

Please provide us with a summary of your PEARL Grant project, how it went and what the impact was using the framework below as well as adding / attaching any additional information or outputs you feel relevant.

Activity Title:	Queen and Country Pilot Study: The 2018 Royal Wedding in Lincoln
Grant-holder name:	Dr Edward Owens

- 1) Please provide a summary describing the final project as it was delivered. Include details of when and where the activity took place, and any changes made to the original proposal alongside why these took place.

Due to time and budgetary constraints, the final project took the form of a two-part public survey of attitudes towards the 2018 royal wedding among members of the public. The Harry-Meghan wedding took place on Saturday 19 May 2018. In anticipation of the wedding, I completed the necessary ethics forms that enabled me to organise two kinds of public survey. The first of these was an online 'survey monkey' questionnaire that was publicized through an online WordPress blog, Facebook, Twitter, and university social media. It invited respondents to answer a two-part survey (the first before the wedding, the second after) on a range of questions relating to Harry and Meghan's marriage. Although the surveys were anonymous, respondents were instructed to record their age, gender, occupation, and location in order to enable me to try and draw conclusions regarding the different constituencies who answered the questions. Approx. 150 respondents answered Part A of the online questionnaire (before the wedding); approx. 50 respondents answered Part B of the online questionnaire (after the wedding). I discuss this in greater detail below, but this was slightly frustrating as all participants who answered Part A were meant to also answer Part B. Nevertheless, given the limitations of my social media presence and the general public annoyance/boredom that seems to have accompanied the royal wedding, this difference in responses is perhaps unsurprising. The second kind of public survey that was undertaken was through student-led interviews with members of the public. Before royal wedding day, I again ensured all ethics and safety procedures were in place to enable me to employ four students to undertake interviews with members of the public (shoppers) on Lincoln's High Street on Friday 18 May (before the wedding) and Monday 21 May (after the wedding). The questions followed the same pattern of those contained in the online questionnaire in order to ensure consistency. The students generally did a very good job and, over the course of the two sessions on the Friday and Monday, recorded approx. 250 sets of responses. The students were then employed to transcribe the handwritten answers to typed up 'Word' documents, which has made it easier for me to analyze the responses of the public to the royal wedding. Although I have not yet completed my analysis of all of the responses captured as part of either the student-led interviews or the online questionnaires, there are clear patterns that emerge from the data which (despite the shortcomings of the data set – more below) indicate a split in public attitudes to the royal wedding, which broadly mirrors wider research on the public's reception of the monarchy's public image.

The website through which the online parts of the questionnaires could be found still exists and can be accessed here: <https://the2018royalwedding.wordpress.com>

It was difficult given time and budgetary constraints to incorporate the other elements that originally formed part of the project proposal – specifically royal wedding activities involving local school children and care home residents. In order to have engaged these constituencies, much more preparation would have been required – including the completion of ethics procedures to work with vulnerable / younger age groups. Unfortunately, given the timing of the Harry-Meghan wedding, this simply was not possible. However, if I had involved these constituencies it would have certainly enriched the project by providing a wider range of responses to the royal wedding whilst also enabling me to learn about a new kind of public outreach that I have not engaged in before.

- 2) Assess the outcomes of the activity and its impact on people who engaged with it. Please include details of:
 - a. What was successful?
 - b. What did not go so well?
 - c. What would you do differently next time?

My main hope for this pilot study was to learn about the kinds of public engagement that could form part of the much bigger project that I am running with colleagues at the University of Sussex, titled 'Queen and Country', which will examine the shifts in public attitudes to the monarchy over the course of Elizabeth II's reign. Part of this project will consider contemporary responses to the monarchy – i.e. those occurring in the present in relation to events like the Harry-Meghan wedding. I was unable to engage with either care home residents or schoolchildren – two of the key demographics that my colleagues and I envisage forming part of the Q&C project. I would like to have learnt more about the benefits and pitfalls of running projects with these demographics, so I was disappointed not to have done more with them. All the same, the pilot study did highlight a number of key areas that I was previously unfamiliar with and which will help inform my approach to the Q&C project. This includes how to design questionnaires; how to ensure ethics and safety procedures are met; how to/how not to publicize one's project online – i.e. the limitations of social media as a publicity tool and the biases this can create in shaping one's data set; and of course how to manage time, costs, and resources in order to ensure the project's success – (it became clear very early on that public engagement is very demanding in terms of the time it requires to plan and execute a project!!)

In terms of those who participated in the study, I found it a rewarding experience, as did the four students who undertook the interviews in person with people in Lincoln. Those members of the public who either responded to the online questionnaires or who were willing to talk with one of the student interviewers also seem to have found it interesting enough that it was worth bothering to complete: some respondents really got into the questions and found it a satisfying experience, venting their opinions on the monarchy. Notably, the interviewers had different 'hit-rates' in terms of their ability to get members of the public to stop in the street and talk to them. I put this difference down to their self-confidence and their ability to spontaneously engage others in conversation in what is quite a difficult situation. A lot of people simply were not interested

in stopping to talk with the interviewers, and this is something I will take into consideration when designing other royal-related public questionnaires like this one. Equally, ensuring that respondents to two-part online questionnaires complete both parts of the survey will be key when it comes to running the Q&C project: in the case of the 2018 royal wedding, I put this down to royal wedding fatigue: people generally seemed quite bored of the entire event by the time it arrived so getting people to log on after the wedding in order to fill in a post-wedding questionnaire was difficult (50 respondents completed Part B of the online questionnaire – approx. a third of those that completed Part A). Again, this has made me rethink how to pitch and publicize online questionnaires in order to ensure consistency and a wider reach.

When it comes to running similar public engagement activities like this one, I will allow more time all round in order to ensure the successful completion of activities. Trying to run projects like this one alongside other full-time teaching and research commitments was extremely demanding and, at one point, I was not sure whether it was feasible given, in particular, the time constraints under which I was working with the wedding falling on 19 May. Because I have spent the last year completing a book, I still haven't finished analyzing and logging the responses collected as part of the pilot study. However, I have already started devising a journal article on the study which will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal in late 2019/early 2020 on the topic of the 2018 royal wedding.

- d. What was the impact? Please include a summary of how many people have engaged with the activity (face-face, online, via social media etc.). Include any qualitative or quantitative evaluation data and comments.

Naturally, given the nature of this survey-led activity and the limitations of online/in-person questionnaires, 'impact' is the most difficult thing to gauge. As I have said above, some respondents (both online and in interview with the students) really seemed to enjoy articulating their opinions on a royal institution which, generally speaking, does not receive much critical attention in public life. A large number of respondents stated that they would be interested in participating in subsequent royal-related studies and this could again be interpreted as indicating a general interest in the topic. Although I have little evidence for this, I think the most notable impact was probably asking members of the public to answer difficult questions on the nature of the British constitutional system and the role the royal family plays within it in ways that they are not used to – hence altering their perspective on the monarchy. Most people take the existence of the monarchy for granted (as a fact of everyday life in modern Britain), but this study encouraged respondents to consider their relationship with the Crown and royals in ways that tested their assumptions and, hopefully, made them think differently about the House of Windsor and the role the monarchy plays in national life.

- 3) How has your public engagement activity had an impact on research? This could include new data, new questions generated by the public, how the engagement has changed or shaped your research etc.

See above: planned research output on the 2018 royal wedding currently in development; to be submitted to *The Court Historian* in late 2019/early 2020.

- 4) Are you hoping to repeat, continue or carry out further activity following on from your PEARL grant? If so, please provide details.

Yes, see above: the point of this pilot study was to learn more about public engagement in ways that would inform the preparation of a major grant application for the forthcoming 'Queen & Country' project.

- 5) Please describe any outputs from your project you could provide to support future PEARL and public engagement activities at the University such as;
- Photographs / films
 - Evaluation data
 - Methodologies
 - Contacts

Data has been collected and is still in the process of being analyzed. The *raw* data cannot be shared with anyone outside of the project due to ethical procedures. Some of the data will however appear as part of a journal article having been interpreted in relation to the wider histories of the modern British monarchy. The methodology used as part of this pilot study will also be discussed in the introduction to the journal article.

- 6) Are there any further comments, ideas, suggestions or other you would like to share?

I think it would be worth highlighting to future recipients of PEARL funding that projects do not necessarily go entirely to plan, hence 'pivoting' is required and is probably inevitable to some extent. Equally, I think it would be worth emphasizing that it is really important to be realistic about what is achievable within time constraints given the other teaching/research demands that are exerted on researchers. Finally, I would just like to record in writing my thanks to the PEARL time and, in particular, Sarah Harris who acted as the liaison on this project. It was a pleasure undertaking the pilot study even if everything did not go quite to plan. I have learnt a great deal and my future research proposal for the Q&C project will be much stronger because of what I have learnt through the pilot study.