The Geological Society of London was founded in 1807. At the time, membership was restricted to men, many of whom became well-known names in the history of the geological sciences. On the 21 May 1919, the first female Fellows were elected to the Society, 112 years after its formation.

This Special Publication celebrates the centenary of that important event. In doing so it presents the often untold stories of pioneering women geoscientists from across the world who navigated male-dominated academia and learned societies, experienced the harsh realities of Siberian field-exploration, or responded to the strategic necessity of the ‘petroleum girls’ in early American oil exploration and production.

It uncovers important female role models in the history of science, and investigates why not all of these women received due recognition from their contemporaries and peers. The work has identified a number of common issues that sometimes led to original work and personal achievements being lost or unacknowledged, and as a consequence, to histories being unwritten.