CREATING AN AI QUEEN

Connecting audiences with the remote past

Helen Bonser-Wilton, Chief Executive, Leeds Castle

HelenBonser-Wilton@leeds-castle.co.uk

LEEDS CASTLE
KENT ENGLAND

Pilgrimage of Love: Eleanor of Castile

Reimagining eleanor

Queen Eleanor material swatch guides

2

3

3B

5

4A

6

8

7

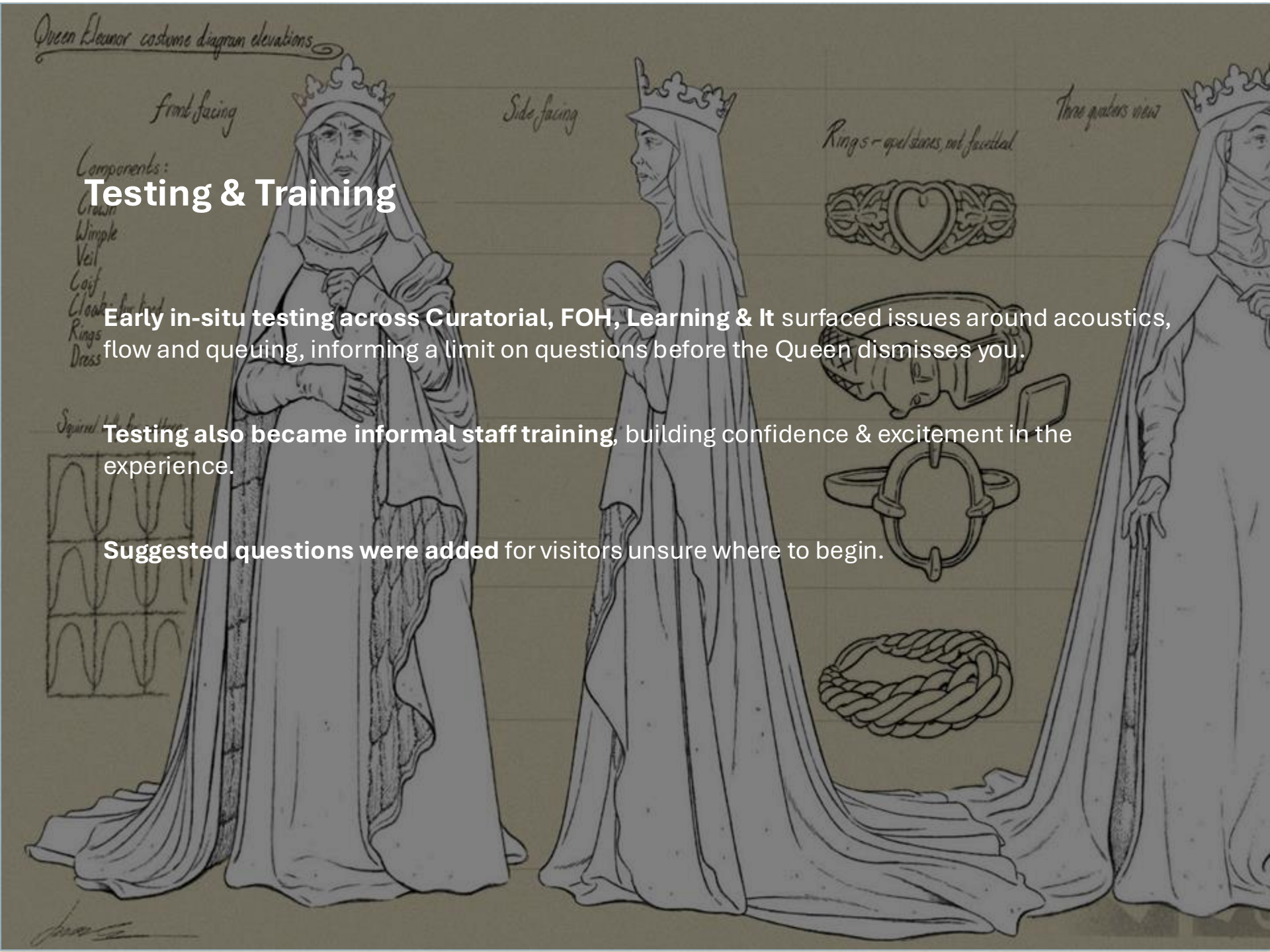
4B

4C

9

10

AUDIENCE WITH THE QUEEN



Testing & Training

Early in-situ testing across Curatorial, FOH, Learning & It surfaced issues around acoustics, flow and queuing, informing a limit on questions before the Queen dismisses you.

Testing also became informal staff training, building confidence & excitement in the experience.

Suggested questions were added for visitors unsure where to begin.

Authenticity, Ethics and Visitor Trust

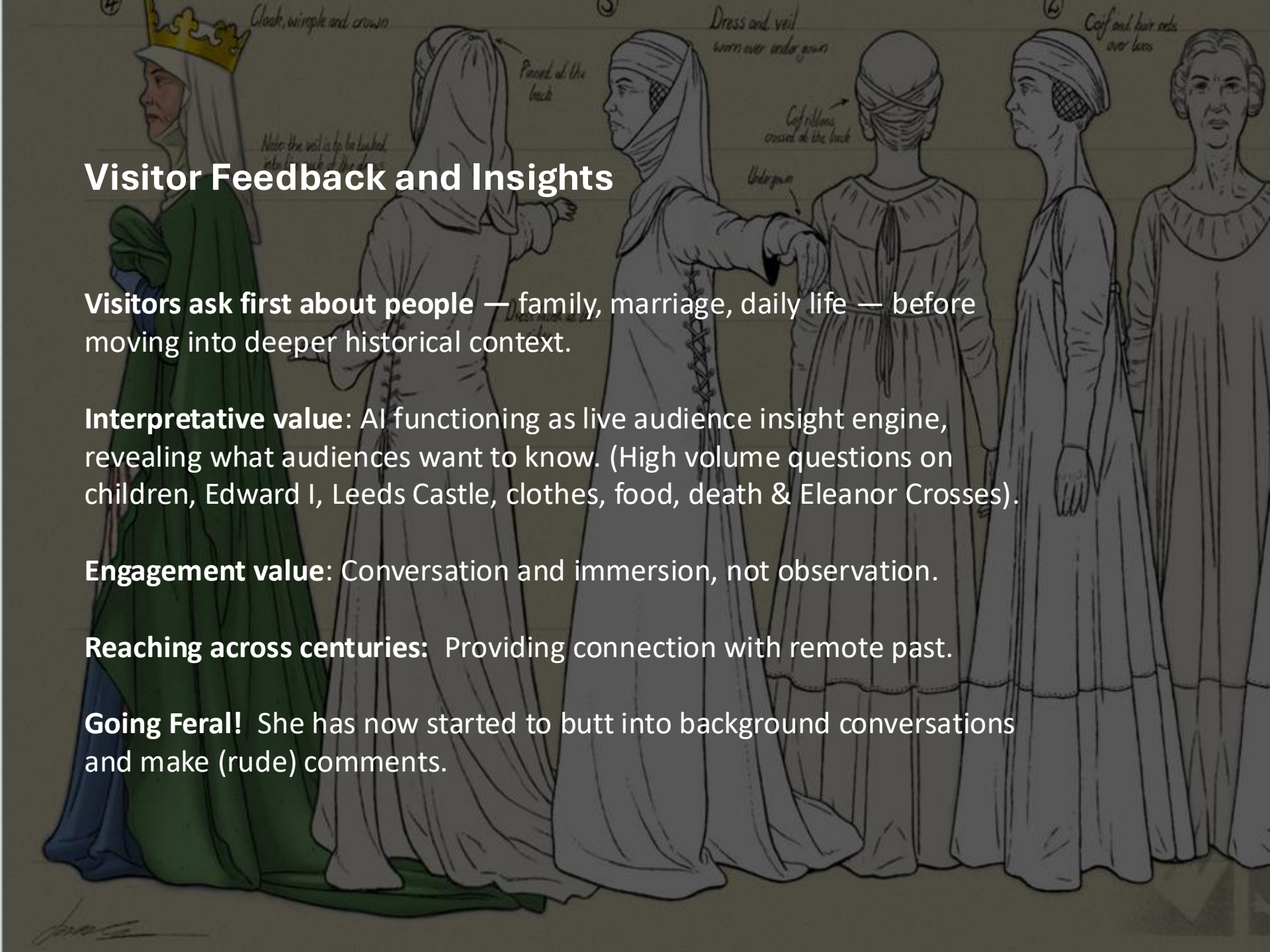
Transparency: visitors are informed how the AI forms answers and what is recorded.

Only transcripts of questions & responses are saved; no audio or visual data is stored.

Biggest ethical risk is false authority: AI can sound confident when evidence is thin.

Mitigation through strong scholarship, pre programmed historical facts & ongoing refinement.

But Eleanor is quite scary, sometimes visitors want staff to ask questions!



Visitor Feedback and Insights

Visitors ask first about people — family, marriage, daily life — before moving into deeper historical context.

Interpretative value: AI functioning as live audience insight engine, revealing what audiences want to know. (High volume questions on children, Edward I, Leeds Castle, clothes, food, death & Eleanor Crosses).

Engagement value: Conversation and immersion, not observation.

Reaching across centuries: Providing connection with remote past.

Going Feral! She has now started to butt into background conversations and make (rude) comments.

AUDIENCE WITH THE QUEEN