

Dormitories

Before my time at St Georges dormitories were numbered from 1 to 6. By the time I arrived they had been named after famous people. In ascending order by age group; Nightingale, Wilson, Fry, Scott, Shaftesbury and Lister. Scott was on the ground floor to the left of the main entrance. Wilson and Nightingale were also on the ground floor at the far end of the main corridor. Above Scott was Fry, above Nightingale was Shaftesbury and above Wilson was Lister. Six dormitories, each with twenty boys.

Apart from Nightingale and Wilson, each dormitory had a prefect and a deputy. It was their responsibility to ensure that members of their dormitory carried out their personal and dormitory responsibilities.

At the end of each day a prefect would inspect each dormitory, bathroom and toilets, and mark them in out of ten. They would check that everything was back in place and any rubbish had been disposed of. After this, there would be prayers led by a warden and then lights out. We never had to do any actual cleaning as such e.g., floors, sinks and baths. At the end of each term marks would be totalled and the dormitory with the highest total would be rewarded with an outing accompanied by all the prefects. This would consist of a trip to a Brighton cinema, followed by a visit to a local café. There we would be served with egg and chips but, even better, unlimited slices of white bread and butter.

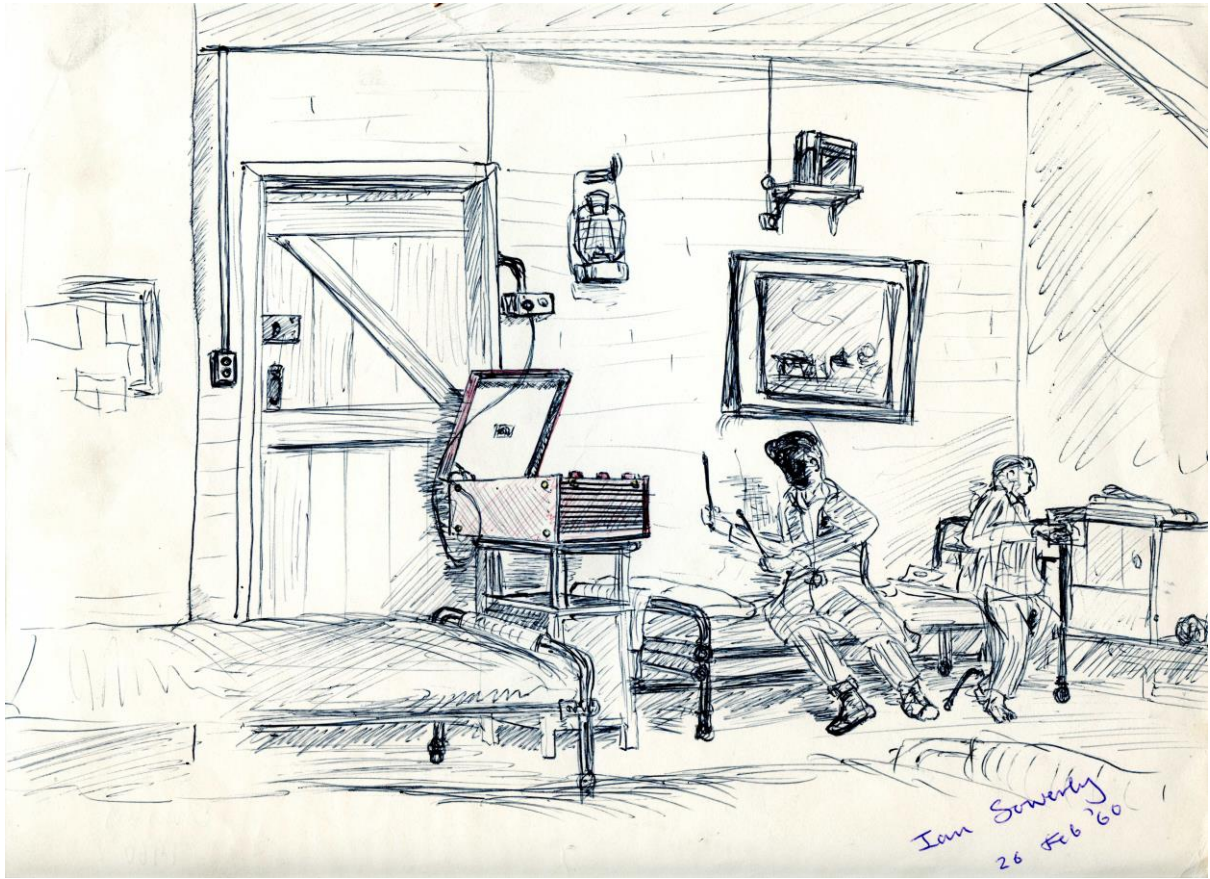
I went to Chailey when I was thirteen and Scott became my new domicile. It used to be a tradition that new boys would suffer a dormo-bashing to welcome them to their new home. Fortunately, for some unknown reason, I missed out on this, but I did receive an apple-pie bed.

During my first term two senior boys were caught going down to “the girls”. As punishment they had to sleep in Wilson for their “childish behaviour”. Debatable!

Between Lister and Shaftesbury was the Prefects Room. Prefects would congregate there. They had their own tea making facilities. There was also a “wireless” which could occasionally pick up Radio Luxemburg. On parents’ days refreshments would be served to parents and boys. Sugar for tea was provided in bowls on the tables, the only time we ever saw it in its natural state, and it became an opportunity for the prefects to top up their sugar tin when no one was looking.

I drew this (very) rough sketch, below, in Lister using ball-point pens. One boy is playing “drums” on a pillow to music coming from a Dansette record player, the other might be sorting out which 45 record to play next. The first boy is in a dressing gown, pyjamas and slippers whilst the other is just in pyjamas. Some of the detail is interesting. There appears to be a PA system (which I never heard used) and a hurricane lamp for emergency use. I wonder if it contained any fuel. Probably not since the boys would have found some use for it. Bed covers are folded over the end of each bed obviously provided for decorative purposes only. And note the rustic door.

Ian Sowerby (1957-1960)



Ian Sowerby
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