

The unprecedented twinning of a French château of the Loire Valley and a English village.

The result of a unique initiative, the twinning was born out of a mutual desire to mark and to celebrate the historical link between the Château de Montsoreau and the village of Mountsorrel and thus attest to the ancient common European heritage of England and France.

“ The similarity in the names and positions of the two castles, Montsoreau and Mountsorrel, and the part they played in the wars of Stephen and Henry, obviously suggest a close connection between the two [...] It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the English castle was built by Stephen’s enemies in the imitation of the French one and named after it.” says Alice Dryden in the *Memorials of Old Leicestershire* (1911).

Mountsorrel is not only the location of one of the largest granite quarries in Europe, it is also 30 miles from Coventry, the British cradle of Conceptual Art.

For 850 years, the village of 8000 inhabitants has shared its name with the Château of Montsoreau, located in the village of Montsoreau in the Loire Valley.

The Chateau, which was listed last year by *All About History* magazine as among the *101 World’s Greatest Castles*, is also home, as Château de Montsoreau - Musée d’art contemporain (Chateau de Montsoreau - Museum of Contemporary Art) to an extensive collection of the work of pioneering Conceptual artists Art & Language.

Last year, the Chateau de Montsoreau – Museum of Contemporary Art, approached the Parish Council of Mountsorrel to begin a twinning agreement procedure.

“ It is a rare opportunity that we have here at the Château of Montsoreau to show and to strengthen the enduring links between England and France, Brexit notwithstanding. These links are both cultural and historical.” says Philippe Méaille, founder of the Château of Montsoreau – Museum of contemporary art.