This lecture is about a woman who once edited Britain’s leading popular geographical magazine but whose name does not figure in any history of publishing or geography; a woman who played a significant role in producing Britain’s leading literary magazines in the interwar period, and knew many of the leading women writers of her day, but is entirely absent from the scholarly literature on women writers and journalists.

Drawing on a variety of published and unpublished material, including the evidence in Ivy Davison’s remarkable library bequeathed to the British Federation of Women Graduates in 1977, the lecture will consider the significance her social and family background, her service in the Great War, her interwar career as an independent professional woman in journalism and publishing, and what can be gleaned of her relationships with leading writers, publishers and editors during the period, including Virginia Woolf. The lecture suggests that Davison’s career as journalist, reviewer and editor sheds light on wider issues about women’s role in editorial work and popular publishing during the twentieth century.