

Embargoed until 12.01am Monday, 3rd August

What our MPs will be reading this summer

Waterstone's announces the results of the annual MPs Summer Reading Survey

Battered by months of revelations and scandals and dealing with the effects of the credit crunch, our nation's MPs are looking to learn a foreign language or disappear altogether as they choose their reading material for the Summer recess.

Several Labour MPs could be accused of preparing for a lot of time off to come, with one member reading up on *Colloquial Spanish*, and others reading *Teach Yourself Polish* and *Teach Yourself Italian*. One is deciding to drop off the map altogether, choosing to read Nick Rosen's *How to Live Off-grid*.

However, some MPs do look like they are planning to be around to help sort out the economic crisis, and are reading up on the state we are in. Titles helping our elected representatives understand how the economic crisis began, how it might develop and how they might make the most of their wages include: *The Storm* by (Lib Dem MP) Vince Cable, *False Economy: A Surprising Economic History of the World* by Allan Beattie, *Nudge: Improving Decisions and Health, Wealth and Happiness*, *The Ascent of Money* by Niall Ferguson, *The Black Swan* by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, and *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell.

The book that will be bulking up most MPs luggage this summer though will be one by one of their own – Chris Mullin. *A View from the Foothills* is the long-serving Labour MP for Sunderland's memoir of his time as both a backbencher and as a member of the Government. The book offers probably the most illuminating portrait yet of the New Labour movement. Long regarded as an honest, independently minded MP, it should be noted that Mullin is no stranger to book charts: his 1982 novel *A Very British Coup* is highly regarded and was made into a hugely acclaimed TV series in the late 1980s. *A View From the Foothills* is the most picked book overall, by both Labour and Conservative politicians.

Second choice amongst MPs again saw consensus from government and opposition, with Antony Beevor's masterful *D-Day: The Battle for Normandy* weighing down MPs suitcases this summer.

Third place goes to the top novel for MPs this year; Steig Larsson's *The Girl Who Played With Fire*, while Hilary Mantel's Booker longlisted *Wolf Hall* – a novel of political intrigue in the court of Henry VIII – is the MPs' fourth choice.

None of the titles bought by MPs from Waterstone's and revealed to have been claimed back on expenses were mentioned, such as *The Rebels: How Blair Misled His Majority*, *Bring Home the Revolution: The Case for a British Republic* or *Economics Explained*. Neither does anyone mention the recently published *Little Book of Big Expenses: How to Live the MP Lifestyle*, which

comes with a form to claim it back and is being promoted by Waterstone's and publisher A&C Black with a competition to win a duckhouse.

Other books chosen by MPs this year include biographies of Abraham Lincoln, Harold Larwood, Gandhi and Dawn French, crime fiction by Ian Rankin, Reginald Hill and Lee Child, and literary fiction by Ian McEwan and Aravind Adiga.

Top Reads in the House of Commons

1. *A View from the Foothills* by Chris Mullin
2. *D-Day: the Battle for Normandy* by Antony Beevor
3. *The Girl Who Played With Fire* by Steig Larsson
4. *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel
5. *A Team of Rivals: the Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Labour's Top Reads

1. *A View from the Foothills* by Chris Mullin
2. *D-Day: the Battle for Normandy* by Antony Beevor
3. *The Girl Who Played With Fire* by Steig Larsson

Conservative's Top Reads

1. *A View from the Foothills* by Chris Mullin
2. *Operation Snake Bite* by Stephen Grey
3. *The Resistance: the French Fight Against the Nazis* by Matthew Cobb

The MP Summer Reading research was carried out on behalf of Waterstone's by ComRes between 29th June and 24th July 2009.

For further information please contact Jon Howells in the Waterstone's Press Office on 0208 9964385.

Waterstone's

Waterstone's is the UK's leading specialist bookseller with over 300 branches in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as branches in Eire, in Amsterdam and Brussels, on the Isle of Man and Jersey. Its transactional website Waterstones.com was launched in 2006, and there are currently over 2.5 million holders of the Waterstone's Card. Waterstone's was named Bookselling Company of the Year at the Bookseller Retail Awards 2008.