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# Finding love: The materialities of love-locks and geocaches

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## Abstract

This article is the product of a collaboration between a folklorist researching the global phenomenon of love-locks (padlocks attached to public structures in declaration of romantic commitment) and an archaeologist who also happens to be a player of ‘Geocaching’ (a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices). A chance discussion between the two revealed significant overlaps between love-locking and geocaching, despite the two practices being divergent in function and intention. Some overlaps are tangible, with love-locks forming an integral component of a number of geocaches worldwide. Other overlaps are theoretical, with both practices resulting in contemporary assemblages, or ‘serial collaborative creations’, fundamentally driven by the relationships between objects, places and human participants. The question driving this article is: what can we learn about these two seemingly different customs by considering where they overlap?

## Keywords

assemblage, customs, geocache, love-lock, materiality

## Introduction

This one padlock was not like the others, although at first it looked like a love-lock. Love-locks are the padlocks that have been inscribed with names, initials, dates and love-hearts, and are attached to public structures worldwide, from the Pont Neuf of Paris to the North Pier of Blackpool. This is a ritual of deposition observed by couples in declaration of their romantic commitment (Houlbrook, forthcoming). Once the padlock is locked, the key is symbolically thrown into the river below. The padlock that forms the

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**Figure 1.** The assemblage of love-locks on Oxford Road, Manchester, UK. © Photograph: Ceri Houlbrook.

focus of this article fitted the bill in terms of location, hanging from the railing of a bridge on Oxford Road in Manchester, UK. It is clustered amidst hundreds of love-locks, with no doubt hundreds of matching keys resting on the bottom of the Rochdale Canal below (Houlbrook, 2018; see Figure 1). A brief glance at the assemblage would not distinguish this one padlock from the others. However, a closer inspection does.

Instead of bearing the usual inscriptions of names and declarations of love, this one padlock had a large black cross against a green background: ‘X marks the spot’, it seemed to say. Beneath it was the word, printed in capitals, ‘GEOCACHE’ and, on the reverse, a plea: ‘Please do not disturb! This is part of an official game’ (see Figure 2). The ‘official game’ referred to is geocaching, a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (usually a physical container: hereafter described as a ‘cache’) hidden at that location. In the case of the Oxford Road example, the padlock was the cache: the prize at the end of the game.

This one padlock materializes the intersection between two contemporary popular practices: love-locking and geocaching. It demonstrates how people have created linkages between these two seemingly disparate phenomena and, by exploring this example, similarities between them come to light. As this article will demonstrate, despite being quite divergent in their functions (the love-lock being a ritual declaration of love and the geocache being the prize in a treasure hunt), both practices are fundamentally driven by the relationships between objects and places, as well as the motivations and interactions of their human participants. Both are examples of structured deposition and contemporary assemblages; both the result of serial collaborative creations, with participatory culture at the centre of each. And both practices are embedded within digital media, providing valuable insight into how digital and non-digital practices are enmeshed in the



**Figure 2.** The love-lock that sparked this research interest – a clandestine geocache on Oxford Road, Manchester, UK. © Photographs: Ceri Houlbrook.

post-digital world. The aim of this article is to explore what we can learn about these two customs, the people who practise them, and the societies in which they flourish, by considering their points of intersection.

## History of love-locks

The origins of love-locking are unclear, with several places worldwide claiming to house the ‘original’ love-lock assemblage. Most often cited is Vrnjačka Banja, Serbia, whose tourist board date their assemblage on the Most Ljubavi (‘Bridge of Love’) back to the First World War (Houlbrook, forthcoming). Local legend tells of schoolmistress Nada who was being courted by a Serbian officer named Relja, the Most Ljubavi being their favoured meeting spot. Relja was forced to go away to fight in Greece, where he fell in love with another and never returned, leaving Nada to die of heartbreak. Determined not to follow in similar tragic footsteps, local girls apparently began writing the names of their lovers on padlocks and locking them to the bridge as a way of binding their romance (Vrnjačka Banja Tourist Board, nd: 11). However, no historical evidence has been identified corroborating the early establishment of love-locking at this site, and the story is likely apocryphal.

Padlocks were being structurally deposited on a fence in Pécs, Hungary, in the 1980s but, according to art historian Cynthia Hammond, their depositors were originally less

concerned with love and more with civic dissent and the Punk music subculture (Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols having adopted the padlock as a symbol in the 1970s) (Hammond, 2010). Also in the 1980s, Italians were attaching padlocks to bridges in Florence and Merano, but these were to celebrate graduation and the completion of military service, rather than to declare romantic commitment.

It was not until the 2000s that the structural deposition of a padlock took on widespread romantic significance. The likeliest trigger was an Italian teenage romance novel: Federico Moccia's (2006) *Ho Voglia di Te* (I Want You), a sequel to *Tre Metri sopra il Cielo* (Three Metres above the Sky), in which characters attach a padlock to a chain on the Ponte Milvio, Rome. 'This is "the lover's chain"', explains Gin, the main female character. 'You have to put a padlock on this chain, lock it and throw the key in the Tevere.' 'And then?', Step, the male protagonist, asks. 'You never break up.' Step obligingly attaches a padlock and deposits the key into the Tiber. The phenomenal success of these novels and subsequent films, in Italy and Spain, led to Moccia's (primarily teenage) fans imitating the custom, in a form of imaginative play that sparked a transition from popular culture to popular custom. By 2007, an assemblage of love-locks was fully flourishing on the Ponte Milvio, and tourists so readily adopted the practice that it became predominantly a tourist practice (Houlbrook, forthcoming).

The consequent dissemination of love-locking was rapid and geographically unbound, with love-lock accumulations emerging in locations as distant and varied as New York and Seoul, Paris and Taiwan, Melbourne and Moscow. Ceri Houlbrook currently has a database of over 500 love-lock sites across 65 countries on every continent bar Antarctica. The symbolism of the steadfast padlock and the irredeemably deposited key – so easily applied to romantic commitment – clearly resonates across cultures. However, the custom has proven as polarizing as it is popular, with many local authorities removing and banning love-locks, particularly since a panel on the Pont des Arts, Paris, was damaged beneath the weight of locks in 2015.

Considering the range of their dissemination, it is unsurprising that love-locks have featured in academic research from a variety of perspectives. Cynthia Hammond (2010), mentioned above, focused on the assemblage in Pécs, Hungary, illustrating how the custom can be viewed as representative of control and dissent in the city, at a time before it was associated with romantic commitment. Many other scholars view love-locking within the context of urban studies. Urban scenographer Jekaterina Lavrinec (2013) considers love-locking an 'urban ritual', one that identifies citizens as active 'interpreters' and reinventors of urban space. Simon Sleight (2018) has equated love-lock assemblages with roadside shrines, designating them 'vernacular memorials' within the urban palimpsest of memories. And engineer Christian Walloth (2014) has characterized love-locks as 'emergent qualities' in the city environment, in that they are unplanned and unpredictable, and can impact urban development strategies.

The symbolism of the love-lock is at the centre of many other scholarly explorations into the custom. Social scientist Kai-Olaf Maiwald (2016) has adopted an objective–hermeneutic approach in his investigation into the symbolic meaning of love-locking at the Hohenzollern Bridge, Cologne. The constituent parts to the love-lock (padlock, key, inscriptions and bridge), he argues, are all symbolically potent in a ritual that seeks to counteract the fragility of romantic relationships. Taking a descriptive–analytical

approach, Felix Richter and Verena Pfeiffer-Kloss (2017) place the love-lock within the context of the history of signs of romantic love within the urban environment, alongside symbols carved into benches and trees. Along similar lines, artist Lachlan MacDowell (2015) groups love-locks with graffiti, street art and other contemporary assemblages of structured deposits. To these, she applies the concept of ‘stigmergy’, originally a biological concept applied to swarm intelligence, but more generally referring to the process of one action leaving a trace on the environment and subsequently stimulating another action. This applies to the love-lock in that once one love-lock is added, more tend to follow (see below).

In this journal, Houlbrook (2018) has contributed a material culture approach to the corpus. She has compiled a database of over 400 love-lock locations in 62 different countries in every continent bar Antarctica, gathered data from over 100 love-lock assemblages and catalogued over 700 love-locks removed from Leeds Centenary Bridge, UK, in 2016. In addition, through conducting a site-specific investigation into the growth of a love-lock assemblage on a bridge in Manchester, UK, from February 2014 to the present, she demonstrates the value in studying an assemblage during the process of its formation rather than at one static point in time.

## History and mechanics of geocaches

Given the more organized nature of geocaching, the history of this practice is far easier to establish. It was first played in May 2000 in the USA (Parry, 2009) and became formalized as a game with the launch of its website in September of that year.<sup>2</sup> This website originally hosted 75 caches though the number has now grown to over 3 million caches hosted in 191 different countries across all seven continents.<sup>3</sup> The game may be played by individuals or groups, the only requirement is access to a GPS-enabled device.

Players of the game use their GPS device to locate these so-called ‘caches’ through a combination of real-time GPS location tracking and in-game descriptions and hints regarding their physical location. There are currently 13 different categories of cache, though any player will realistically encounter five of these most frequently. By far the most common is the ‘traditional’ cache – a physical container deposited at the listed co-ordinates. It may be any size (from a few centimetres to over a metre in length) but must contain a paper log for the players to sign as part of their proof of discovery (see Figure 3). Some caches contain trinkets or ‘swappables’ (low value, small items such as plastic toys, stickers, or curios). Records of both successful discoveries and failed attempts are also logged via the smartphone app or the website platform; these online logs are at the discretion of the player and range from a few simple words (usually of thanks) to a mini-biography of the circumstances of discovery or failure. These are sometimes accompanied by photographs taken by the player of their search and the site of the cache.

A ‘multi-cache’ type lists a starting point for the cache, though it may require the player to travel to more than one physical location to gather data that will, ultimately, reveal the co-ordinates of the final container complete with its logbook. ‘Mystery/Puzzle’ caches are similar in format, but much more variable and may require completion of a complicated puzzle (digital or real-world) or other criteria before the cache location is revealed.



**Figure 3.** The contents of a medium-sized geocache. Like all caches it contains a log, physically signed by the game players who have found it. As it is suitably large, this container contains some ‘swappables’ – material objects which are swapped by players. This cache is owned by the author and is located in Wootton, North Lincolnshire, UK. © Photographs: Adam Parker.

These three types represent the most commonly encountered physical caches. The following two types of common cache are virtual – there is no physical container hidden in the landscape for a player to find. ‘Virtual’ caches simply require the player to travel to a specific location and, for verification, take a picture at that place or answer a simple question regarding the place. ‘Earth’ caches are also virtual but explicitly based around geological learning experiences and they require the user to interact with a physical space to answer geology questions based on a short introduction to the specific subject in the cache description. The real, physical cache types form the backbone of the game. All of the above types are further sub-categorized by both the terrain in which they are hidden and the overall difficulty. This grading refers to the accessibility of the location and the difficulty of the puzzle based on the time a user may need to invest in finding it.<sup>4</sup>

All geocaches are installed and maintained by the player community, each of which is reviewed and published for public use by a team of volunteers. Both app and web platform are free to use and engage with, though an in-game paywall prevents free access to the harder caches or those listed by cache owners for use only by the premium members. There is an etiquette to geocaching, encouraging players to: sign the logbook in the container and write the online log; log DNF (Did Not Find) logs to highlight difficulties or possible problems; leave higher value trinkets than are taken (to avoid diminishing returns and build-up of rubbish); being mindful of non-geocachers; avoid trespassing on private property; leave the area better than it was found (for example, by removing an item of rubbish); and report problems with caches.<sup>5</sup> Anecdotally, most players try to



**Figure 4.** A typical clandestine geocache in the form of a plastic model of a stone. These ‘stones’ are sold as key-safes for use in a domestic garden and are here repurposed for the game. This example was hidden amongst a pile of similar looking stones in Thornton Curtis, North Lincolnshire. © Photographs: Adam Parker.

avoid being seen by non-geocachers (‘muggles’ in the in-game terminology) to avoid damage to the caches or questions regarding their (possibly suspicious or unusual) behaviour – aversion strategies are often described in the online logs, e.g. pretending to tie shoelaces to allow close proximity to a cache on the ground in a public place. Caches may, themselves, be camouflaged to remain hidden in a public place (see Figure 4.)

The range and extent of academic research into the phenomenon of geocaching is variable, but has been undertaken on an international scale and, in this sense, reflects the diversity of the game itself. Research primarily focuses on the health benefits of geocaching (Battista et al., 2016; Robinson and Hardcastle, 2016; Schlatter and Hurd, 2005), or potential tourism benefits and the effects of geocaches on an urban environment (Boys et al., 2017; Mendes et al., 2013; Hödl and Pröbstl-Haider, 2017; Schneider and Jadcakova, 2016). The opportunity to use a material culture approach to this practice is welcome indeed.

### **Structured deposits and serial collaborative creations**

There are obvious differences between the customs of love-locking and geocaching. Motivations for participating in both customs differ: love-lockers are often declaring romantic commitment while geocachers are achieving goals in a game. Love-locking is, by and large, an unofficial – in some cases prohibited – action, with no central authority controlling or promoting the practice. Geocaching on the other hand is an official game



and is governed by a set of rules and conventions that the players are requested to uphold. Modes of participation contrast; players attempt to hide geocaching activity from the public, which is somewhat juxtaposed to the idea of *publicly* declaring love through love-locking. However, by considering the two customs in tandem, it turns out that they actually have more in common than not.

Both involve participants in the millions and are global in scale. Both involve physical engagement with the landscape, are experienced in real-time, in real-spaces and have the potential for great variability in this experience depending on the when, where, how and who of participation. Both practices might be understood phenomenologically, with tactility and a physical connection between agents and objects (locks and caches) central to both customs. And both are structured deposits, defined by Richards and Thomas (1984) as the material result of ‘formalised repetitive actions [i.e. ritual] which may be detected archaeologically through a highly structured mode of deposition’ (p. 215). By ‘structured mode’ they mean deposited in a style that suggests deliberate placement by the depositor. The love-lock is deliberately placed by the depositor(s) with the aim of declaring romantic commitment, while the geocache (despite being more commonly conceptualized as an object that is sought) is deliberately placed by the depositor(s) as the prize in the geocaching treasure hunt they are setting up.

Some similarities between the two types of object are obvious; others are less so, such as their constitutions as assemblages. Most love-locks are found with other love-locks, often in large assemblages. Writing of prehistoric archaeology, Fontijn (2002) remarks that some sites become ‘multi-deposition zones’, at which ‘people *repeatedly visited specific zones in the land in order to carry out specific types of deposition*’ (p. 260, emphasis in the original). This is what occurs at love-lock sites, with one love-lock having a ‘magnetic-like effect’ (Gamble, 2007: 122) and attracting others, until there are hundreds, thousands and possibly millions. Love-locks thus form what folklorist Jack Santino (2004) has termed ‘folk assemblages’: accumulations formed spontaneously, which invite further participation from others. It was with this process in mind that folklorist Lynne McNeill (2007) coined the term ‘serial collaborative creations’, which share four common features:

- (1) People come into contact with objects through geographical movement. Either the objects are passed from person to person (type A) or the people pass by the objects (type B).
- (2) People involved contribute to the object, either by adding to its physical form or by continuing its journey through some sort of personal effort.
- (3) Multiple people interact with the object, but they do it one at a time or in small, sequential groups.
- (4) Those who interact with the object individually (or in small groups) are aware of others’ involvement with the object’s existence, though they may not interact with them directly. This awareness is expected and necessary; the object, by virtue of being a chain object, implies the presence of past and future participants. (McNeill, 2007: 285–286)

Love-lock assemblages are quite obviously a type B serial collaborative creation in that they are encountered through people’s movement as they pass the site or approach it

deliberately. People contribute to the creation collaboratively by adding to its physical form, adding their own love-lock. They do this one person, couple or group at a time, but aware of other people's past and probably future contributions.

Geocaches less obviously constitute folk assemblages because when a cache is structurally deposited, it is (by the rules of the game) the only cache in the immediate vicinity and it often remains that way – the game institutes a minimum distance between the physical geocache types of 0.1 miles (528 feet or 161 metres) to prevent over-crowding of a single place. Virtual caches operate on a different system so a player could potentially find a physical and a virtual cache within 0.1 miles of each other. A cache cannot attract other physical caches to within 0.1 miles, but the presence of a cache within a wider landscape (at the scale of a town, road, or marked walking route) can, and does, attract the addition of other caches into the surrounding landscape to create geographical groups ranging over miles. Geocachers cannot create a new cache outside of their home region (e.g. whilst on holiday abroad) as it is a fundamental tenet of the game that the creator of a cache has a duty of responsibility to maintain it and, as long as it is expedient, to ensure that it is fit for purpose. More obviously, the names of the geocachers multiply in each written log as more people find the cache, and thus for these features it does fit McNeill's criteria for a serial collaborative creation. People come into contact with it through geographical movement (indeed, that is the point of the treasure hunt). People add to its physical form by writing their name on the log contained inside the cache and by taking/adding swappable objects. Multiple people interact with the cache, alone or in small groups, aware of other people's engagement – again, this is the attraction of geocaching.

Conceptually, therefore, the two practices are similar. Both form assemblages that are changed and built upon by the individuals who visit and engage with them at different times, each adding to the whole in a small way. Where they intersect explicitly, for example with the Manchester Bridge love-lock, a self-contained smaller serial collaborative creation (a geocache) is added to a larger one (a love-lock structure). Cachers are linked by their shared experiences of finding the same thing, but at different times. In the same way, love-locking links its participants over time with the additions of new locks to the same structure. However, the two practices overlap literally as well as conceptually, and this article now turns to those overt intersections.

## Methodology

In order to better understand this phenomenon, throughout 2018, we gathered information on 100 geocaches around the world that intersect with love-locking locations from the geocaching web platform, primarily informed by a curated, and publicly accessible, list of such sites by another player.<sup>6</sup> We recorded names, locations, cache-types (see above), locking fixtures (if appropriate), cache container types and the date that the cache was installed. Additionally, we recorded the total number of attempts published for each cache as well as the total number of successful attempts. As geocaching is an organic, developing game some of these caches were no longer 'live' and had been archived, preventing further logs. Archived caches are not visible on the in-game map and are usually no longer present in the physical environment. Of the 100 recorded, 61 were live and 39 were archived.

We then recorded the nature of each of the caches' connection with love-locks, examining the photographs and comments posted by the players who had sought the cache and recording any reference to love-locks. Some were irrelevant and incidental; perhaps the cache just happened to be at the same site as an assemblage of love-locks and therefore the locks sometimes featured in descriptions or players' posted photographs of the site. In other cases, the love-locks were central to the cache. Either way, the custom of love-locking has impacted people's experiences of geocaching, and vice versa; therefore, this broad spectrum of relevance was considered.

## Features of interest

As noted above, in many cases, caches and love-locks only incidentally share a space. The cache and its online description exhibit no conceptual link to love-locks, but the gallery of images posted by the players as they search for and find the caches also include photographs of love-locks. This is unsurprising considering that both geocaches and love-lock assemblages tend to be situated at sites of interest, most often tourist attractions. For example, love-locks co-exist with the caches: 'Le challenge des chiffres et des lettres' on the Pont des Arts, Paris; 'Hua Shan' on Mount Hua, China; 'Frank Farrington's view' on the Brooklyn Bridge, New York; and 'Old Bridge' on the Ponte Vecchio, Florence.<sup>7</sup> In other cases, well-known landmarks are chosen for both caches and love-locks because of romantic associations: the cache 'Juliet's Balcony (Graffiti & Co.)' in Verona shares courtyard space in the Casa di Giulietta with love-locks, as does the cache 'Kissing Hill/Musumägi', a place for lovers and newly-weds in Tartu, Estonia.<sup>8</sup>

This emphasizes the central role tourism plays in both customs, with many people participating in both while travelling away from home. Much past literature on customs and culture tends to omit tourists; as Bruner (2005: 8) observes: 'a purposeful ignoring of that which is present but that ethnography finds embarrassing'. However, some research has shifted focus to the culture of tourists themselves, such as MacCannell's seminal *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (2013[1976]). MacCannell views tourists as a distinct sociological group, in search of experience and the rituals associated with visiting particular destinations. In MacCannell's description of the tourist attraction, as 'the locus of a human relationship between unlike-minded individuals, the locus of an urgent desire to share – an intimate connection between one stranger and another, through the local object' (p. 203), we can see how in the cases of both love-locks and geocaches, this sharing has become physical – tourists contribute their own piece (be it a padlock on a bridge or a name in a geocache log-book) to the local object, as part of the rituals of tourism. And thus, through mass tourism, the assemblage grows. Given this, it is easy to understand why so many caches and love-lock assemblages occupy popular tourist attractions. The Adventure Travel Trade Association defines 'Adventure Tourism' as 'any tourist activity, including two of the following three components: a physical activity, a cultural exchange, or interaction and engagement with nature'.<sup>9</sup> Geocaching certainly meets the first criteria in almost all cases, and the third a significant proportion of time. Where it intersects with love-locking it could be argued to meet the criteria for 'adventure tourism' because it is outside, requires travel to spaces that frequently are only accessible to pedestrians (thus 'physical activity') but it involves a cultural exchange

in as much as individuals or couples are participating in a social phenomenon that is not available in all places at all times. With the case of the oldest love-lock bridge, in Vrnjačka Banja, Serbia, and its geocache (Most Ljubavi ['Bridge of Love']) participants are engaging with a locally significant cultural event. Beyond such microcosm examples, geocaching and love-locking together are international in scale and people of different nationalities individually contribute to both – they inherently cross cultural boundaries.

As a case in point, and to highlight the international scope for the relationships between geocaching and love-locking, some geocaches include a 'flag counter' – a digital tool which notes the home countries of players viewing (not necessarily logging) the geocache. The 'Bridge of Lovers' cache on the Hans-Psenner bridge in Innsbruck, Austria, has such a tool visible on its geocache webpage; whilst Austrian players are by far the largest proportion, participants from 23 other countries are listed as having viewed the page.<sup>10</sup> The page has instructions in both German and English and introduces the concept of love-locking as part of the cache. By total figures, only approximately 10 percent of those who viewed the page had logged the cache, but the digital transmission of a connection between these two customs could readily be conveyed. We should not discount this mechanism as a potential pathway for tourists to encounter such links.

In some cases, the geocache and the love-lock assemblage do not occupy a site because of a tourist attraction but because the latter has become a tourist attraction in itself. In such cases, it appears that the cache was deliberately sited at a love-lock assemblage because it is already a feature of interest or even a landmark. This is certainly the case where cache names allude to the custom, such as Manchester Oxford Road's 'Love Lock Bridge' cache. Other examples from the UK include: 'Little Bridge # 753 LOCKDOWN, and up, and . . .' on Pero's Bridge, Bristol; 'Gracie loves Charlie' on Scarborough Bridge, York; and 'Albert lock' on Albert Docks, Liverpool.<sup>11</sup> There are many more examples worldwide – a total of 45 geocache names have been identified that either directly reference or clearly allude to the love-lock custom.<sup>12</sup>

Some examples of caches include information about love-locking in their online descriptions. Some reproduce a vague history of the custom, referencing the Serbian tale of Nada and her heartbreak or referring to the famous Pont des Arts example in Paris. A cache in Oosterwolde, the Netherlands, explains how 'Cities like Paris, Salzburg, Riga and Cologne have one or more love bridges. Couples in love hang a lock with their initials and a date on the bridge and throw the key in the water.' In Marburg, Germany, a cache's description explains, 'Incidentally, the name comes from the fact that at the bridge couples prove their love by hanging locks on the struts and sink the key in the Lahn! This idea comes originally from Italy . . .' While a cache in Stuttgart, Germany, quotes from the Wikipedia 'Love Lock' article in their description.<sup>13</sup>

Other caches provide more specific information on their respective love-lock assemblages. The cache on the Bernatek Footbridge, Krakow, describes how:

The current [bridge] was erected in 2010 and almost immediately it became one of the many bridges of love. Loving couples shut padlocks signed their own names on the bridge construction and then throw the keys to the Vistula river.

And on the Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne:

The Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne does not really have much romance to offer. Nevertheless, it has become a place of pilgrimage for lovers. Couples fasten locks – as a symbol of their love.<sup>14</sup>

In some cases, love-locks appear to not only have motivated the siting of a cache, but to have motivated the creation of one. In the description of the ‘Love Locks’ cache in San Marcos Plaza Park, Texas, the creator writes:

On my visits to the park, I became fascinated by the growing number of locks secured to this bridge. After some research, I knew I had to place a cache here . . . One of the locks in front of you is the cache you seek. I placed it to express my love for geocaching and my fascination with this ever more popular romantic tradition. Happy hunting!<sup>15</sup>

### **Geocaches as love-lock disseminators**

The examples above not only demonstrate that love-lock assemblages have become established landmarks in and of themselves but they also emphasize the way in which information about love-locks is being disseminated through geocache gaming. Players who may not have known about the custom are informed of its history, why the locks are there and where else in the world they can be found. By participating in the game, the players are also invited to visit these sites and engage with them in order to locate the cache. Comments made by players logging the Krakow cache have highlighted this: ‘The Padlocks in that bridge are amazing. I had seen that on television, but there it was the first time live’; ‘I have seen padlocks like this in other parts of the world. Now I know what they mean’; ‘Never seen anything quite like it before, what a lovely idea’; ‘It is not in the tourist guides but worth visiting’; ‘We took some pictures of the locks before searching and finding the cache’.<sup>16</sup>

Geocache logs provide data on how many players have attempted to find a particular cache, thereby also providing data on how many people have engaged with these love-lock assemblages. Given the nature of geocaching, the quantities are constantly growing, but the total number of players who have attempted to log our catalogued 100 caches, as of August 2018, was 99,511. This may have increased to over 100,000 by the publication of this article, a vast sum when we consider that many of these people may not have engaged with love-lock assemblages otherwise. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that new caches have been established at love-locking localities, furthering this connection.

So, through geocaching, nearly 100,000 people have looked at love-locks and considered their meanings; of these, many will have photographed them, touched them, talked about them, read their inscriptions. Higher levels of cache difficulty may be taken as an indication of greater interaction with the love-locking space, particularly if the geocacher is required to physically inspect a great number of locks to find the cache. Player comments for the St George, Utah cache emphasized this depth of engagement: ‘didn’t get past Stage 1 but we had fun examining all the love locks at the fence’; ‘Cant [sic] find it, looked at EVERY SINGLE ONE, literally’. While in Vancouver, players logged: ‘I think I will see locks in my sleep tonight! . . . it took us almost an hour to find the right one’ and another compared finding the right lock to ‘looking for a needle in a stack of needles’.<sup>17</sup> Some people’s sole experience of love-locks will have been through

geocaching. For others, the cache may have rekindled memories of other love-locks seen in the past. In the description of the ‘Love Locks of Porvoo’ cache, Finland, for example, players are invited to ‘add photos and your experience from other love locks locations’. For the online log of the Queen Elizabeth Park, Vancouver cache, a player has uploaded an image of a love-lock bridge in Santiago.<sup>18</sup>

Geocaches are only semi-permanent in their positions and may eventually be deactivated or archived by the player community if their integrity is not maintained by the cache creator, or it frequently gets lost or moved by non-players unaware of its significance (‘muggled’). Love-locks have a more inherent permanence in their establishment with the ability to easily remove them somewhat diminished by their nature. That said, the removal of large numbers of caches by the administrators of the bridge has occurred – we have mentioned the removal of 700 locks from the Leeds Millennium Bridge in 2016 (see Houlbrook, 2018) – at many sites worldwide, such as in Paris and Melbourne (see Safi, 2015; Williamson, 2015), and it is likely to occur again elsewhere in the future.

The life span of both locks and caches may vary greatly, but it is possible to still interact with objects that have been hidden in situ for some time. As a case in point, Adam Parker, whilst geocaching in the UK, had logged finds in December 2017 for both a virtual cache established in March 2002 and a physical container first deployed in August 2005. Love-locks are more difficult to date. Granted, many are inscribed with years, but they are as likely to refer to the start of relationships or weddings rather than the actual date of deposition. However, the vast majority of those love-locks catalogued in Manchester in 2014 are still there five years later.

In the case of both geocaches and love-locks, we do not know whether there is a finite lifespan for their existence and the extent to which people actively interact with them. Both are quite young concepts on the international stage. Realistically, we have no way of speculating whether geocaches or love-locks will remain features of the urban landscape in the decades and centuries to come. Their nature or the physical mechanisms by which we currently participate in these activities could become altered beyond recognition in the future. If either ultimately ceases to exist, then the interactions considered in this article will serve as an important outline of an interaction that might otherwise have gone unnoticed in academic literature.

Often the geocacher’s engagement with love-locks leaves only invisible traces. Digital traces are also left on the online log, but there is rarely conspicuous evidence at the assemblage itself. The physical cache is, by its nature, hidden, and so too is the player’s contribution to it. Because of the clandestine nature of the game, only fellow players would be aware of a geocacher’s activities. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Adam Parker had been unaware of this substantial group of people engaging covertly with love-locks. However, in some cases, geocaching activities have altered the physical make-up of an assemblage, albeit often in minor ways.

This is certainly the case when the cache is disguised as a love-lock or when a love-lock provides clues. There are at least 15 examples of this. Most often, these cache-locks are physically different to the rest. Returning to the Manchester example, it was adorned not with names, love-hearts and messages of love, but with the geocache symbol and instructions not to remove it, identifying it as a piece in an official game. Neither was it a typical padlock but it had actually been designed or adapted as a geocache container. On the bottom of the padlock, where there would normally be a keyhole, was a plastic

cap; prying it open revealed a small hole, which contained a paper log of names and dates, retrievable only with a pair of tweezers.

Containers disguised as love-locks are sold on a UK-based geocaching supplies website: the 'Love locked gift set', on sale for £4.99, is marketed as

Strong, lightweight zinc alloy and steel construction heart shaped lock with 3 digit combination . . . Comes complete with pencil and RITR [Rite in the rain] log . . . Ideal for a geocaching proposal or ideal for caches in your favourite place.<sup>19</sup>

The Design Partner of the company explained that:

Ever since love locks have become popular, we have had quite a few request [sic] for 'Trackable' love locks. The locks are engraved with a unique geocaching number, this unique number being used as part of the game . . . These items were very popular . . . we sell enough to warrant a permanent stock.<sup>20</sup>

This particular example did not feature in the 100 caches recorded, but there is clearly a market for combining the two customs.

Other cache-locks bear clues or coordinates leading to the cache. For a cache in Lüneburg, Germany, the online instructions read: 'You are looking for a padlock on which the final coordinates are engraved.' In Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver, players are instructed to 'Find Ron and Marilyn's Love Lock . . . On the lock you will find the last three coordinates.' In Gorzów Wielkopolski, Poland: 'In order to get the cache, you'll need to find the love lock. There are the final coordinates on it'; likewise on the 'I Love Geocaching' cache padlock at St George, Utah. While in Ljubljana, Slovenia, more complicated instructions are given:

In addition to the padlocks with love messages you will also find six padlocks devoted to geocaching. They include the messages like 'G + CA = ?'. Determine the value of all six missing letters (A, B, C, D, E and F) which will lead you to the nearby final stage of the geocache at the given coordinates.<sup>21</sup>

However, not all padlocks attached for the purposes of geocaching were entirely distinct from the game. A couple at least do appear to have been deposited, as per the 'traditional' custom, in declaration of love as well as being geocaches. The cache in Montague Parkette, Toronto, for example, is described as having been 'placed by 2 love-birds celebrating 6 months of marriage + 15 years of love and happiness by putting their love on "lockdown."<sup>22</sup> While, on the Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne, we have the following explanation for why the original padlock cache had been changed:

The cache was placed on 12.9.2010 by 'Team\_Camouflage' – as an expression of their love! Unfortunately, the love did not last . . . the cache is gone, it was thrown by me into the Rhine at 10:30 pm yesterday evening, a true liberation, as you can imagine it has to do with a love that is now over.<sup>23</sup>

It is not only the geocache creators who add love-locks to these assemblages; sometimes the players do as well. In some instances, the geocache description encourages deposition.

The creator of a cache in Puerto del Carmen, Spain, writes, ‘A cultural symbol of love, why not add your own! You can buy them very cheaply (a couple of euros or so) in the dozens of gift shops surrounding the area.’ The creator of an Oosterwolde cache in the Netherlands advises players, ‘If you also want to hang your love on the bridge, take a lock with you’, but requests that they throw their keys into a rubbish bin rather than the river. In Lübeck, Germany, the creator encourages players: ‘If you attach a lock, it would be great if you add a photo of your log.’ On Venus Bridge in Kobe, Japan, the creator included a padlock in the cache container: ‘Among other things the cache also contains a “love lock” for some love bird cachers (in case you forgot yours). Please don’t take it unless you are a couple and actually intend to use it at Venus Bridge!’ And for a cache in Neckarelz, Germany, to fulfil the log the players must lock a padlock themselves: ‘So dear Cacher, find the tin [cache] and hang your (love) locks’.<sup>24</sup>

And they do. Many of the online cache galleries feature photographs of players attaching their own love-locks, such as in Antwerp, Vancouver and Lovelock, Nevada. For a Buenos Aires cache, one player commented: ‘We left a lock too to commemorate our anniversary! Gracias!’ In Krakow: ‘It was also a pleasure to add our padlock to the many already there!!!’ In Liverpool: ‘Came to place a lock in memory of 80th birthday and found the cache.’ And in St George, Utah: ‘I might purchase my own lock.’<sup>25</sup> These people are not only engaging with the love-lock assemblages but contributing to them; they are not only aware of the custom but are actively participating in it. Their love-locks are no less ‘authentic’ than the others already there, but it is significant that many probably would not have deposited a lock had they not been directed to the site whilst geocaching.

## Impacts on geocaches

Geocaches may be impacting the custom of love-locking, but the reverse is true as well. In some cases, the cache pre-dates the love-locks and therefore had nothing originally to do with the custom. The later introduction of love-locks thus alters the nature of the cache’s environment and, consequently, the nature of players’ interaction with the site. In other cases, the site was chosen specifically because of the love-locks, and this can impact the future of the cache. As we saw above, the cache on the Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne was altered when the love-lock element to it was removed as a consequence of the geocachers’ relationship ending – an occupational hazard when geocaching is combined with romance. In many cases, however, the nature of the cache is changed despite the geocacher’s best efforts to maintain it.

The growth of love-lock assemblages is one prime cause. In Vancouver, players posted the following comments about their search for the love-lock cache: ‘I am not sure how many locks were about when others found it but there are a lot of locks to sift through now’; ‘I enjoyed looking through the locks. That will certainly become even harder over time’; ‘This one WILL get harder, and it looks like a bunch were placed here just a few days ago, on Valentines Day! Figures I waited for the difficulty to go up a little . . .’ The difficulty of geocaching in such places clearly increases in tandem with the popularity of love-locking.

At the Pécs cache, ‘The padlock (A geolakat)’, a clue advises players to find a padlock with a password, but a later update warns that the ‘password has already been absorbed



by many new padlocks'. Because of the difficulty players had finding the correct lock as more and more were added, the creator of the cache changed the password, removing the connection to the locks and thus altering the cache itself. In St George, Utah, however, it was weathering rather than increased numbers that changed the cache, this time causing it to be archived. The geocacher left a comment in 2014, explaining that the

first stage [a love-lock bearing coordinates] hasn't weathered as well as I'd hoped . . . Therefore I have decided to archive this cache . . . The lock will remain on the gate as a reminder of my first multi-cache placement. And maybe someday someone will wonder what those coordinates are on the lock.

At other sites, the contested nature of love-locks has impacted the cache. While some local authorities tolerate or even promote the custom of love-locking, others designate the practice as vandalism and remove the locks periodically. In other cases, the love-locks are condoned long enough for a large assemblage to form and then the decision is made to remove them in one large cull. Obviously, when this happens, any disguised caches are cleared away as well. The Oberhausen cache in Germany, originally placed in 2011, was updated in 2016 when the geocacher explained, 'We unfortunately had to completely rebuild the cache due to the not longer [sic] approved locks at the bridge.' While, in Stuttgart, a cache placed in 2013 was archived in 2015, with the geocacher lamenting 'Too bad that in a night . . . all locks were removed on the bridge. Also our own lovingly designed [lock]. As you can see, not all things that are meant for eternity last so long!'

Geocaches can be, and are, replaced when they go missing. Adam Parker has real-world experience of doing so with the geocaches that he maintains in his home town. More often than not, the reason that a cache has gone missing is never discovered, though building projects and other changes to their immediate surroundings, such as mechanical hedge cutting or the rebuilding of a wall, can sometimes be deduced as the cause of loss. It is clear that the clandestine nature of geocaching may negatively affect the long-term security of containers because their true purpose may not be known to many people who interact with them by accident rather than design. Thus the geocache may change organically over its lifetime and be represented by several different containers with different life-spans. By comparison, love-locks are evidence not of occasional change but of a single, static point in time known only to those who locked it in place. Although there have been a few reported occasions of love-locks being 'hijacked', old messages overwritten with new ones, this is rare.

## **Digital considerations**

Both practices became popular in the 2000s, which fits with McNeill's (2007: 282) argument that serial collaborative creations are symptomatic of the state of current society. We react against our increasingly intangible (i.e. digital) relationships and incohesive communities by contributing something physical to a shared piece or place.

In both love-locking and geocaching, the rise of technology in the 21st century has contributed significantly to their developments: increased social communication and

information dissemination through the internet and social media for the former, and the very existence of hand-held GPS tracking for the latter. Even within the timescale of geocaching, the technology used for participation has enormously changed. A 2005 introduction to the game in academic literature recorded the exclusive use of hand-held GPS devices used by students to participate in the game (Schlatter and Hurd, 2005: 29); the use of GPS enabled smart-phones has, at least anecdotally, severely reduced the incidence of stand-alone GPS devices. A companion smartphone app has been available since 2013 and continues to be supported on Apple and Android operating systems. Using a smartphone requires much less preparation to play the game because co-ordinates do not need to be downloaded/uploaded to a dedicated GPS device. This allows for a much greater level of opportunistic play. Developing technologies may yet have a fundamental impact on the use of digital devices in geocaching; for example, the emergent use of Augmented Reality in other smart-phone utilized GPS games (such as Pokémon GO and Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery).

Although love-locking may have had its genesis in an earlier time (and arguably, so had geocaching in scavenger hunting), both it and geocaching are firmly located in the early 21st century and may be seen as products of this time. Neither are formed as reactions against digital media but incorporate it into their phenomena. Digital media help to embed love-locking and geocaching with each other.

As a palimpsest of a social practice this is, perhaps, unlikely to remain the case as changing technologies and social customs render one or the other obsolete or changed beyond recognition in the future. Thus, it is important that the current overlapping of these two customs is recognized and analysed now, before any of this information is lost to us.

Beyond the role of digital technology in the development and dissemination of these practices, we should also flag the specific role of social media and tourism within them. The role of social media should not be underestimated, be it through the online platform of geocaching or the sharing of images and content of love-locks and, of course, on the immediate overlap between these two customs where our interest is focused here. Munar and Jacobsen (2014) highlight the motivating factors of individual involvement in social media tourism, which includes feelings of solidarity and identifying as part of a specific community. They talk about ‘community-empowerment’ and this is self-evident in the love-lock/geocaching phenomenon as both practices incorporate the naming of individuals, couples, or groups as affiliates and contributors. We cannot be sure of the motivations of individuals for dedicating a love-lock or playing geocaching in the first place, but the scale of the international community involved in these individually and, crucially, the two together is breathtaking.

## **Conclusions: Value to the researcher**

Much has been gained from studying the overlap of these two contemporary customs, with a number of elements being brought to light. For one, this research has led to greater knowledge about the locations of love-locks and their histories. What has also been brought to light is the love-lock’s mutability, strikingly evident in the use of love-locks as caches or as components of a cache. The custom of love-locking has adapted to

accommodate the practice of geocaching, demonstrating its ability to acclimatize to different groups of people. This also provides a warning: to not assume all padlocks that are attached to a love-lock assemblage are actual love-locks, in the strictest sense of the term. Not all of them – despite looking very similar – were deposited as declarations of love. Evidently, physical homogeneity amongst deposits does not necessarily indicate uniformity of purpose amongst depositors (see Houlbrook, 2014).

This situational aspect of a custom has been recognized as not only incidental, but often integral to its continued perpetuation. Because customs can be variously interpreted, individuals and groups of people can ascribe whichever ideas, beliefs and purposes are more suited to them. The love-lock therefore acts as what Eade and Sallnow (1991: 15) have termed a ritual ‘void’; free from authoritative prescription, it can accommodate various practices and meanings. It is for this reason that mutability is often essential to a custom. It is, to use Catherine Bell’s (1992: 184) words, ‘integral to its efficacy’. A custom must be able to adapt to its various participants (from love-lockers to geocachers), otherwise it may not retain them.

What this study has also demonstrated is how both love-locking and geocaching are fundamentally personal, sensory experiences. Love-locking is inherently emotive, and at least some of this emotive engagement is transferred or otherwise visible in the geocacher’s interactions with these spaces. The nuanced space where these two practices overlap is an excellent platform for considering the archaeology of emotion (Tarlow, 2012), with individuals actually recording (through their digital logs) personal experiences of their interactions with these modern, dynamic assemblages. Some of the transcripts mentioned in the above record expressions of love, excitement of new discoveries, satisfaction of finding the cache, disappointment of not doing so, and empathy for heart-break to name but a few. As we suggest, these relationships between people, places and these specific objects may not be present in the world of the future.

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## Notes

1. See Moccia (2006: 274–276); translation from Italian by Francesca Benetti, with much appreciation.
2. See: <https://www.geocaching.com/about/history.aspx> (accessed 25 May 2018).
3. See: <https://newsroom.geocaching.com/fast-facts/> (accessed 25 May 2018).
4. Both terrain and difficulty are graded 1–5. Compare both at level 1 (a hike of less than 0.5 mile (0.8 km) and wheelchair accessible/easy to find or solve within a few minutes) to both at level 5 (requires specialized equipment such as scuba gear, a boat, rock climbing gear, or similar. The most extreme mental challenge/requires specialized knowledge, skills, tools, or significant effort to find, solve, or open). Available at: <https://www.geocaching.com/help/index.php?pg=kb.chapter&id=97&pgid=82> (accessed 25 May 2018).

5. See: <https://www.geocaching.com/help/index.php?pg=kb.chapter&id=141&pgid=539> (accessed 27 July 2018).
6. The public list 'LoveLock caches around the world' was created by user DanPan. The list feature allows players to create bespoke groups of caches which may be of interest and allow them to be grouped. The user was contacted through the in-game messaging service, but no answer was received. The player appears to be inactive within the game. See: <https://www.geocaching.com/plan/lists/BM1Y7QV?sort=name&sortOrder=asc&skip=0&take=10> (accessed 24 November 2019).
7. 'Le challenge des chiffres et des lettres' cache created February 2010: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC23V5N\\_le-challenge-des-chiffres-et-des-lettres?guid=fb5494f1-e2b7-4352-ac48-43c58d31dd51](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC23V5N_le-challenge-des-chiffres-et-des-lettres?guid=fb5494f1-e2b7-4352-ac48-43c58d31dd51); 'Hua Shan' cache created August 2009: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC1XAM3\\_hua-shan?guid=dba0e2d9-5434-495d-a5d1-c8f263ba64e4](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC1XAM3_hua-shan?guid=dba0e2d9-5434-495d-a5d1-c8f263ba64e4); 'Frank Farrington's view' cache created November 2006: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GCZ803\\_frank-farringtons-view?guid=24aef1a8-035f-468c-9417-7165a98f1830](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GCZ803_frank-farringtons-view?guid=24aef1a8-035f-468c-9417-7165a98f1830); 'Old Bridge' cache created September 2012: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3X1GD\\_old-bridge?guid=013284f1-456b-4889-8919-9f15b6f6fa07](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3X1GD_old-bridge?guid=013284f1-456b-4889-8919-9f15b6f6fa07)
8. 'Juliet's Balcony (Graffiti & Co.)' cache created April 2013: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC49T24\\_juliets-balcony-graffiti-co?guid=14c540a2-e1ab-4fa5-9739-a5e86b79d30a](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC49T24_juliets-balcony-graffiti-co?guid=14c540a2-e1ab-4fa5-9739-a5e86b79d30a); 'Kissing Hill/Musumägi' cache created August 2004: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GCKFWH\\_kissing-hill-musumagi?guid=4c713939-3871-42ab-b09f-fc2bf372abb6](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GCKFWH_kissing-hill-musumagi?guid=4c713939-3871-42ab-b09f-fc2bf372abb6)
9. Adventure Travel Trade Association, Travel Guide Qualifications and Performance Standard – III: Definitions: <https://www.adventuretravel.biz/education/adventure-edu/guide-standards/adventure-travel-guide-qualifications-performance-standard-iii-definitions/>
10. The countries listed are, in alphabetical order: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.
11. 'Little Bridge # 753 LOCKDOWN, and up, and.....' cache created December 2015: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC614CF\\_little-bridge-753-lockdown-and-up-and](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC614CF_little-bridge-753-lockdown-and-up-and); 'Gracie loves Charlie' cache created October 2016: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VYH1\\_gracie-loves-charlie?guid=545df21a-2e76-486a-8f94-9340453d3e53](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VYH1_gracie-loves-charlie?guid=545df21a-2e76-486a-8f94-9340453d3e53); 'Albert lock' cache created April 2014: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC52F7X\\_albert-lock](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC52F7X_albert-lock)
12. 'Bridge of Lovers' cache created February 2014: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC46PPT\\_bridge-of-lovers](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC46PPT_bridge-of-lovers); 'Lock of Love' cache created January 2015: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5KDBGK\\_lock-of-love](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5KDBGK_lock-of-love); 'N Seoul Tower - Tree of Love-Locks' cache created January 2011; [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2M5XZ\\_n-seoul-tower-tree-of-love-locks?guid=c14d8eb5-c704-4be3-aa5e-c9163f75291c](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2M5XZ_n-seoul-tower-tree-of-love-locks?guid=c14d8eb5-c704-4be3-aa5e-c9163f75291c); '♥ Lock of Love ♥ Goes' cache created February 2014: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC4Y7B9\\_lock-of-love-goes?guid=c961d489-7099-4251-bc59-0e91edcd1eal](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC4Y7B9_lock-of-love-goes?guid=c961d489-7099-4251-bc59-0e91edcd1eal); 'The Love Bridge (Mariinsky Park)' cache created May 2011: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC1DV84\\_the-love-bridge-mariinsky-park?guid=48d5c55c-89d8-47d8-9358-1330c181d6e6](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC1DV84_the-love-bridge-mariinsky-park?guid=48d5c55c-89d8-47d8-9358-1330c181d6e6); 'Locked Up' cache created August 2010: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2DG1K\\_locked-up?guid=b665b4f7-ed72-41cd-8591-a62d43cb37b3](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2DG1K_locked-up?guid=b665b4f7-ed72-41cd-8591-a62d43cb37b3)
13. 'Liefdesbrug [Love bridge]' cache created January 2013: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC43WBD\\_liefdesbrug?guid=44c85530-7b5f-43ea-bbb1-c930ab33b52b](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC43WBD_liefdesbrug?guid=44c85530-7b5f-43ea-bbb1-c930ab33b52b); 'Liebesbrücke \*reloaded\* [Love bridge]' cache created in October 2015: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC64H24\\_liebesbruecke-reloaded?guid=432e8441-194a-4d68-a845-d0841fca5baa](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC64H24_liebesbruecke-reloaded?guid=432e8441-194a-4d68-a845-d0841fca5baa); 'Lucchetti dell' Amore - Liebesschlösser [love locks]' cache

- created April 2014: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC4A873\\_lucchetti-dell-amore-liebesschlusser?guid=85f2d154-6caa-4942-8fab-f53b06635cd5](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC4A873_lucchetti-dell-amore-liebesschlusser?guid=85f2d154-6caa-4942-8fab-f53b06635cd5)
14. ‘Kladka Ojca Bernatka / The Footbridge of Father Bernatek’ cache created April 2011: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2V9VV\\_kladka-ojca-bernatka?guid=10e8ee33-1e65-49fa-96c4-f61077ab296e](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2V9VV_kladka-ojca-bernatka?guid=10e8ee33-1e65-49fa-96c4-f61077ab296e); ‘Liebesbrücke [Love bridge]’ cache created September 2010: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EJCE\\_liebessbrucke?guid=dc2cb6d3-2c16-4852-b33a-865aad6511b](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EJCE_liebessbrucke?guid=dc2cb6d3-2c16-4852-b33a-865aad6511b)
  15. ‘Love Locks’ cache created January 2015 : [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5K7EM\\_love-locks?guid=ad96a225-f5c0-4f1b-b5b4-78f61acc7f02](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5K7EM_love-locks?guid=ad96a225-f5c0-4f1b-b5b4-78f61acc7f02)
  16. ‘Kladka Ojca Bernatka / The Footbridge of Father Bernatek’ cache created April 2011: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2V9VV\\_kladka-ojca-bernatka?guid=10e8ee33-1e65-49fa-96c4-f61077ab296e](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2V9VV_kladka-ojca-bernatka?guid=10e8ee33-1e65-49fa-96c4-f61077ab296e)
  17. ‘I Love Geocaching’ cache created September 2010: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EZ0M\\_i-love-geocaching?guid=f12769a6-c097-4c31-b4fb-8bb69fd34463](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EZ0M_i-love-geocaching?guid=f12769a6-c097-4c31-b4fb-8bb69fd34463); ‘Love Lock’ cache created October 2016: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VBW2\\_love-locks?guid=23ec4ec6-0e73-4241-b27f-7d8a82b021e5](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VBW2_love-locks?guid=23ec4ec6-0e73-4241-b27f-7d8a82b021e5)
  18. ‘Love Lock’ cache created October 2016: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VBW2\\_love-locks?guid=23ec4ec6-0e73-4241-b27f-7d8a82b021e5](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VBW2_love-locks?guid=23ec4ec6-0e73-4241-b27f-7d8a82b021e5); ‘Love Locks of Porvoo’ cache created February 2011: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2NFBZ\\_love-locks-of-porvoo?guid=6727764d-1115-47b9-a134-7c544941c702](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2NFBZ_love-locks-of-porvoo?guid=6727764d-1115-47b9-a134-7c544941c702)
  19. See: [https://www.negeocachingsupplies.co.uk/index.php?route=product/product&path=106\\_313&product\\_id=970](https://www.negeocachingsupplies.co.uk/index.php?route=product/product&path=106_313&product_id=970) (accessed 18 January 2019).
  20. Personal communication, Chris Johnson, Design Partner, NE Geocaching Supplies, 24 February 2019.
  21. ‘Liebesschlösser und Luftschlösser (love locks and castles in the air)’ cache created August 2012: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3VVB7\\_liebesschlusser-und-luftschlusser?guid=2765fee3-4fe2-448e-813f-740eef224c1a](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3VVB7_liebesschlusser-und-luftschlusser?guid=2765fee3-4fe2-448e-813f-740eef224c1a); ‘Love Lock’ cache created October 2016: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VBW2\\_love-locks?guid=23ec4ec6-0e73-4241-b27f-7d8a82b021e5](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6VBW2_love-locks?guid=23ec4ec6-0e73-4241-b27f-7d8a82b021e5); ‘Love Lock’ cache created February 2015: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5MQTE\\_love-lock?guid=8962c762-d919-489f-a26a-2388f065e981](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5MQTE_love-lock?guid=8962c762-d919-489f-a26a-2388f065e981); ‘I Love Geocaching’ cache created September 2010: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EZ0M\\_i-love-geocaching?guid=f12769a6-c097-4c31-b4fb-8bb69fd34463](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EZ0M_i-love-geocaching?guid=f12769a6-c097-4c31-b4fb-8bb69fd34463); ‘Mesarski most/Butchers’ Bridge’ cache created June 2011: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2WT0Q\\_mesarski-most-butchers-bridge?guid=02fabd01-fc1f-467c-8937-0c1f2731a582](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2WT0Q_mesarski-most-butchers-bridge?guid=02fabd01-fc1f-467c-8937-0c1f2731a582)
  22. ‘Love Lock’ cache created May 2017: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3CZFB\\_love-lock?guid=21d5a3a2-6edd-49f2-9c7f-963b36569c4f](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3CZFB_love-lock?guid=21d5a3a2-6edd-49f2-9c7f-963b36569c4f)
  23. ‘Liebesbrücke (Love bridge)’ cache created September 2010: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EJCE\\_liebessbrucke?guid=dc2cb6d3-2c16-4852-b33a-865aad6511b](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EJCE_liebessbrucke?guid=dc2cb6d3-2c16-4852-b33a-865aad6511b)
  24. ‘Love Lock Tower’ cache created December 2016: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6Y026\\_love-lock-tower?guid=8d67871d-a713-444a-810e-f6b05dd1f085](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6Y026_love-lock-tower?guid=8d67871d-a713-444a-810e-f6b05dd1f085); ‘Liefdesbrug (Love bridge)’ cache created January 2013: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC43WBD\\_liefdesbrug?guid=44c85530-7b5f-43ea-bbb1-c930ab33b52b](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC43WBD_liefdesbrug?guid=44c85530-7b5f-43ea-bbb1-c930ab33b52b); ‘Musikalische Liebesbrücke’ cache created February 2007: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC115A4\\_musikalische-liebessbrucke?guid=ce6050d9-a183-4697-a523-9a50e0053583](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC115A4_musikalische-liebessbrucke?guid=ce6050d9-a183-4697-a523-9a50e0053583); ‘Love Locks’ cache created March 2005: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GCN3VG\\_love-locks?guid=2a2fa511-ca35-4eeb-96a9-c4600901c71a](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GCN3VG_love-locks?guid=2a2fa511-ca35-4eeb-96a9-c4600901c71a); ‘Neckarelzer Liebesschlösser (Love-Locks)’ cache created December 2012: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC42XKR\\_neckarelzer-liebesschlusser?guid=252a66f2-6168-4a14-8199-e97922de429c](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC42XKR_neckarelzer-liebesschlusser?guid=252a66f2-6168-4a14-8199-e97922de429c)

25. '♥ Love lock ♥' cache created September 2013: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC4NNRK\\_love-lock](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC4NNRK_love-lock); 'Kladka Ojca Bernatka/The Footbridge of Father Bernatek' cache created April 2011: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2V9VV\\_kladka-objca-bernatka?guid=10e8ee33-1e65-49fa-96c4-f61077ab296e](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2V9VV_kladka-objca-bernatka?guid=10e8ee33-1e65-49fa-96c4-f61077ab296e); 'Albert lock' cache created April 2014: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC52F7X\\_albert-lock](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC52F7X_albert-lock); 'I Love Geocaching' cache created September 2010: [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EZOM\\_i-love-geocaching?guid=f12769a6-c097-4c31-b4fb-8bb69fd34463](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EZOM_i-love-geocaching?guid=f12769a6-c097-4c31-b4fb-8bb69fd34463)

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