Hughes Hall Fresher’s Glossary:

To ease your integration into life at Hughes Hall and at the University of Cambridge, this glossary was designed to inform you of the meaning of some terminology not otherwise used elsewhere in the UK or globally.

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(The) Backs - a picturesque area to the east of Queen's Road in the city of Cambridge, England, where several colleges of the University of Cambridge back on to the River Cam, their grounds covering both banks of the river. The name "the Backs" refers to the backs of the colleges.

Blades – a rowing term used to refer to the spoon portion at the far end of the oar. Blades also refers the award won by boats that row in Bumps (either Lent Bumps or May Bumps; see Bumps) and “bump” 4 out of 4 races. The award comes in the form of an oar which is usually displayed in the MCR Bar.

Blue - Sportsmen and women at the University of Cambridge may be awarded a Full Blue (or simply a Blue), Half Blue, First Team Colours or Second Team Colours for competing at the highest level of university sport, which must include being in a Varsity match or race against the University of Oxford. A Full Blue is the highest honour that may be bestowed on a Cambridge sportsman or woman, and is a much-coveted and prestigious prize. In general, the Full Blue standard is approximately that of being successful at a national level of student competition, and the Half Blue standard is that of being successful at county or regional level.

Bluetack – the ladies who have a particular affinity for Blues boys.

BNOC – stands for “Big Name on Campus” and is used to refer to individuals who are very present at Hughes Hall events and activities.

Boat Club – Hughes Hall rowing club, one of the largest institutions within Hughes Hall, it attracts individuals who come to Hughes Hall to further their rowing career and sparks great enthusiasm in its members no matter their experience level.

Bop – Party at the college usually put on by the college’s student body. For Hughes Hall, these are put on by the MCR in the MCR bar. (see MCR) These often themed parties (see Fancy Dress) are very unique to Cambridge and very popular among both undergraduate and graduate students.

Bumps – a rowing event whereby each college boat of each division lines up along the river Cam and races one another (approx. 17 boats per division). The goal of bumps is to literally bump the boat ahead of you (or at least overtake/cross the bow end). Once this happens, the two boats involved in the bump stop rowing, allowing remaining boats to continue. These boats will then switch places in the starting line-up for the next day of bumps. There are two of them; one
held at the end of Lent term (Lent Bumps) and one held at the end of Easter term (May Bumps) and the starting line-up for each event is separate and determined by the previous year’s results.

**Easter** – the third of three academic terms at Cambridge (see Terms)

**Fancy Dress** – does not actually refer to dressing fancy. “Fancy Dress” actually refers to costumes. So a “Fancy Dress Bop” is actually a costume party and usually has a theme where attendees dress according to that theme.

**Fellow** – an academic post in a college (as distinct from the university).

**Formal(s)** – also known as Formal Hall, the evening meal held at some of the oldest (arguably with a strong academic tradition), universities in the United Kingdom at which students dress in formal attire and often gowns to dine. Gowns are not mandatory at Hughes Hall formals but may be at other college Formal dinners (be sure to check with each college).

**Fresher** – an incoming (first year) student at the University of Cambridge

**Fresher’s Flu** - the name commonly given to a battery of illnesses contracted by as many as 90% of new students during the first few weeks at a university, as a consequence of the intensive Fresher’s Week events schedule; common symptoms include fever, sore throat, severe headache, coughing and general discomfort.

**GLR** – the Garden Lecture Theater or Garden Lecture Room, a separate building located behind the main Hughes Hall administrative building (known as the Margaret Wileman Building, see below). 4 (soon to be 8) ergometers [also known as “rowing machines”] are located here and where much of the Hughes Hall rowing training takes place. This location is also used for supervisions and other extracurricular activities such as dance practice.

**Gown** – academic dress. The gowns wore by undergraduates differ slightly from those worn by graduate students (the sleeves of graduate gowns are longer, with a hook at the end). It is not likely that you will need to purchase a gown for your time at Hughes Hall as they are not mandatory for Formals at Hughes Hall. Additionally, it is usually easy enough to borrow a gown from someone if you will be attending a Formal at a college where it is mandatory (be sure to ask the person who invited you to the formal). Graduation ceremonies often do require gowns, as well as additional academic dress, which are almost always rented.

Note: Also refers to Cambridge students as opposed to “Town” which refers to the Cambridge locals (people living in Cambridge that aren’t necessarily associated with the university). There are some “Town vs. Gown” events, like in boxing, where the university club take on the town club.

**Half Blue** – a Blue in certain minor sports (see Blue)

**Hat Club** - the College’s society for talks and debate. It is an essential part of academic life in the college, in which everyone is encouraged to take part. The society hosts regular talks given
by students and fellows of the college as well as high-profile external speakers on anything from ancient history to particle physics. All of the talks are aimed at a general audience with no background in the subject area, making this a great place to learn something completely new and meet people outside of your area of study.

**Hawks Club** – (or Hawks), the private university club for men who have been awarded Blues.

**Induction Day** – University specific event meant to welcome you to your department. Chances are you will have several of these depending on your department and lab. Usually include information on safety and common practice as a student in that particular department. Happen during the first week or two of Michaelmas Term.

**JCR/MCR/SCR** – (or Common room), stands for Junior Combination Room, Middle Combination Room, or Senior Combination Room

- Junior Combination Room – college-level student union representing undergraduate students
- Middle/Senior Combination Room – college-level student union representing graduate students

Note: These terms can be used to refer to the room within which the student body is housed, the college bar or in reference to the organization itself.

**KFC** – Kitchen Fixed Charge, a non-optional college free paid to maintain the management of the cafeteria in Fenner’s.

**Fenner’s** – the name of the largest housing building at Hughes Hall. Also where the dining hall is located.

**Lent** – the second of three academic terms at Cambridge (see Terms)

**Matriculate** – (verb) to become an official member of the University

**Matriculation** – legally happens after you have signed your Matriculation Form (part of your Registration Day)

**Matriculation Dinner** – celebration of Matriculation (see above). Because of the size of the intake population compared to the size of Fenner’s cafeteria, Hughes Hall splits the celebration of Matriculation (see above) over several Matriculation Dinners. Each student may sign themselves up for one of these Formal dinners which consists of a free, 3-course meal with a small speech given by the President of the college (attendance is strongly encouraged).

**May Ball** – a large party held during May Week (ironically in June) which include conspicuous consumption and self-indulgence in the form of catered food, carnival-like events and activities, live music, and much more. Each college holds their own May Ball and prices range from £80-250 for the evening and often include a theme. These events tend to be viewed as important and worthwhile.
**May Week** – two weeks in June (last week of Easter Full Term) meant to celebrate the end of the academic year.

**MCR** – see JCR/MCR/SCR

**Michaelmas** – the first of three academic terms at Cambridge (see Terms)

**MWB** – Margaret Wileman Building, the main Hughes Hall building where most of the staff is located.

**NatSci** – (pronounced Nat-ski), the Natural Sciences Tripos and its students.

**Ospreys** – female version of Hawks

**Pidge** – short for “pigeonhole” (see below).

**Pigeonhole** – often referred to as a “pidge” (see above), the place on college where your mail will be located, awaiting your collection. Even those living off college will be provided with a pigeonhole so that they can receive mail at the college.

**Porter** – a college staff member who watches the gates/entrances of the college. Not someone who carries your luggage. This is also the person you should speak to if you lock yourself out of your room or if you have witnessed any suspicious behaviour on college. Become friends with these blokes and your time here will be much easier.

**Punt** - a long flat-bottomed shallow boat, originally evolved for shooting wild-fowl, but now popular at both Oxford and Cambridge as a pleasure craft. Propelled by sticking a pole in the river bed and pushing. Hughes Hall college has a punt which can be rented during the summer for a small fee.

**Punting** - the act of propelling a punt. As with all objects where a forward-acting force is applied at a point a long way behind the centre of gravity, a punt is fundamentally unstable, with errors of direction tending to magnify rather than be self-correcting. So punting correctly (in a dead straight line with no apparent effort) is more difficult than it looks.

**Registration day** – the day you register formally as a student of Hughes Hall. Your registration date will vary depending on the program you will be studying at Cambridge and if you are a UK, EU or International Student. Your Registration Date will be specified on your formal Acceptance Letter from Hughes Hall.

**Swap** – events organized by the MCR whereby a select number of individuals from one college (usually about 15) attend a Formal at another college as a group. These are currently highly coveted events and a great way to experience the atmosphere of other colleges.
**Surgery** – refers to a clinic where several doctors are located. When you first move to Cambridge, you must sign up for one (and only one) so that if illness/minor injury occurs, this will be where you go for help.

**Terms** – Cambridge course terms are split into 3, 8-week terms labelled Michaelmas (Oct. – Dec.), Lent (Jan. – March), and Easter (April – June), see [http://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/term-dates-and-calendars](http://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/term-dates-and-calendars)

**Trad** – (adjective) means “traditional” but refers to the many traditional practices carried out at the University of Cambridge due to its age. For example: “St. Johns’ dining hall is so trad!”