Introduction
Liza Cooke graduated with an Upper Second Class Honours degree in Classics in 1979 from the UCL Department of Greek and Latin. Whilst she was studying, her eldest daughter attended the university day care centre for which she will always remain grateful as, without that support, she would have not have finished her degree. Liza now lives in Kenya.

What did you enjoy most about your time in Greek and Latin and at UCL?
Several things: the breadth of the subjects that were available for study and being able to immerse myself in Greek and Latin language and literature; the friends I made (sadly there’s only one with whom I still have contact); and the buzz of being in London.

What was your career path like after leaving UCL?
Having brought one daughter with me to UCL, my husband and I went on to produce three others (don't ask!) so, initially, I was consumed with childcare but managed to do some private coaching in A level Latin. Once the girls were all at school, I did a PGCE and taught Reception for several years before going into special education where I've been ever since, with occasional summer excursions into teaching English as a foreign language.

For the last four years, my husband and I have been working with the Anglican church in the North Rift of Kenya where I have joined the staff of a project working in the community with families who have children with special needs.

What do you like most about your current job?
The variation and the challenge. I've had to learn a new language (Kiswahili) and how to drive off road and to recycle my longstanding skills so that they are meaningful and appropriate in a very different cultural context.
What was your first-ever job?
I spent the summer in the lower 6th form in a factory making plastic "Wedgwood" flowerpots in order to earn the money to go on an archaeological dig in the south of France.

What has been your favourite job?
I have realised that I really am a teacher at heart and have honestly enjoyed every single opportunity I've had to be a teacher in lots of different settings.

In what way did your studies help you in your subsequent work?
Studying Latin and Greek gave me a love of languages so my use of modern European languages became much more confident. When the time came to teach EFL and to study Kiswahili, I was greatly helped by my understanding of the structure of language. I also think the discipline of studying Latin and Greek developed both my analytical and intuitive skills which have been of great value on many an occasion.

What do you remember most about your time in UCL Greek and Latin?
I have many memories but two stand out clearly. I chose Lucretius for one of my finals papers and Dr Horsfall was my tutor. He had an office in one of the round observatories and I remember sitting there once in the fug of his cigarette smoke trying to answer his semi-serious charge to me of plagiarism in my latest essay. I can laugh now but I was terrified then, as I was very shy.

I also remember walking to Heal's in the Tottenham Court Road with Alan Griffiths after a Latin Elegy class as we both needed to buy wedding presents. We chatted together about family life and kitchen appliances!

Who at UCL (past or present) has most influenced you?
I will never forget the kindness of both Mark Gretton and Professor Goold who believed in me enough to allow me to study full-time with a small child. None of us were sure that I would actually be successful but their encouragement kept me on track and was an example to me for life as a teacher, especially when working with those who are struggling to learn.

Of what are you most proud about UCL?
I am very proud that UCL is rated so highly and that I had the opportunity to get my degree there.

What is your favourite part of UCL?
I have three favourites:
- the Classics corridor in the main building (although the Department is now situation in Gordon House);
- the Classics library;
- the gardens in Gordon Square.

What, in your opinion, would improve UCL?
Because of my personal circumstances, I rarely ventured outside the department so I am not really in a position to comment. But I would hazard a guess that appropriate student accommodation might need to be a continuing priority.

Tell me something about yourself that most people don’t know!
Although I sound very English, I am actually half American and half Irish and it shows!