

Ken Follett is one of the world's most successful authors. Over 165 million copies of the 31 books he has written have been sold in over 80 countries and in 33 languages.

Born on June 5th, 1949 in Cardiff, Wales, the son of a tax inspector, Ken was educated at state schools and went on to graduate from University College, London, with an Honours degree in Philosophy – later to be made a Fellow of the College in 1995.

He started his career as a reporter, first with his hometown newspaper the South Wales Echo and then with the London Evening News. Subsequently, he worked for a small London publishing house, Everest Books, eventually becoming Deputy Managing Director.

Ken's last project, The Century Trilogy, has sold over 22 million copies worldwide. The three books tell the story of the twentieth century through five generations on three continents.

Ken's first major success came with the publication of Eye of the Needle in 1978. A World War II thriller set in England, this book earned him the 1979 Edgar Award for Best Novel from the Mystery Writers of America. It remains one of Ken's most popular books.

In 1989, Ken's epic novel about the building of a medieval cathedral, The Pillars of the Earth, was published. It reached number one on bestseller lists everywhere and was turned into a major television series produced by Ridley Scott, which aired in 2010. World Without End, the sequel to The Pillars of the Earth, proved equally popular when it was published in 2007.

Ken's new book, A Column of Fire, is a historical novel about spies and secret agents in the 16th century, the time of Queen Elizabeth I. Set partly in the fictional town of Kingsbridge, it is a sequel to bestsellers The Pillars of the Earth and World Without End and was published in 2017.

Ken has been active in numerous literacy charities and was president of Dyslexia Action for ten years. He was chair of the National Year of Reading, a joint initiative between government and businesses. He is also active in many Stevenage charities and is President of the Stevenage Community Trust.

Ken, who loves music almost as much as he loves books, is an enthusiastic bass guitar player in two bands. He lives in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, with his wife Barbara, the former Labour Member of Parliament for Stevenage. Between them they have five children, six grandchildren and two Labradors.