



British International School Riyadh

A student's guide to living in halls

Meet Seb, Danny, Katie, Kate and Ben, flatsharers at Bath University. Will Danny and Kate end up an item? Who's got the smelliest room? And when will "someone" do the washing-up? Janet Murray reports on real life in halls

Ben Parker, 20

Home town: Chichester, Physics Bsc (Hons)

I'm usually quite shy until I get to know people, so it took me a while to settle in and be myself. I'm the only state school kid in our group of friends, but they are quite normal, everyday people considering they all went to private school.

Danny is the big brother of the flat and is constantly winding people up. He'll turn off the oven when you're cooking or move your pans, which can be a bit annoying.

There's definitely chemistry between him and Barbie. Danny always seems to be hanging around her room and they are always play-fighting and being a bit flirty. We all think something might happen between them.

The worst thing about this year has been not having my um around to do my washing. At home, I'd just put it in the wash bag and it would reappear magically in my room, all washed and ironed. Now I walk round in creased clothes, all my T-shirts have shrunk and I take a careful of washing home at the end of each term.

Daniel Harris, 20

Home town: Cambridge, Business administration BSc (Hons)

Kate's nickname is Barbie because she is blonde, loves pink and is a bit ditz. She is very intelligent, but has a habit of saying silly things, so we enjoy trying to catch her out. One time we asked her where raisins came from and she said she thought they grew on trees. That's a typical Barbie comment.

Barbie and Katie are notoriously bad cooks. They have bangers and mash every night and do odd things like putting frozen mince straight into a frying pan. Often they'll end up ordering pizza.

When Seb is calm and chilled, he's a really good laugh, but after a drink he tends to get a bit emotional. At the start of the year, he really fancied this girl in our flat and used to sit outside her room, until the early hours of the morning, begging her to go out with him. One night he actually cried on me. I couldn't believe it – a fully-grown man crying into his hands. In the morning, he claimed not to remember anything about it – he always says that.

Seb also gets teased for being vain. For his birthday, we all clubbed together to buy him some hair straighteners, only to find the girl he was seeing had bought him some too, along with a spa day.

He tries to model himself on Spencer from Made in Chelsea [the E4 reality soap about a group of posh twentysomethings]. He started slicking back his hair and wearing white jeans, so we've been giving him a bit of stick about that.

Ben is probably the nerdiest out of the five of us. He's quite a reserved guy, who was so quiet during freshers' week, we thought he wasn't very sociable. As the year has gone on, he's really come out of his shell and has turned out to be a really nice, funny guy.

Katie is probably the most normal in the group. When she was away skiing, we emptied everything out of her room for a laugh. She came back late at night, after a long journey home and found all her stuff in the kitchen. All things considered, she took it well.

Kate (Barbie) Crooks, 20

Home town: Portsmouth, Business administration BSc (Hons)

I chose Woodland Court because it was one of the newest halls. At £125 a week, it's one of the pricier ones, but the rooms are a good size and all have a shower room.

There are 16 [students](#) in our flat and we share a communal kitchen, so it can get pretty messy. There have been times when the table, which seats about eight people, has been completely covered with dirty pots and pans because no one has got round to doing the washing-up.

The university and halls of residence are at the top of a really steep hill, so most people can't be bothered to carry their shopping home. There are always Tesco delivery vans driving round the campus. Because the kitchen gets so busy, most of us have formed our own cooking groups. I shop and cook with Katie, but our repertoire is quite limited. The others tease us, saying we have sausage and mash every night.

Seb is definitely the biggest party animal of the flat. While the rest of us are careful about what we spend, Seb seems to like to splash his money about and has bought us bottles of champagne before on nights out. He went to Harrow school, so he gets quite a bit of stick about being posh. I think his brother is about to become a Lord or something. He is quite good-humoured about it all. In fact, I think he secretly enjoys it.

His room is definitely the untidiest and his habit of ordering pizza and kebabs in the early hours of the morning means it doesn't always smell great. He's got one of those plug-in things that's supposed to make it smell nice, but I actually think it smells worse.

Sebastien Webb, 20

Home town: Slough, Natural sciences BSc (Hons)

It was a bit weird living with girls at first, as I went to an all-boys school, so I had to make sure I made a bit more effort to keep my bedroom tidy. I wouldn't say I'm posh, but I went to Harrow, so I get a bit of stick from time to time.

Having 16 people sharing one kitchen is a bit of a nightmare and there have been a few tiffs about washing-up. One guy was so bad, people ended up putting his dirty plates in his cupboard. The cleaners aren't contracted to do the washing-up, so if the kitchen gets too bad, everyone gets fined £25. We've had a few warning notices.

Danny is hilarious. He is quite loud and is always cracking jokes – mostly at Barbie's expense. He's also quite vain. Before we go out for the night, he'll change his clothes about three times and do his hair in this kind of quiffy thing, a bit like Jedward.

He gets teased because everyone always assumes he's Chinese, even though he isn't. When we order a Chinese takeaway, we'll always ask him if he wants to do the ordering, just to get on his nerves.

We like to play pranks on one other, like the time we put clingfilm over Kate's door when she had a guy over to visit. He walked straight through it and tried to walk casually out of the flat afterwards, with bits of clingfilm dropping off him. It was brilliant.

Katie Browning, 20

Home town: Brighton, Economics BSc (Hons)

The nicknames came about because, according to the boys, having a "Kate" and "Katie" is confusing. They called me "Baby" because I'm small and Kate "Barbie", which, unfortunately for her, seems to have stuck. Kate also gets teased because she is from Portsmouth, which Danny's dad calls "tat-land", which basically means it's a bit chavvy.

She gets teased about her accent and whenever she wears a diamond ring or gold earrings or something, everyone's like "Aw, you're so tat."

We have regular telly nights and always watch Britain's Got Talent, The Apprentice and Made In Chelsea together, usually in Danny's room because it's the tidiest. We tease Danny a lot about his "man crush" on Michael Buble.

Seb is very posh and likes to boast. He tells ridiculous stories about his posh friends, their posh cars and always has some kind of personal drama going on, but he is really lovely.

Accommodation tips from Bath University students

- Invest in a pack of cards for **pre-night out games** – this can be a great ice breaker
- **If you're shy**, just keep your door open on moving in day – people will soon come and say hi to you
- Invest in a **black marker pen and label everything**. If it's not labelled it'll soon find it's way into someone else's room
- Save money by shopping and **cooking with a group of friends**
- Making all **pots, pans and cutlery communal** can save arguments in the long run
- A cunning plan to stop people **stealing your milk** – add food colouring: no one will want to drink **blue milk**
- Avoid **romantic entanglements** with your closest neighbours – they rarely end happily