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UNLOCKING THE LOVE-LOCK

The History and Heritage of a Contemporary Custom
Ceri Houlbrook

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DESCRIPTION

A padlock is a mundane object, designed to fulfil a specific – and secular – purpose. A contemporary custom has given padlocks new significance. This custom is ‘love-locking’, where padlocks are engraved with names and attached to bridges in declaration of romantic commitment. This custom became popular in the 2000s, and its dissemination was rapid, geographically unbound, and highly divisive, with love-locks emerging in locations as diverse as Paris and Taiwan; New York and Seoul; Melbourne and Moscow. This book explores the worldwide popularity of the love-lock as a ritual token of love and commitment by considering its history, symbolism, and heritage.

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UNLOCKING *the* LOVE- LOCK

The History and Heritage
of a Contemporary Custom



CERI HOULBROOK

“This is a well-researched and thoughtful assessment of a fascinating topic.” • **Sarah Randles, University of Melbourne**

“...this is an eminently enjoyable and thorough investigation of a popular phenomenon through the lens of heritage and folk tradition.” • **Sara De Nardi, Western Sydney University**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ceri Houlbrook attained her doctorate in Archaeology from the University of Manchester, and is a lecturer in Folklore and History at the University of Hertfordshire. Her primary research interests are contemporary folklore and the material culture of popular customs and beliefs. She has published previously on the British phenomenon of coin-trees and the history and folklore of concealed objects.

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