



Landmark British History

Commissioning Opportunity



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SECTION A: OPPORTUNITY

Commissioning Opportunity : Landmark British History | 47216

Commissioner	Daniel Clarke
Commissioning Manager	Lea Lauvray
Title	Landmark British History
Network	BBC Radio 4
Guide Price	£4950 per episode
Genre	Factual
Duration	14'
No. of Episodes	30 – 50, or more with the right idea
Transmission Period	From September 2026
Slot Day	Mon-Fri
Slot Time	1345
Production Location	We welcome proposals that support the BBC's strategic rebalancing of production away from London, either from the outset or with a credible transition plan in the first year of the contract, but the editorial proposition is always paramount.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE:

- **Full proposals** must be submitted via **PiCoS** (Landmark British History | 47216) before the deadline at **noon on Tues 13 January**
- There is no short proposal stage
- There is a 1000 max word count for Production Experience and a 1000 max word count for Full Proposals
- There is a cap of TWO ideas per supplier
- Submissions from supplier partnerships are welcome. In the case of a partnership, one registered supplier must be designated as the lead partner. No company should be attached to more than 3 ideas.

NETWORK EDITORIAL STRATEGY & OBJECTIVES

Radio 4 is the biggest speech station in the world. We commission nearly 8,000 new programmes and podcasts every year, chosen from the many offers submitted to our commissioners. This is alongside having editorial oversight of all the regular news sequences, programmes and strands that sit in the schedule and on BBC Sounds.

In turbulent times, history can be a good way to frame and inform the current political debate and shine light on the various claims being made by competing groups.

We know that the Radio 4 listeners love history and, further, that there is a huge appetite for stories from the past within the opportunity audience.

So we're looking for clever ways to explore history; creating a landmark series which is both a compelling listen and a resource for many years to come.

Do think hard about treatment: if the Reithian mission for Radio 4 is reassuringly constant, the manner in which we capture people's imaginations and draw them into our world should be constantly evolving.

We look forward to discussing your best ideas.

Mohit

Mohit Bakaya
Director, BBC Speech Audio
Controller, BBC Radio 4 & Radio 4 Extra

THE EDITORIAL OPPORTUNITY

We're living through a time of great change, where the question of what constitutes British identity is being contested, and the politics of belonging sit squarely at the heart of political debate. So: who are we? What defines our culture and our values? And what does it mean to be British?

We're looking for a landmark series that tells a compelling history of the British Isles and helps us tackle these questions by looking deeply into our past.

It will need to have scale – 30-50 x 14' episodes, or more with the right idea – and to be ambitious in scope. But in terms of how we do it, it's over to you.

It could be chronological, and span centuries, aiming to tell the full story of our isles – *This Sceptred Isle*, reinvented for 2026.

But it's more likely to have an organising principle – a conceit that enables us to zone in on specific chapters from our history that tell us something fascinating about how we've become the nation we are now.

What are the moments of convulsion or revolution that have shaped the British Isles up until now (the industrial revolution, say, or the Reformation)?

And how could your series explore such moments in a way that brings them vividly to life?

Alternatively, your idea could take a deep dive into just one period or pivot-point from our past which still has ripples stretching into the present – and explore it in forensic depth.

The most successful landmark history we have commissioned has often been framed through a unique treatment, most notably *The History of the World in 100 Objects*, and your series could be told through a set of people, places, ideas, institutions, cultural artefacts, documents, or events.

But remember that one of the reasons for the success of *100 Objects* was that it was highly original, at that time, to look at history through material culture – and now, it's not! So, it's best treated as an inspiration, rather than something to directly emulate.

A more narrative-driven approach could work well, too – some of the best history podcasts out there simply take us through what happened, sometimes through a particular lens, and always with life, character, and gripping storytelling, as well as rigorous research.

Your series will need to be presented by brilliant presenting talent – someone with the heft to carry a project of this scale – and we would prefer you to come to us with presenter(s) in mind.

The ultimate commission needs to have a straightforward, crystal clear, immediately graspable vision for what it is doing and why. It should have serious purpose, and real intellectual ambition – but a low barrier to entry.

History in audio is a hugely lively and competitive area, and this commission needs to stand out within the mix of what is out there in the podcast world now.

PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE

Please address the points below in the ‘Production Experience’ field in PiCoS

(1000 words max.)

You must be able to demonstrate:

- Extensive production experience in delivering factual scripted programmes
- Experience in delivering at scale
- Extensive experience in working with high-profile on-air presenters
- Experience working with Radio 4, and extensive demonstrable knowledge of working within the Editorial Guidelines and standards

POINTS TO NOTE

Sustainability

The BBC is committed to informing and inspiring listeners about how they, as individuals, can take steps towards more sustainable living. Your proposal should consider how the editorial and production methods contribute towards the BBC’s Net Zero strategy – you can read about this [here](#). Where appropriate, sustainability should be woven into the editorial – either implicitly or explicitly. Production methods should demonstrate good practice – minimising negative environmental impacts (e.g. from energy, waste, travel) and, where possible, making a positive contribution. For further information, please discuss sustainability with the Commissioning Editor and see our Radio Commissioning site [here](#).

Key Deliverables

Finished edited show for broadcast and audio for podcast publication. Social media video assets for promotional purposes, where needed, to be discussed in advance. Descriptions completed in proteus in a timely fashion and, where possible, listening copies of audio made available for press previews and other promotional opportunities.

Rights

Radio 4 requires programmes to be contracted under the Audio Terms of Trade. This will vary only in exceptional circumstances. Proposals with co-production funding will be welcomed.

Compliance and BBC Editorial Guidelines

You will be required to deliver programmes that are in line with the BBC's Editorial Guidelines and be able to adapt to the BBC's changing editorial and business needs during the period of the commission.

COMMISSIONING TEAM

The following people will be involved in the evaluation of your proposal at various stages:

- **Mohit Bakaya**, Controller, Radio 4 & Radio 4 Extra and Director, Speech Audio
- **Daniel Clarke**, Commissioning Editor, Factual Storytelling
- **Tracy Williams**, Commissioning Executive, Factual

SECTION B: COMMISSIONING TIMETABLE

Stage	Timings (all midday)	Activities
Commissioning Brief published	Wc 24 Nov	Publication of Commissioning Brief. Round opens in PiCoS.
Full Proposal Deadline	Tues 13 Jan 12 noon (prev. 06 Jan)	Deadline for Full Proposal and Production Experience to be submitted via PiCoS. Your proposal should answer the editorial objectives and other requirements as set out in The Editorial Opportunity.
Full Proposal Results	wc 19 Jan (prev. wc 12 Jan)	Results published in PiCoS. Shortlisted suppliers invited to a pitch meeting.
Pitching	Wc 09 Feb	Pitches with panel and shortlisted suppliers. Suppliers should expect to discuss and elaborate on their proposal and answer questions about it. You may be asked to start with a brief presentation. More detail will be given when you are invited to pitch. Please make sure you are available for pitching during this period.
Results	Late Feb	Results and feedback published in PiCoS.
Conditional Commission and Contract		Commissioning award decision made, commissioning specification completed and contract issued. Agreement of all programme related deliverables and technical specifications.

We will assess your proposal according to this timetable. **Late submissions cannot be accepted.**

At any stage of the process, we may need to come back to you to seek clarification. Your answers will be factored into the evaluation process as appropriate.

If you have any questions about this commissioning brief that need answering before you submit your Full Proposal and Production Experience responses, please ensure you email them to lea.lauvray@bbc.co.uk.