

FONDATION



PRESS RELEASE

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KEN FOLLETT DONATES ALL ROYALTIES FROM THE BOOK "NOTRE-DAME" TO THE FONDATION DU PATRIMOINE

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Ken Follett © Olivier Favre



The Dol-de-Bretagne Cathedral © Patrick Amiot

Deeply affected by the fire that devastated Notre-Dame on the night of 15 April 2019, Ken Follett conveyed this emotion by publishing a new short text, *Notre-Dame*, at Éditions Robert Laffont a few weeks later. The work has sold 113,000 copies around the world. Following up on his initial commitment, Ken Follett is donating all of his royalties for the book to the Fondation du patrimoine. Together they have chosen to allocate this money to the restoration and structural reinforcement of another cathedral, the *Cathédrale Saint-Samson de Dol-de-Bretagne*, supported by the Fondation du patrimoine.

A jewel of Gothic architecture in Brittany, this cathedral was also devastated by a fire in 1203, but suffers today from the wear and tear of time. Thanks to Ken Follett's generosity, the Fondation will soon be donating €148,000 to the town of Dol-de-Bretagne. The donation will reduce the total cost of the work to be paid by this Petite Cité de Caractère® ("Small Town of Character") and its 6,000 inhabitants—for whom the maintenance and enhancement of this iconic edifice already weigh heavily—to €800,000.

"When my French publisher asked me if I would consider writing a short book about La Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris, I agreed immediately. I am delighted to support La Fondation du patrimoine and the conservation and renovation of La Cathédrale Saint-Samson de Dol in Brittany. I am very fond of Northern France, both because of my research and my own travels, and I look forward to following the project and seeing how the money will be put to use."

Ken Follett

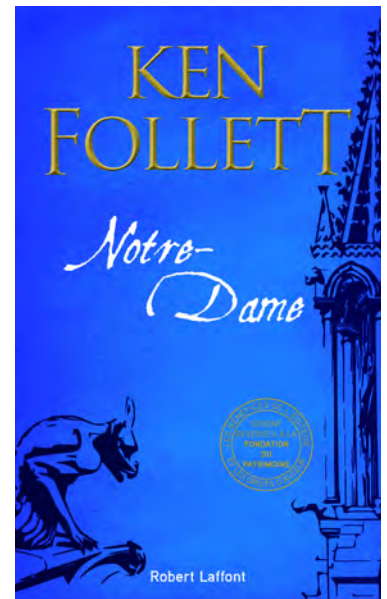
ABOUT THE BOOK "NOTRE-DAME"

Ken Follett had something akin to a prophetic vision when he described the fire of the Kingsbridge cathedral so precisely in his major work *The Pillars of the Earth* thirty-two years ago. In his version, thousands of men and women from various counties came to rebuild the cathedral by hand.

Following the fire at Notre-Dame, he had the idea of writing a short work of non-fiction, in which he would relate the emotion he felt when he heard the news, and then recount the history of Notre-Dame, from its construction to the influence it had on the great Victor Hugo, and on Ken Follett himself. His book hence demonstrates the universality of the fascination and attraction that Notre-Dame exerts.

"If people were crying on 15 April, in Paris and everywhere else in the world, it is because something very important and intimate was being destroyed before their very eyes. Indeed, we are the heirs of the cathedral builders."

Ken Follett



ABOUT THE DOL-DE-BRETAGNE CATHEDRAL, IN ILLE-ET-VILAINE

Classified as an historical monument since 1840, the Saint Samson Cathedral is one of the jewels of Gothic architecture in Brittany, as much for its early construction as for its homogeneity and architectural qualities. After burning in 1203, it was entirely reconstructed in granite in a Norman Gothic style. It was erected in a relatively short time for such a large building: from 1250 to 1275 for the nave, and over the last few decades of the thirteenth century for the Choir. Due to its prestige and its location along the Breton frontier, this cathedral city was frequently attacked; in the thirteenth century, it surrounded itself with ramparts, part of which have survived until today and are integrated into the cathedral.

A PROJECT FOR ENHANCEMENT

The presence of the cathedral is a reminder of the prestigious past of this religious Breton metropole, which was an archbishopric for three centuries and home to a line of over seventy bishops until the Revolution. The Cathédraloscope, a centre of interpretation specifically devoted to discovering cathedrals, was created in the vicinity twenty years ago. Via its interpretive exhibits and educational tools, it helps provide a better understanding of the construction of these edifices.



The Dol-de-Bretagne Cathedral © Commune de Dol-de-Bretagne



The Dol-de-Bretagne Cathedral © Commune de Dol-de-Bretagne

Thanks to its religious, military (ramparts) and civil (half-timbered houses) heritage, the town received the Petite Cité de Caractère® ("Small Town of Character") label in 2017, and its old town is engaged to be classified as a French Remarkable Heritage Site. Dol-de-Bretagne benefits from the "Petites villes de demain" programme and from the support of the Brittany region. Given its complementary nature with the Cathédraloscope, this project will have a positive structural effect on tourism in the town.

STATE OF PERIL

Despite regular restoration campaigns, the wear and tear of time have taken their toll. The cathedral framework and roofing have become dilapidated and are no longer waterproof; the fabric of the granite balustrades have become powdery due to exposure to bad weather; parts of the cladding need to be replaced or consolidated; and four thirteenth-century skylights—featuring the oldest listed stained glass in Brittany—are no longer protected.

The work on the cathedral, which the town is undertaking in several phases, began in the summer of 2019 and is expected to be completed in 2024.

COST OF THE WORK

Thanks to Ken Follett's donation—which will be added to national (Direction régionale des affaires culturelles) and regional (Région Bretagne) grants and to money from a fundraising campaign by the Fondation du patrimoine—the restoration work, which has been evaluated at 2.4 million euros, will cost the town less than €800,000.

CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW TO VIEW THE INTERVIEW WITH KEN FOLLETT

[in French] Ken Follett shares his memories of Notre-Dame de Paris, his taste for architecture, the writing of his book "Notre-Dame" or even why he transfers all the copyright of this work to the Fondation du patrimoine.

