

Press release: Culture Secretary Matt Hancock confirms next steps for return of Bayeux Tapestry to the UK

- Memorandum of Understanding signed by UK Culture Secretary and French Minister of Culture in Paris
- Agreement includes commitment to Tapestry's English translation and joint Anglo-French initiative to 'enrich and broaden international and public understanding' of tapestry through digital technology

The Bayeux Tapestry is a step closer to returning to the UK for the first time in almost a thousand years after the Government signed a landmark agreement today.

Following his attendance at the Digital Colloque in Paris, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Matt Hancock signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with French Minister of Culture Françoise Nyssen. The agreement is a key milestone in securing the Tapestry's loan in 2022.

Both countries have agreed to collaborate to broaden international and public understanding of the Tapestry and work towards its full English translation.

The deal sets out a period of cross-Channel cooperation between universities and research institutes, who will consider how to use digital technology to make the Tapestry more accessible to future generations. They will also prepare for its conservation and safe transportation to the UK.

The move will ensure the British public will be able to see one of the world's major historical artefacts for the first time in more than 900 years.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Matt Hancock said:

The Bayeux Tapestry is a world treasure and a symbol of the deep ties between Britain and France.

This agreement takes us a step closer to bringing the Tapestry to our shores for the first time in almost a millennium. It also underlines the ongoing commitment from both nations for greater cultural, digital and scientific collaboration now and into the future.

We are incredibly excited about the potential of the loan, to enhance further the bonds that tie us to our neighbours across the water.

The unique 70 metre long tapestry depicts the 1066 Norman Conquest of Britain. It was created in England in the eleventh century, shortly after the

Battle of Hastings and has been on display in various locations in France since its completion.

The Tapestry is now part of the UNESCO Memory of the World Register and depicts the Battle which saw William the Conqueror take the English throne in 1066.

Its loan forms part of a wider cultural exchange taking place between Britain and France over the next four years and marks a key milestone in the celebration of our shared history.

The Tapestry will come to the UK while its current home, the Bayeux Museum, undergoes refurbishment in 2022. Further details of the exhibition, including exact dates and locations, will be released in due course.

ENDS

For more information call the DCMS press office: 0207 2112210