

Press Release

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THE WELL-TROD STAGE

ISBN: 1-869981-847
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Pages: 160 mono illustrated
Author: Bill Port

Headline:

Kate Winslet gives star billing to new Kenton Theatre book

Subhead:

From Henley-on-Thames to Hollywood! – fond memories for Kate

'The Well-Trod Stage' – a new history of The Kenton Theatre, Henley-on-Thames – includes a delightful message from the international screen star, Kate Winslet.

Kate has many associations with the area. She was born in Reading, where her parents managed the Reading Repertory Theatre; she went to the Redroofs theatrical school in nearby Maidenhead; and of course appeared in many productions at The Kenton Theatre, culminating in the 1991 production of *'The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole'*.

As the country's fourth oldest working theatre, the Kenton has seen many famous faces step out from its wings – Celia Johnson to Diana Rigg, Anthony Newley to Christopher Cazenove. Author Bill Port has captured the whole glittering cavalcade in his remarkably well-researched book.

But most of all, Bill has documented how this small provincial theatre has provided a key and a focus for the community which it serves.

He has paid a fitting tribute to the generations of aspiring professionals, keen amateurs and countless volunteers who have helped create and sustain this charming theatre at the heart of this picturesque English town. He conjures up that indefinable magic of the stage which has proved such an attraction down the ages, and which, thanks to unassuming theatres like the Kenton, is within the reach of anyone who wishes to give up an occasional few evenings for the sheer joy of taking part. In his foreword to the book Henley's MP, Boris Johnson, no mean performer himself, recognises this vital role of the Kenton.

Of course, anyone associated with The Kenton Theatre will want to have this book on their shelves, but it will also prove a fascinating and enthralling read for anyone involved or interested in the great tradition of English theatre, whether professional or amateur. And that should prove to be a great many.

Notes for Editors

'*The Well-Trod Stage*' is a history of The Kenton Theatre in Henley-on-Thames. The theatre was built in 1805, and was opened that year on 7 November, just two weeks after Lord Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar. This year, the theatre is celebrating its two hundredth anniversary, making it the fourth oldest working theatre in the UK.

Many famous actors and actresses have worked at the Kenton over the years. Some of the most famous names are: Celia Johnson (of *Brief Encounter* fame), Anthony Newley, Michael MacLiammoir, Diana Rigg, Christopher Cazanove, Jeremy Irons, Sylvia Sims, Diana Dors, Simon Williams and there are numerous others.

Kate Winslet, four times nominated for an Academy Award and star of *Titanic*, appeared at The Kenton Theatre many times, including a production of *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* when she was sixteen.

'*The Well-Trod Stage*' contains a foreword by Boris Johnson, the MP for Henley-on-Thames and, of course, the message from Kate Winslet which includes the following:

"I remember my experiences at The Kenton Theatre so well, and with great affection. I did several productions at the Kenton, including 'Adrian Mole'... What fun we had!"

Author Bill Port is an amateur actor and has for many years been a voluntary member of the management staff at the theatre. For the real theatrical enthusiast he has listed every known production in the Theatre since 1805!

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For more information about '*The Well-Trod Stage*', contact:

The Publisher: Robinswood Press
South Avenue Stourbridge DY8 3XY UK

Chris Marshall Phone: 01384 397475
or Roy Lett (editor) Phone: 01384 394133
Fax: 01384 440443
email: cjm@robinswoodpress.com

The Author: Bill Port Phone: 0118 972 3369