The variable **out\_reason**, giving the reason for the by election, takes the following values:

appointed | 251 23.11 23.11 (this includes accepting army commissions)

called to lords | 101 9.30 32.41

chose | 63 5.80 38.21 (chose to sit for another constituency)

deceased | 237 21.82 60.04

expelled | 6 0.55 60.59

petition | 93 8.56 69.15 (this includes voided elections)

vacated | 335 30.85 100.00

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Total | 1,086 100.00

There were a fair number of by elections precipitated by unexpected events, such as death of a peer (leading to MP being called to the lords) or death of MP.

The variable entry\_year ideally equals the first year that a person contested a parliamentary election. In practice, some entry\_year values reflect the first year that a person entered the House of Commons (i.e., contested and won), since this is what is easily available from the member biographies. Systematic checks of the biographies were made for all names first entering the data by 1812. After that date, many entry\_year values are missing. They can be set equal to firstyear. The error that this approximation introduces is that some persons will be coded as first contesting a race in 1814, say, when they actually first contested in 1798. They will be counted in the entering cohort for 1814 when they should not, probably upward biasing the win rate for cohorts after 1812 relative to those before.