currently have a socialist government.
- This is really for general knowledge, because I’m now living in a rural area, and I didn’t want to remain ignorant of farming.
- It opened my eyes on religious and political attitudes. Nothing today is new (book on the thirty years’ war).

Several of these comments cast light on the importance of public libraries for personal learning:

- I was in foster care, and dossed around at school. Now I’m doing GCSEs in science subject, and hoping to do psychology and sociology next year (student, returning psychology book).
- I read Nature regularly from the library. They cost £5 a time, so they’re too expensive for a personal copy (student, returning a journal).
The personal learning function was perhaps the most difficult to define with any certainty, and to some extent overlapped with other reasons given for borrowing. For instance, in some cases those giving this reason had borrowed material which could equally have been borrowed by people on a formal course of study. Nevertheless, it is reasonably clear what is meant by ‘personal development’ – in fact, this is the motivation which dominated the setting up of the nineteenth century Mechanics Institutes - the antecedents of the public library movement. We may argue that at the beginning of the twentieth century, with greater equality of opportunity - educational and social - entrenched in British society, this reason for using public libraries has taken a back seat to others explored in this survey. Yet some of the comments reported above reveal that it remains - for the drop-outs and missed-outs, for those who cannot afford to buy their own materials, and as a form of intellectual cement underpinning a thinking, democratic society. The current stress from the UK government on life-long learning is likely to increase demand for material of this kind.

Scotland: a concise history was borrowed by a woman in the 35-54 age range - a full-time farm secretary. She had borrowed on the same subject before, and intended to do so again. She had read less than half the book, and was renewing it on this visit. She said she had little knowledge of Scottish history, and found the book of ‘some help’ in developing her knowledge. She commented: ‘I didn’t do A-levels at school. I use the library to learn and catch up, without doing anything as serious as going to a course’.
Section 8 Non-fiction borrowing and advocacy of public libraries

In the last decade, public libraries have increasingly been affected by the emphasis upon benchmarking in all publicly funded sectors. As part of this, we have seen more measurement and comparison of library performance, represented by outputs such as issues and enquiries. But mere output measurement has not been enough, and in the past few years in particular there has been stress on measuring the impact of services - the impact on individuals, and the impact on institutions and on society at large. Public libraries have adopted a more corporate approach, seeking to show that the benefits deriving from their services support the work of other local government departments. Demonstrating effectiveness in these terms is becoming necessary to secure continued funding.

The provision of recreational materials - especially fiction - is a very well established public library service. But there has always been a healthy discussion as to the relative importance of the library’s information function vis a vis recreational. One problem is that in the key information services of reference and enquiry work and non-fiction lending, impact is particularly hard to demonstrate. This current survey was undertaken principally to throw light upon the impact of non-fiction lending.

What this survey cannot do is demonstrate the effectiveness of public libraries in providing non-fiction needed by users. It is based upon non-fiction books being returned to the library, so the sample of non-fiction on which the survey is based only reflects the success stories, and not users’ failures at the shelf. For the latter, we must look at ‘needs fill’ questions in a different kind of user survey - of which the CIPFA PLUS survey is a good example (3). There remains a need for more sophisticated techniques in this area, and we cannot necessarily feel confident that users’ needs are fully addressed at present.

The current survey does have some good stories to tell. Not least amongst these is the finding that nearly all of the 388 books borrowed were actually used, to some extent or other. In other words, the issues statistics for non-fiction tell a reasonably accurate story. In fact, since some 20% of the books borrowed were also used by someone other than the borrower, the statistics somewhat understate the position.

Only 29% of the books were read in their entirety by their borrowers, but in many cases the ‘reasons for borrowing’ did not require all-through reading. The considerable length of time spent on using the books borrowed - an average of five and three quarter hours per book, taking all users’ estimates into account - is in itself a comment upon impact.

However the specific questions about whether the books borrowed provided useful information reveal that there is no room for complacency. Table 13 depicts responses for the three largest groups of reading ‘motivations’; practical purpose, hobbies, and personal learning. Overall, 29% of users said they got ‘a lot’ from their book, but many more - 57% - replied that they had obtained ‘some’ useful information. Relatively few loan transactions were complete failures: 9% overall obtained ‘not much’ information, and only 2% ‘none’.
When we look at the detailed reasons that users gave for borrowing books, a picture of great variety and complexity emerges. Fourteen per cent of the 388 users had borrowed ‘for pleasure’, sometimes in much the same way as users would borrow fiction books. The remainder had all borrowed for some more specific purpose. The largest category (29%) had borrowed for some ‘practical’ purpose, some connected with enjoying life more fully, but many more supporting essential life skills and decision-making, in key areas such as health. The second-largest category (27%) was connected with a very wide range of users’ hobbies and interests. A third category (13%) was related to formal courses of education, from a wide range of different institutions, and a fourth (13%) with personal development and learning unrelated to formal courses. A fifth category, job-related borrowing, was very small, with only 5% borrowing for this reason.

It seems clear that, taken overall, the library function of lending non-fiction makes a contribution at many levels to people’s individual development: to their education, their sense of self-fulfilment, their enjoyment of recreational time – and, to a much lesser extent, to their work. It allows those who have fallen out of the formal educational system to pick up lost ground. It provides a support system for the complex process of decision-making necessary throughout people’s personal lives. It adds value to activities undertaken as recreation and in retirement. It provides materials for those who cannot afford to buy them.

These themes have recently been outlined by the new Reading Partnership Agency (11), which promotes public libraries under ‘national impact’ headings such as the quality of life, building a creative nation, and citizenship and social inclusion, and under a range of headings related to impact upon the individual. As the library enhances personal goals, it also contributes to social needs. It is one of the key sources of information - others are the radio, television, and newspapers - discriminating use of which tends to turn out individuals prepared to participate in a functioning democracy. In the corporate sense, this kind of evidence can convince other local government departments - notably education and the social services - of the value of public library services to their objectives. There is much evidence in the current survey to support the view that the library plays a major role in these respects.
Section 9 Non-fiction borrowing and stock management

It is encouraging to note that non-fiction lending makes a substantial impact upon the lives of library users, but the degree of impact is always open to improvement. We need to explore whether the current systems of stock management employed make the best of the limited funding available. Some useful pointers were thrown up by the current survey.

Overwhelmingly, users’ approach to choosing non-fiction is by subject. Seventy-one per cent of the respondents had gone into their library intending to choose a book on that particular subject, and a further 12% had wanted the particular book that they chose. In other words, most users do not approach the non-fiction section wanting ‘something to read’, or something by a particular author. This is a big difference from the approach of users in the fiction section.

There are several implications, of which the most important is that libraries should aim to achieve subject coverage on the shelf of the areas constantly in demand. Clearly this can only be a matter of degree since - as the survey shows - users want a very large number of subjects, some of them highly specialised. Identifying the subject areas where demand is most concentrated can be done through user surveys, analysis of issue records from the management information system, and above all by checking on the library shelves whether or not material is regularly available. Filling gaps on shelves is a matter for stock revision - that is, identifying the ‘best’ material available on the subject (not necessarily the most recently published), and acquiring it by purchase or other means.

The heavy concentration upon searching by subject also suggests that non-fiction stock should always be arranged by subject, and not - as sometimes occurs - on random selection racks of paperbacks.

The very wide range of specialised subject areas sought by users makes it difficult for any one library, especially a small one, to provide material from stock. It is therefore important that the full range of titles available within the whole authority are publicised at every service point.

One feature highlighted strongly by the survey was users’ tendency to borrow repeatedly from the same subject area. This was expected, but the degree of repeated borrowing was surprising. In all, 91% of respondents said that they intended to borrow again from the same subject area. Even at the larger service points, repeated borrowing by one user will soon exhaust the possibilities for finding untried stock. The obvious implication for stock managers is the need for regular circulation (or rotation) of stock between service points in the same authority.

The subject approach to information in libraries is obviously crucial, but there is another dimension to non-fiction borrowing - as evidenced by the six ‘reasons for borrowing’ explored in this survey. In many instances, the users’ reasons for wanting a book can be just as important as the subject areas sought. These ‘reasons’ bring into play another set of references for librarians selecting and managing stock, and they need to be kept in mind along with the need for subject coverage. An obvious example relates to educational institutions in the vicinity of public library service points - the types of courses taught there, and the types of resulting demand likely to make themselves felt at the public library.

Perhaps the most important of these extra dimensions is the demand for material required for a practical purpose. This was the most common reason for borrowing identified in the survey - by 29% of respondents specifically, and additionally by quite a number of those borrowing for
‘hobbies’. Ian Smith’s study of issue records at one authority (9) demonstrates that the greatest demand is for books of a practical nature, and that in some key subject areas (notably computers) this is not satisfied.

The need for larger holdings of ‘practical’ books brings problems of its own, since most of this material is not reviewed in the national press. Librarians need to find better ways of evaluating it, to aid the stock selection process.

Perhaps one implication of all these factors is that the old mantra – the need for ‘a balanced stock’ - is no longer valid, if it ever was. On the shelves of any one medium or large-sized service point librarians may need to attempt a minimum subject coverage, to give an indication of the range of materials available in the authority as a whole. But once this is done, the bulk of resources may have to be concentrated, to a much greater extent than has been the case, on subject areas in demand. Within and around this subject approach, the ‘extra dimension’ represented by users’ motivations for borrowing should also play an important part.
References


Appendix A Library sites

Lincoln is a cathedral city of over 75,000 people. The central library, completely redeveloped and refurbished five years ago, is close to the main shopping centre, and also the new university (built within the last three years) and the long-established school of art and design. There are numerous schools and colleges, together with the headquarters of both the Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincoln City Council. Total annual issues from the library are 543,000.

Grantham is a large market town of over 30,000 people in the west of Lincolnshire, serving a wide, very rural hinterland. The purpose-built library is part of the Isaac Newton shopping centre, adjoining the car park. The education system is selective, rather than comprehensive, so there are both grammar and secondary modern schools in the town, as well as a college of further education. In the Lincoln and Grantham areas are a number of Royal Air Force establishments, including the officer training school at Cranwell. Loans of adult items are in excess of 274,000 per annum.

Loughborough is a university town, with a wide range of ethnic groups, and varied industries, such as engineering and chemicals. The library is close to the town centre shopping area, and about a mile from the university campus. Total annual issues from the library are almost 385,000. There are numerous schools and a college of further education. The university has recently incorporated a local college of art and design.
Appendix B  Survey questionnaire

PLACE  DATE
TITLE   TIME
CATEGORY NO OF PAGES
YEAR OF PUB.

PART A - GENERAL QUESTIONS

1a How much of this item did you read or use?
   All - thoroughly ....
   All - skimmed ....
   Nearly all ....
   More than half ....
   Less than half ....
   Only a few pages ....
   Images/maps ....
   None ....

If you did not read or use all of the item, please say why
............................................................................

1b Please estimate the total time which you spent reading or using this item:
   Estimated time
   No time at all ....
   Less than half an hour ....
   Half-hour - 1 hour ....
   More than 1 hour ....
   More than 2 hours ....
   More than 4 hours ....
   More than 8 hours ....
   More than 16 hours .... (please specify if possible) ......hours

2 Did anyone else read or use the item at all whilst it was on loan?
   YES ....
   NO ....
   NOT SURE ....

   If yes, please specify: Family member(s) .... .................
                        Friend ....
                        Other ....

3 Have you ever borrowed this item from any public library before?
   YES, MORE THAN ONCE ....
   YES, ONCE ....
   NO ....
   NOT SURE ....

4 Have you ever borrowed other items on this subject before from this library?
   YES ....
   NO ....
   NOT SURE ....
Please think back to the day when you came to the library and borrowed this item. Which of the following statements best describes you as you came into the library on that day:

I wanted **this item specifically** ....
I wanted an item/items **by this author** ....
I wanted an item/items **on this subject** ....
I came for an item on a different subject/by a different author ....
I wanted an item, but I had **no subject or author in mind** ....
**I did not come for any item** ....
**I cannot remember** what I wanted ....
Other (please specify) ........................................... ....

Did you borrow this item from the library, rather than buying a copy, for any of the following reasons?

Expensive to buy ....
Out of print/hard to obtain ....
Limited/one-off use ....
Not sure it would be useful/relevant ....
Other (please specify) .............. ....
No answer ....

Which of the following were **reasons for borrowing** this item? (Please indicate most important reason if more than once answer is given).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education/course</strong></td>
<td>B4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hobby</strong></td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information/practical/instruction</strong></td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job</strong></td>
<td>B6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal growth/personal learning</strong></td>
<td>B5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pleasure</strong></td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(If item was read/used (Q.1 above), go to B section if indicated, or continue with Q.8; if item was not read/used, go to Q.10 below).

In terms of the level of this item, did you find it

- **a bit too simple**/not detailed enough ....
- **about right** ....
- **a bit too complicated**/too much detail ....
9 Have you recommended this item to anyone?
(Please do not include people who have read or used the item whilst on loan).

YES .... NO .... NOT SURE ....

If yes, please give details:
Any member of family .... ......................................
Work colleague .... ......................................
Friend .... ......................................
Other .... ......................................

10 Do you personally expect to borrow this item again from a public library?

YES .... NO .... NOT SURE ....

11 Do you expect to borrow other items on this subject again from this library?

YES .... NO .... NOT SURE ....
If no, please say why ..........................................................

12 Please could you tell me which of the following applies to you?
(Please tick, and delete, as appropriate).

I work full-time/part-time .... Please state occupation ......................................
I study full-time/part-time .... ......................................
I am retired .... ......................................
I am unemployed .... ......................................
Other .... Please specify ......................................

13 Please could you tell me to which of these age groups you belong?

Under 15 ....
15-24 ....
25-34 ....
35-54 ....
55-64 ....
65+ ....

14 Please identify your ethnic origin from the list below:

BANGLADESH ....
BLACK-AFRICAN ....
BLACK-CARIBBEAN ....
BLACK-OTHER ....
CHINESE ....
INDIAN ....
PAKISTANI ....
WHITE ....
OTHER ....

Male / Female
PART B1 - HOBBY SECTION

1 To which hobby does this item relate?

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2 Which of the following statements best describes the level of your knowledge of or skill in this hobby at the time when this item was borrowed?

  Extensive/ detailed knowledge/ skill ....
  Some knowledge/ skill ....
  Little or no knowledge/ skill ....

3 Has reading or using this item made any contribution to the development of your hobby?

  YES, A LOT ....
  YES, SOME ....
  NO, NOT MUCH ....
  NO, NOT AT ALL ....
  NO ANSWER ....

If yes, please say what this item has most contributed to the development of your hobby:

  Knowledge/ understanding ....
  Ideas/ inspiration ....
  Technique/ skill ....
  (including musical practice or performance)
  Other ....

Please give details, if appropriate:

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

RETURN TO PART A - QUESTION 8
PART B2 - PLEASURE SECTION

1 Which of the following was the main effect on you of reading or using this item?

Cheered me up/ made me laugh ....
Depressed me/ made me unhappy ....

Bored me ....
Interested me/ made me think ....

Scared/ frightened me ....
Relaxed/ comforted me ....

Other (please specify) ....
Had no effect ....
Not sure ....

2 Is this an item that you think will “stay with you” for a long time or a book which you will remember reading?

YES ....
NO ....

If yes, please say what you will remember about it:

..................................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

3 Thinking about non-fiction items, which subjects do you most often borrow for pleasure only, from public libraries?

(please give up to 3 categories)

..................................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

RETURN TO PART A - QUESTION 8
PART B3 – INFORMATION/PRACTICAL/INSTRUCTION

1. To which topic does this item relate?

............................................................................................................................................

2. Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of this topic, at the time of borrowing this item?

   Extensive/ detailed knowledge  ....
   Some knowledge               ....
   Little or no knowledge        ....
   Not applicable                ....

3. Has reading or using this item given you useful information or instruction?

   YES, A LOT                     ....
   YES, SOME                     ....
   NO, NOT MUCH                  ....
   NO, NOT AT ALL                ....
   NO ANSWER                    ....

   If yes, in which of the following ways has this item been most helpful to you?

   Carrying out a practical task  ....
   Planning an event or holiday   ....
   Making a decision or choice   ....
   Facing a personal life issue  ....
   Working on a personal project or activity ....
   Other                         ....

   Please give details, if appropriate:

............................................................................................................................................

RETURN TO PART A - QUESTION 8
PART B4 - EDUCATION SECTION

1. Are you on a course of study?
   YES .... NO ....
   (if no, answer section B5)

2. Is this course:
   Full-time ....
   Part-time (3 or more hours per week) ....
   Part-time (less than 3 hours per week) ....
   Other (please specify) ....

3. Are you working towards a qualification? YES .... NO ....

   If yes, what is the qualification?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …

4. Where are you studying?
   Location
   School .... ......................................
   College of further education .... ............................
   University or higher education .... ..........................
   Other .... ..........................................

5. Is there a library there, as far as you know?
   YES .... NO .... NOT SURE ....

   If yes, have you used the public library on this occasion for any of the following reasons?
   (please mark all that apply)
   - More convenient for home/ workplace ....
   - Books are more likely to be available ....
   - Wider range of book stock available ....
   - Longer loan period ....
   - Better atmosphere/ building ....
   - Other reason (please specify) ..................................................
   - No answer ....

6. How, if at all, has this item most contributed to your studies?
   - Preparing assessed coursework or for an exam ....
   - Producing an essay/ report or similar assignment ....
   - Background reading/ introduction to subject ....
   - No contribution ....

7. Was this item mentioned by your tutor/teacher either in person and/ or on a reading list?
   YES, IN PERSON ....
   YES, ON READING LIST ....
   NO ....

RETURN TO PART A - QUESTION 8
PART B5 - PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

1 Which main subject or topic did you borrow this item to find out about?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
……

2 Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of this topic, at the time of borrowing this item?

   Extensive/ detailed knowledge ....
   Some knowledge ....
   Little or no knowledge ....

3 Has reading or using this item contributed to your personal development or learning?

   YES, A LOT ....
   YES, SOME ....
   NO, NOT MUCH ....
   NO, NOT AT ALL ....
   NO ANSWER ....

If yes, please say how this item has contributed to your personal development or learning:

…………………………………………………………………………………………
……
…………………………………………………………………………………………
……

RETURN TO PART A – QUESTION 8
PART B6 - JOB SECTION

1. In relation to which job/career did you borrow this item?

........................................................................................................................................

2. What kind of information were you looking for from this item?

   Factual/technical knowledge ....
   Working with colleagues/managing ....
   Background information ....
   Other (please specify) ....

........................................................................................................................................

3. Has reading or using the item had an effect on your job/career?

   YES, A LOT ....
   YES, SOME ....
   NO, NOT MUCH ....
   NO, NOT AT ALL ....
   NO ANSWER ....

If yes, what have been the effects of this item on your job/career?
(please mark all that apply)

   Improved general work performance ....
   Help with a specific/ one-off activity or task ....
   Increased prospects of advancement/promotion ....
   Raised levels of interest/enthusiasm ....
   Other (please specify) ....

........................................................................................................................................

Please give details, if possible

........................................................................................................................................

RETURN TO PART A - QUESTION 8
Appendix C  Public Lending Right categories

Full listing of subject categories

Science and technology
110 Science
112 Medicine
113 Technology
115 Computing

History, war, and transport
117 Transport
119 War and military history
120 History
122 Local interest
124 Names and customs

Geography and travel
126 Geography
128 Travel

Social science and religion
130 Social sciences
132 Politics and law
133 Management and economics
134 Education
136 Crime and espionage
138 Philosophy and religion
139 The Occult (Supernatural)

Sport and games
150 Sport
152 Indoor games

Family, health and food
160 Family and health
162 Food and drink

Crafts and D-I-Y
166 Crafts
168 Do-it-yourself

Arts and music
170 Visual arts
174 Music
176 Entertainment

Biography
180 Biography
182 Royal Family

Language and literature
186 Humour
190 Language and literature
191 Plays
192 Poetry
500 Foreign language
510 German
520 Welsh
100 Miscellaneous

Nature and animals
140 Nature and country life
144 Gardening
146 Animals and pets