

**‘IN AND OUT’:
AN ANALYSIS OF KIT-CAT CLUB MEMBERSHIP
(Web Appendix to *The Kit-Cat Club* by Ophelia Field, 2008)**

There are four main primary sources with regard to the membership of the Kit-Cat Club – Abel Boyer’s 1722 list,¹ John Oldmixon’s 1735 list,² a Club subscription list dated 1702,³ and finally the portraits painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller between 1697 and 1721 (as well as the 1735 Faber engravings of these paintings). None of the sources agree. Indeed, only the membership of four men (Dr Garth, Lord Cornwallis, Spencer Compton and Abraham Stanyan) is confirmed by all four of these sources.

John Macky, a Whig journalist and spy, was the first source for the statement that the Club could have no more than thirty-nine members at any one time,⁴ and Malone and Spence followed suit.⁵ It is highly unlikely that there were so many members at the Kit-Cat’s inception, however, and membership probably expanded with changes of venue, especially around 1702–3. By 1712–14, all surviving manuscript lists of toasted ladies total thirty-nine, suggesting that there was one lady toasted by each member and therefore that Macky was correct.⁶ The rough correlation between the dates of expulsions/deaths and the dates of new admissions (such as the expulsion of Prior followed by the admission of Steele in 1705) also supports the hypothesis that at some stage a cap was set on the size of the Club.

Allowing that all members were not concurrent, most sources estimate between forty-six and fifty-five members during the Club’s total period of activity.⁷ There are forty-four Kit-Cat paintings, but Oldmixon, who got his information primarily from his friend Arthur Maynwaring, lists forty-six members. Oldmixon also helpfully records that the first, founding generation of members included: Wharton, Dorset, Somers, Carbery, Halifax, Stepney, Compton and Tidcomb.⁸ Abel Boyer also had close personal contacts with several definite members of the Club, and his list adds a range of further names to the roster, in particular men who were Junto-following Whig MPs in the late 1690s.⁹

The most incontrovertible of the four sources, the 15 May 1702 manuscript subscription list for the building of a Club venue in Hampstead, contains fourteen names. One signatory - ‘Vandom[e]’¹⁰ - remains unidentified. His name has often been mistaken for that of Lord Grantham: ‘Henry D’Auverqueque’ or ‘Ouwkerk’ – son of Henry de Naussau and Keeper of the Privy Purse and Master of the Horse under William III. Ouwkerk knew Vanbrugh, Garth and Tonson and was a major political figure in 1702, but a Dutch member of the Kit-Cat Club was always improbable, and there is no other evidence to support his membership besides the misread signature.

The 1702 subscription list also causes confusion regarding the membership of ‘J. Dormer’, in so far as the signature looks more like that of Lieutenant-General James Dormer than that of his brother, Brigadier-General John Dormer. While the latter was certainly a Kit-Cat, as proved by the caption on his portrait’s Faber engraving, it is possible that James was also a member.¹¹ If so, it would be more likely that they sat in the Club in sequence, rather than in tandem, as no other close family relations belonged to the Club at the same time (the Earl of Dorset’s son Lionel being admitted

only on his father’s death, and Halifax’s brother Sir James Montagu, who was a friend to many of the members and highly suitable for admission in political terms, never being admitted.)

Given that there was not even fixed membership of MPs within political parties during the early eighteenth century, it is hardly surprising that Kit-Cat membership is blurry around the historical edges. The matter is further complicated by evidence suggesting that certain men – such as Bishop Burnet, the Duke of Marlborough and Sidney Godolphin – were invited to join a particular Club meal as honoured guests, but were not full members.

Even allowing for confusion due to loss of historical evidence, it is clear that Kit-Cat membership was a much more amorphous and fluctuating thing than previously believed. The way in which the Kneller portraits look like a series of matching snapshots creates the misleading impression that members were concurrent, instead of recognizing that there were several ‘generations’ of Kit-Cats during the two decades of its existence. If one looks solely at the Club’s military members, for example, one can distinguish between a first generation of veterans who distinguished themselves in William’s wars,¹² and then a second influx of military officers, or men with close connections to the Commander-General Duke of Marlborough, at the start of the War of Spanish Succession in 1702.¹³

What follows is therefore a table of the fifty-five men (thirty-one of whom were peers at the time of their deaths) who, in the view of this author, are the most likely to have been members of the Kit-Cat Club.

Table of 55 Most Likely Kit-Cat Club Members

Name, titles and dates	Oldm.	Boyer	1702	Portrait ¹
1. Jacob Tonson (1656–1736)	✓	✓		✓1717
2. Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1726)	✓	✓		✓1704–10
3. William Congreve (1670-1729)	✓	✓		✓1709
4. Joseph Addison (1672–1719)	✓			✓1703
5. Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729)	✓			✓1711
6. Sir/Dr Samuel Garth (1661–1719)	✓	✓	✓	✓1710
7. Arthur Maynwaring (1668–1712)	✓	✓		✓1705–10
8. George Stepney (1663–1707)	✓	✓		✓1705
9. Matthew Prior (1664–1721)		✓		
10. Thomas Holles-Pelham, Earl of Clare and Duke of Newcastle (1693/4–1768)	✓			✓1721?
11. Henry Fiennes-Clinton, 7 th Earl of Lincoln (1684–1728)	✓			✓1721?
12. Charles Seymour, 6 th Duke of Somerset (1662–1748)	✓			✓1703
13. William Cavendish, Marquess of Hartington and 2 nd Duke of Devonshire (1673–1729)	✓		✓	✓1710–16
14. Charles Lenox, 1 st Duke of Richmond [and Lenox] (1672–1723)	✓			✓1703–10
15. Charles Fitzroy, 2 nd Duke of Grafton (1683–1757)	✓		✓	✓1703–05

¹ Dates given relate to the latest estimates for the dating of each portrait, according to the National Portrait Gallery, London, based on the expertise of J. Douglas Stewart and David Piper. In very few cases is the dating certain.

16. John, Viscount Monthermer and 2 nd Duke of Montagu (c.1688–1749)	✓			✓1709
17. Charles Sackville, 6 th Earl of Dorset [and 1 st Earl of Middlesex] (1643–1706)	✓	✓		✓1697
18. Richard Lumley, 2 nd Earl of Scarborough (1684–1740)	✓			✓1717
19. Charles Howard, 3 rd Earl of Carlisle (1669–1738)	✓		✓	✓1700–12
20. Sir Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham (1675–1749)	✓	✓		✓1710–13
21. Thomas Hopkins (c.1641–1720)	✓			✓1715
22. William Walsh (bap.1662–1708)	✓	✓		✓1708
23. Algernon Capel, 2 nd Earl of Essex (1670–1710)	✓			✓1705
24. James, 3 rd Earl of Berkeley (1680–1736)	✓			✓1710
25. John Vaughan, 3 rd Earl of Carbery (bap.1639–1713)	✓			✓1700–10
26. Charles, 4 th Baron Cornwallis (1675–1722)	✓	✓	✓	✓1705–15
27. Charles Montagu, 3 rd Earl of Halifax (1661–1715)	✓			✓1703–10
28. John Somers, Baron Somers of Evesham (1651–1716)	✓	✓		✓1715–16
29. Thomas Wharton, 5 th Baron and 1 st Marquess of Wharton (1648–1715)	✓		✓	✓1710–15
30. Charles Montagu, 4 th Earl and 1 st Duke of Manchester (c.1660–1722)	✓		✓	✓1710–12
31. Evelyn Pierrepont, 5 th Earl of Kingston and Marquess of Dorchester, Later 1 st Duke of Kingston (c.1665–1726)	✓	✓		✓1709
32. Lionel Cranfield Sackville, 1 st Duke of Dorset (1688–1765)				✓1710–12
33. Charles, 4 th Baron Mohun (1675/7–1712)	✓		✓	✓1707
34. Sir Robert Walpole, 1 st Earl of Oxford (1676–1745)	✓			✓1710–15
35. Spencer Compton, Earl of Wilmington (1673/4–1743)	✓	✓	✓	✓1710
36. Gen. James Stanhope, 1 st Earl of Stanhope (1673–1721)	✓	✓		✓1705–10
37. William Pulteney, Earl of Bath (1684–1764)	✓			✓1717
38. Col. John Tidcomb (1642–1713)	✓	✓		✓1710
39. Abraham Stanyan (c.1669–1732)	✓	✓	✓	✓1710
40. Richard Boyle, 3 rd Earl of Burlington (1695–1753)	✓			
41. Francis, 2 nd Earl of Godolphin (1678–1766)	✓			✓1710–12
42. Richard Boyle, 2 nd Viscount Shannon (1675–1740)	✓	✓		✓1710
43. Charles Dartiquenave (1664–1737)	✓	✓		✓1702
44. Edward Hopkins (1675–1736)	✓			
45. Edmund Dunch (c.1677–1719)	✓			✓1700–15
46. Theophilus Hastings, 9 th Earl of Huntingdon (1696–1746)	✓			✓incomplete
47. Anthony Henley (1667–1711)		✓		
48. Richard Norton (c.1666–1732)		✓		
49. John Smith (1655–1723)		✓		
50. Henry Boyle, Baron Carleton (1669–1725)		✓		
51. Richard Topham (1671–1730)		✓		
52. Sir Henry Furnese (1658–1712)				
53. Major John Shrimpton (d.1707)			✓	
54. John Dormer (1669–1719) and/or James Dormer (1679–1741) – see above explanation.	✓		✓	✓1705–10
55. John Vandom[e] (dates unknown)			✓	

Abel Boyer lists six further names not included on the table above: Charles Boyle (Earl of Orrery), Edward Wortley-Montagu, Dr Hans Sloane, John Harrison, Dr Merry and Colonel Thomas Farrington. The accuracy of Boyer's list is open to question, however, because he excludes several definite members (by virtue of the Kneller portraits and other manuscript evidence) including Addison, Steele and some of the

younger Kit-Cats (for example, the 1st Duke of Dorset and the 2nd Earl of Godolphin). Secondly, in the cases of four out of the six additional names on Boyer's list, no other evidence or logical explanation for membership exists. The two possible exceptions are Edward Wortley-Montagu (1678–1761) and Colonel Thomas Farrington (c.1664–1712), for whom claims could be made based on their family connections and biographies. The former, Wortley-Montagu, was the nephew of Lord Halifax and a friend of several Kit-Cats, particularly Addison. The latter, Colonel Farrington, was the nephew of another Boyer-named Kit-Cat, John Smith, who interceded to prevent Farrington from being posted to the West Indies in 1694. Farrington also served in the Coldstream Guards, the same regiment as Steele, and then in Spain alongside several Kit-Cat officers. In neither case, however, is there any hard evidence to support these rather circumstantial explanations of their appearance on Boyer's list, and neither their accomplishments nor social status clearly merit their inclusion. Wortley Montagu, while a Whig, saw himself primarily as standing in the 'Country Whig' tradition, and therefore prized his independence from the party leadership to a degree sufficient to explain non-membership.

Aside from the four main sources (Oldmixon, Boyer, the 1702 list and the paintings/engravings), there are also a number of other primary sources to verify individual memberships. These sources include: private correspondence, the writings of John Macky, Ned Ward and other contemporary authors, and various manuscript ephemera (especially Additional MS 40,060 at the British Library and the Tonson Papers at the National Portrait Gallery in London).

Such evidence establishes beyond doubt the membership of the financier Sir Henry Furnese, though he does not feature in any of the four main sources.¹⁴ Despite the strong alliance between the Whigs and the City of London, it is interesting that Furnese was the only real 'money man' to become a Kit-Cat. The goldsmith-bankers and scriveners were mainly Tories who, with their more traditional forms of investment, viewed men like Furnese as encroaching on a limited capital pool. They were obviously not Kit-Cat material. Stockjobbers were mostly Whigs, and formed an exclusive professional 'club' thanks to an Act restricting their number to a hundred, with a dozen places reserved for foreigners and a further dozen for Jews. But stockjobbing was still regarded as an ungentlemanly profession, and Jews' rules about inter-marriage and diet excluded them 'from all Table of Conversation and the most agreeable Intercourses of Life'.¹⁵ Furnese was an exception to the general snobbery about financiers because his lending was so crucial to the Treasury, and thanks to his friendship with the Duke of Marlborough, with whom the Kit-Cats dearly wanted to align themselves. It was the last qualification that set him apart, for example, from someone like Sir Gilbert Heathcote, a governor of the Bank of England and leader of the City Whigs who was never invited to join the Kit-Cat Club.

Not all names mentioned in manuscript in the context of the Kit-Cat Club, on the other hand, are evidence of membership. A man named John Charlton, for example, makes reference to the rituals of the Kit-Cat Club in his private correspondence of 1703, but examination of this source suggests that he was merely repeating hearsay, not pretending to membership himself. Other primary sources occasionally hint that there may be Kit-Cat members of whom we know nothing – for example, an undated letter from the Duke of Newcastle to Jacob Tonson states that 'Lord L--- got drunk one night at the Kit-Cat.' but there is no peer whose name begins with 'L' among any

of the key lists or portraits.¹⁶ Other possible mystery members include an individual nicknamed ‘Buda’ in one Tory satire (whose identity among existing members is not obvious)¹⁷ and Mr Arthur Attlie, who is unaccountably listed in a nineteenth century source that gets at least one other gentleman’s membership wrong.¹⁸ Jonathan Swift also deliberately misattributed Kit-Cat membership to a ‘free-thinker’ named Collins for satirical effect in 1713.¹⁹

The most common error in the listing of Kit-Cat members is inclusion of the Duke of Marlborough. Because there is a mezzotint of Marlborough in the Kit-Cat portrait format, it has been assumed that the original painting has been ‘missing’ since the eighteenth century, even though there is no mention of it on the 1730s’ gallery’s hanging plan. A 1772 letter notes that Marlborough’s mezzotint was one of four inserted after Faber had numbered the plates of the 1735 series. Faber’s patriotism would have sorely tempted him to include Marlborough among the Kit-Cats, just as the Junto were happy to let Tories retain the false impression that Marlborough had joined the Kit-Cat Club in 1709-10. The Duke’s widow, Sarah, though still living at the time Faber’s engravings were published, was interested in having her late husband remembered as a Whig patriot and therefore would not necessarily have corrected Faber’s inclusion of the image in his series. Faber’s mezzotint of Marlborough is the only one in the series where both hands are showing – an anomaly that would make sense if the image had been ‘constructed’ out of other Kneller paintings of the Duke. On this evidence, Marlborough appears to have been ‘forced into the mezzotint collection’, in spite of his politics and his personal resolution not to become a Kit-Cat member.²⁰ The non-existence of the Marlborough Kit-Cat portrait is, at least, a plausible theory. Other explanations – such as the story that Sarah stole it away from Barn Elms while the Tonsons were once out of the house – were maliciously inferred from false evidence by Sarah’s enemies.

Three other portraits currently considered ‘missing’ because of their inclusion among the Faber mezzotints are those of Ned Hopkins, Theophilus Hastings, 9th Earl of Huntingdon, and Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington.

The mezzotint of Hopkins is in a noticeably different format from all the others – a bust in an oval – causing one to wonder whether, again, Faber just copied from a different portrait because he was told that Hopkins had been a Club member. Primary manuscript evidence supports Oldmixon’s assertion that Ned Hopkins was a Kit-Cat,²¹ so it may be that Kneller never got around to painting his portrait for the series and that Faber corrected the omission. There is no record of the Tonsons having owned the original portrait and it does not feature on the 1730s’ hanging plan.

The portrait of Huntingdon was incomplete, with only the head painted, and went missing sometime after Faber’s prints appeared in 1735.

The third ‘lost’ portrait, based on Faber’s engravings but not listed on the 1730s’ hanging plan, is that of Burlington. Oldmixon lists Burlington as a member of the Kit-Cat Club, but there is no other evidence to confirm this, and Faber’s inclusion of his portrait may merely tell us that Faber relied on Oldmixon. Addison’s cousin Eustace Budgell wrote a contemporary biography of Burlington in which he described the Earl as distinguished by his ‘Love of Letters and Men of Learning’ but in which Budgell did not mention Burlington’s Kit-Cat membership.²²

The Burlington portrait is of Kit-Cat dimensions, but one suspects that Faber puffed out a bit of fabric to make it look as if, according to Kit-Cat rule, both elbows are showing. If so, Burlington's inclusion in the series (and hence the Club) may have been an unauthorised acquisition by Faber of a prestigious Whig cultural figure. Arguing against this is the fact that Burlington was alive in 1735 when Faber's prints were published, and surely would have seen them, yet there is no record that he objected to his inclusion. The case for Burlington's Kit-Cat membership includes his father Charles Boyle's friendship with Carlisle, Somers' appointment as Burlington's guardian after his father's death, and two other relatives, Boyle and Shannon, both being Kit-Cats. Burlington's parliamentary record was consistently Whig (though it has been argued, contentiously, that he was a covert Jacobite operative²³). Burlington has therefore been included on the above list on the grounds that the tradition of his membership is widespread and supported by at least one printed primary source in addition to the Faber engravings.

Some men who were definitely members – for example, Matthew Prior, Richard Norton and Sir Henry Furnese – are not among the Kneller-Faber portrait series at all, suggesting not everyone was painted before they died or were expelled from the Club. Prior's expulsion could easily have intervened before Kneller painted him in Kit-Cat format.

Faber engraved Kneller's own self-portrait among his set of forty-seven Kit-Cat portraits. This, together with the fact that Tonson's nephew hung Kneller's self-portrait in the Kit-Cat gallery during the 1730s, has often led to the erroneous inclusion of the Kit-Cat portrait-painter among the list of Club members.

Similarly, historians have erroneously named a number of authors from the period as Kit-Cats, the most common misattributions being two playwrights, Nicholas Rowe and Thomas D'Urfey.²⁴ In Rowe's case, the confusion seems to have come from Dr Johnson, who made a false assumption based on Rowe's close association with Tonson, Congreve and others, and his receipt of the Poet Laureateship under George I. In D'Urfey's case, the confusion may be due to the fact that he tried to gain entry to or patronage from the Kit-Cat Club through published dedications.

John Dryden has also been erroneously included on the Kit-Cat list because of his close association with Tonson, the financing of his funeral by various Kit-Cats and a Kneller portrait of him in Kit-Cattish style. Dryden, however, was a Tory and a Catholic: two facts that automatically barred him from membership, should he have desired it. (Alexander Pope's boast that he was the only writer of the age 'who ne'er was out nor in'²⁵ because he never accepted a government or Court sinecure was a fairly hollow boast since his Catholicism made him ineligible for public office, just as it made him utterly ineligible for Kit-Cat membership during the early years when Tonson was his publisher and the Kit-Cat lords his patrons.)

The non-membership of a number of politically prominent Whig aristocrats also requires explanation. Robert Spencer, 2nd Earl of Sunderland (father of Charles Spencer, the 3rd Earl), for example, was the most well-connected and powerful politician outside the Junto when the Club was founded in the late 1690s. He was by then already in his mid-fifties, however, and had been through too much with the

Junto, both as its ally and enemy, to join their Club. One might as well ask why he never joined the Junto itself. He needed to retain his independence in order to change tack – in both his policies and allegiances – as and when necessary, and he had even been willing at one point to support James II's plans for Catholic emancipation. The Kit-Cat Whigs were determined to shed their reputation as 'trimmers', 'judases', 'machiavels' and 'apostates', in favour of loyalty to a Whig ideology, and Sunderland could not join them in this resolve. Sunderland was, in addition, interested in patronage mainly in relation to improvement of his family seat (Althorp), rather than more general patronage of literature and the arts for the sake of the nation.

His son, Charles Spencer, the 3rd Earl of Sunderland, fitted with the Kit-Cat ethos far better, being a committed party man and passionate about book-collecting. Yet he too never joined the Kit-Cat, though historians often mistakenly presume that he did.²⁶ Like his father, and like the literary critic John Dennis,²⁷ he was not a 'clubbable' person – considered too volatile, especially when young. When Mr Spectator praised this Earl's 'Candour and Openness of Heart' it was a euphemism for his big mouth and tactless radicalism.²⁸ On the other hand, the 3rd Earl of Sunderland was extremely important as a conduit between the Junto and the Marlborough-Godolphin ministry after 1702 (just as the Duke of Shrewsbury had once been a conduit between the Junto and King William), and after 1706, as Secretary of State for the South, he helped more Kit-Cat members to government promotions than many of the Kit-Cat patrons themselves. His wife, the 'Little Whig', Marlborough's favourite daughter, was a frequent Kit-Cat toast until her death, and Charles was a leader of the Whigs in opposition during 1710–14. There is therefore no absolutely clear-cut reason why the 3rd Earl was never a Kit-Cat; perhaps he was merely following his father's example in this regard.

Nor is there really any satisfactory answer as to why neither the lawyer William Cowper, 1st Earl Cowper (1665–1723), nor the politician Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury (1660–1718), ever joined the Kit-Cat Club. Somers and Halifax were political patrons of the former, and close colleagues of the latter; the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography therefore erroneously assumes Cowper was a Kit-Cat. Both men, however, had a strong streak of independence, as shown by Shrewsbury's desertion of British politics to live on the Continent between 1700 and 1705, and then his late alliance with Harley in opposing the war after 1709.

Edward Russell, 2nd Earl of Orford (1652–1727), was the only member of Junto not in the Kit-Cat – a fact that requires explanation. The answer lies in the fact that, after his near impeachment in 1701, Orford became deeply cynical about Westminster politics and only really involved himself in issues relating to the navy (such as the deposing of Prince George from the Admiralty). His parliamentary record shows a sharp drop in activism after 1702, and though he possessed huge electoral influence, he did not always mobilise this influence as fully as his Junto colleagues. Nor was he a cultured or highly educated man, preferring the company of his fellow military officers to that of literary wits.

William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire, is another Whig aristocrat whose non-membership might demand explanation, given that he was one of the 1688 conspirators alongside Somers and Wharton, with a reputation as a chivalrous womaniser, and the cultural ambitions clearly expressed by Chatsworth. The

explanation lies in the fact that Devonshire was already in his mid-fifties when the Club was founded and, though a member of the Privy Council, not a major political figure in the latter Stuart era. Indeed, in 1696–97 his reputation was at a low ebb due to his perceived mishandling of the Fenwick affair, and he never quite recovered his ambition after this debacle. He differed from the Junto in being a magnate content to consolidate territorial interests, rather than to exert power on the national and international stage, and he was always more interested in the visual arts – architecture, painting and sculpture – than in literature or music, the two priorities for the Kit-Cat Club. Nonetheless, Devonshire life's interests would seem to give him greater qualification for membership than certain men who were certainly members, such as the Duke of Richmond, one of the youngest of the early Kit-Cats, whose career as an aide-de-camp to King William in 1697 offers little obvious explanation for his inclusion and whose wealth and love of food, wine and women seems to have sufficed to compensate for his limited intellect and cultural ambition.

Finally, it is perhaps curious that Charles, 2nd Viscount Townshend (1674–1738), was apparently never invited to accept Kit-Cat membership despite his close personal and professional alliance with Robert Walpole. Macky called him 'a gentleman of great learning, attended with a sweet disposition', which certainly makes him sound like Kit-Cat material,²⁹ and though he was a poor orator, Bishop Burnet praised his private conversation as 'engaging'.³⁰ One explanation for his non-inclusion is perhaps found in Townshend's relative disinterest in cultural patronage – the main *modus operandi* of the Club and, in a more self-interested form, a key tool of Robert Walpole's later premiership.

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¹ Abel Boyer, *History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne* (1722)

² John Oldmixon, *The History of England during the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne, King George I* (1735)

³ Tonson Papers, NPG

⁴ John Macky, *Memoirs of the Secret Services of John Macky*, ed. A.R. (1733)

⁵ Edmond Malone (ed), *Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, 3 vols. (London 1800); Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men*, ed. by S.W. Singer (London 1820) or by James M. Osborn, 2 vols. (Oxford 1966)

⁶ Tonson Papers, NPG

⁷ E.g. John Brewer says 45 members of whom 10 were dukes - see John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997). Catherine Howells, *The Kit-Cat Club – A Study of Patronage and Influence in Britain 1696-1720* (University of California Ph.D. 1982) p.v – Believes 55 members; Harry M. Geduld, *Prince of Publishers: A Study of the Work and Career of Jacob Tonson* (London 1969), p.159 n.37 - Also assumes that the club membership expanded from 39 to 48 at the time they moved to the Fountain tavern (no allowance for turnover).

⁸ John Oldmixon, *The History of England during the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne, King George I* (1735)

⁹ Abel Boyer, *History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne* (1722). Examples of MPs added by Boyer:

John ('Jack') Smith was an MP for Andover, having gained the seat thanks to Wharton's influence. In return, Smith lobbied unsuccessfully for Wharton's promotion during 1697. Smith was also a close ally of Montagu, having been in the Treasury Commission since 1694. His literary interests are unknown, therefore his Kit-Cat membership was likely based on political loyalty and City connections – his grandfather was a wealthy merchant and his father a London alderman. Another key credential was his articulacy: Smith had studied at Middle Temple, and was described as 'a very agreeable companion in conversation, a bold orator in the House of Commons, when the interest of his country is at stake; [and] of good address.' See Jonathan Swift, *Remarks on the Characters of the Court of Queen Anne from 'Memoirs of the Secret Services of John Macky Esq.'* (1733). Swift's deflating marginalia in response to this praise – 'I thought him a heavy man' – does not erase the impression that Smith knew how to handle himself and the English language.

Anthony Henley would join Smith as second MP for Andover in 1698. He was mentored by Dorset through university (Christ Church, Oxford), and introduced to London's literati while studying at Middle Temple in 1684. Henley's interest in classical literature and his reputed wit must have qualified him for the Kit-Cat, along with his wealth. In 1697, he inherited several estates and six houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields. His private income was some £3,000, supplemented by a government pension to make a total annual income of £5,000 (around £470,000 today). Not only would his admission to the Kit-Cat in 1697 fit with the date of his inheritance but also with his political usefulness, as Henley's political patron Sunderland had enjoyed a short-lived ascendancy earlier that year.

Henry ('Harry') Boyle was another Whig MP and a newly acquired Junto-follower. Since 1692, Boyle had been the MP for Cambridge University, thanks to the influence of his Chancellor cousin, the Duke of Somerset. Addison and Steele later applauded Harry Boyle's affability and lack of ostentation, such 'that Elegance and Politeness would appear in [his] more retired Conversation.' See dedication prefixed to the first collected edition of *The Spectator*: 'To Henry Boyle Esq.' in Donald F. Bond (ed), *The Spectator* (Oxford 1965), vol. 5. Relative to others in the Kit-Cat, Boyle was always a fairly moderate Whig, reluctant to make Tory enemies, and favoured by the King. While John Macky recorded that 'by his prudent administration, [Henry Boyle] obliges everybody in the Exchequer; and in time may prove a great man', Jonathan Swift sourly remarked on Boyle's 'scurvy qualities, particularly avarice'. See Jonathan Swift, *Remarks on the Characters of the Court of Queen Anne from 'Memoirs of the Secret Services of John Macky Esq.'* (1733).

¹⁰ There was a close friend of Addison, Congreve and Steele named John Sansome (who fancied himself a literary patron until he went bankrupt and who later ended up in protracted legal disputes with Steele) but it seems unlikely that the first letter of the signature could be read as an 'S'.

¹¹ There has been chronic historical confusion about which 'J. Dormer' was the member of the Kit-Cat Club. John was friends with Vanbrugh, Carlisle, Essex and Edmund Dunch in the early 1700s and later married a Kit-Cat toast. His standing as a country squire at Rousham in Oxfordshire, his Court place as Assistant Master of Revels, and his military service as Colonel and then Brigadier-General of the 2nd Regiment of Horse-Grenadier-Guards, all make sense of his membership. Arguments in favour of the younger James Dormer, who inherited Rousham after John's death in 1719, also being a member rest primarily on his military career in Marlborough's army: he was Lieutenant and Captain of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards in May 1702, was wounded at the battle of Blenheim but went on to see action at the battle of Ramillies and with Mohun's regiment in May 1708. He also fought alongside Stanhope in Spain, ending his career a lieutenant general. At home, he was a great book collector and art lover, remodelling Rousham and its gardens in a very Kit-Cat-like way.

¹² One such figure was 55-year-old **Colonel John Tidcomb**, a Restoration pal of Dorset's, first celebrated as a wit and debauchee, before his valour was demonstrated in battle. Tidcomb had served in the same regiment as Vanbrugh and, as a junior officer, led troops towards the invading William. This, combined with his link to Dorset, explains Tidcomb's

inclusion among the Kit-Cats. In 1695, Tidcomb received an honorary doctorate from Oxford, suggesting he was not one of those whom Addison later referred to as military pedants, whose conversation always smelled of gunpowder. In 1697, after the Peace of Ryswick, Tidcomb's regiment was transferred to the Irish establishment. Swift said Tidcomb complained about the pride of superior officers until he received a commission, at which point he confessed that 'the spirit of colonelship was fast coming upon him, which spirit is said to have daily increased to the hour of his death.' Jonathan Swift, *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift* eds. Herbert Davis et al. (Oxford 1939-1975), vol. 12, p.192. Colonel Tidcomb also became an early mentor to Pope, though Pope never had much respect for the old soldier: he later said Tidcomb's 'beastly, laughable Life is (if you will excuse such a Similitude) not unlike a Fart, at once nasty & diverting' (29 August 1709, Pope to Henry Cromwell, in George Sherburn (ed), *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope* (Oxford 1956), vol. 1, pp.70-71.

¹³ Only the marriage of **Edmund Dunch** to Marlborough's niece sets him apart from other Junto-supporting MPs who never became Kit-Cat members, though Dunch was also a wealthy landowner in his forties in the late 1690s, a nephew of Wharton's and elected under Wharton's interest in 1701. Oldmixon, however, does not list Dunch among the earliest generation of Kit-Cats, which suggests his membership followed, and resulted from, his marriage.

The main reason for the admission of **James, 3rd Earl of Berkeley**, seems to have been his military connection to Marlborough, though his father was also an old friend of Somers' and he was an MP for the City of Gloucester. Berkeley was in the navy throughout the War of Spanish Succession and was made a Rear Admiral in 1707, then in January 1708 a Vice Admiral of the Blue. He was a rare Whig ally in a navy predominantly commanded by Tory strategists who disagreed with Marlborough's concentration on Flanders. In 1714, Berkeley married Lady Louisa Lenox, 21-year-old daughter of the Kit-Cat Duke of Richmond and niece of the first toasted beauty of London, Frances Brudenell. Louisa died of smallpox two years later, her only recorded achievement being a Kit-Cat toast addressed to her when she was 10.

Richard Boyle, 2nd Viscount Shannon was another admitted primarily to boost the Kit-Cat's military membership post-1702. Though his military career dated back to the battle of the Boyne, he first came to prominence as a colonel leading the grenadiers who, alongside Stanhope, stormed the fortifications at Vigo in late 1702. It was probably following this victory, the official report of which he had the honour to carry back to England, that he was invited to join the Kit-Cat Club. Though he had studied at Oxford while Addison was there, a cousin of Addison's said Shannon's education 'has been chiefly in a Camp' and 'I have never heard that he has a more than ordinary Share of Learning'. Nor did Shannon inherit much of an estate or much of an electoral influence. Shannon's membership of the Club rested therefore on what this same writer described as his bravery, generosity and 'an Openness and Frankness in his Conversation which are highly engaging' Eustace Budgell, *Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Earl of Orrery and of the Family of the Boyles* (1732) p.258.

¹⁴ A bankrupt grocer's son, **Henry Furnese** started his working life selling stockings, and made his fortune in the 1690s importing linen and lace from Flanders, supplying King William and several army regiments. Furnese's traders also served as a high-speed information network, allowing him to profit, through coffeehouse bets and the stock exchange, from advance notice of how the winds of war were blowing. Furnese continued to import fabric and lace throughout his subsequent career as a financier, half as a front and half as a fallback. Furnese supplied linen-drapers like Mr Thomas Doyley, a Covent Garden man who sold coarse napkins fringed with lace to a mass market (hence the word 'doily').

A Dissenter, Furnese's politics were firmly Whig. In 1694, he was one of the original directors of the Bank of England, investing £3,000 (over £350,000 today), and in 1697 he became a salaried trustee for the circulation of Exchequer Bills ('Montagu's Notes'), again subscribing heavily to that fund. Later he was also a Director of the New East India Company, which Halifax created.

Furnese supported Halifax (when still called Charles Montagu) in creating the New East India Company, convincing sceptical government ministers that £2 million could be raised from public subscription if the Company received a monopoly on East Indies trade. Proved correct, he was made a Director of the New Company, though forced to renounce his parliamentary seat (representing the Sandwich Corporation) to avoid a conflict of interest.

Furnese made an advantageous second marriage in 1697 to Matilda, daughter of Sir Thomas Vernon, and built an impressive pile at Waldershare in Kent – the epitome of new wealth acquiring the trappings of the old. In October 1700, as a sheriff of London, Furnese organised a banquet in the Drapers' Hall for the King and 400–600 mainly Whig guests, at a cost of some £800 (some £96,000 today). This was Whig partying on a more conspicuous scale than any night at the Kit-Cat Club.

In the early 1700s, Furnese remitted monies on the Treasury's behalf to foreign governments and English troops overseas, using his trading networks. (In July 1703, during a period when Furnese was making at least one high-interest loan per month to the Government, Halifax personally referred Jacob Tonson to Furnese and some sort of financial deal seems to have been done between the publisher and financier.) By the second half of the decade, Furnese was the most important individual financier in England. In December 1705, he signed a contract with the English Government, giving him a six-month monopoly on all remittances to the Low Countries, Germany and Portugal, for which he received a commission. At the same time, Furnese wrote to Marlborough with a suggestion ahead of its time that they should extend warfare into obstructing the enemy's financial transactions.

The high interest rate on Furnese's loans meant the Tories (and rival Whigs) could characterise him as profiteer, but without such loans, for which Furnese sometimes personally shouldered the liability, the Grand Alliance would have

collapsed. Others grew envious when Furnese became Marlborough's personal banker, but thanks to his strong relationship with Godolphin, Furnese's privileged government contract was renewed in 1706. In 1707, Furnese was raised to a baronetcy, and to the Kit-Cat Club by the end of 1709. By this date, Furnese's combined personal holdings in the Bank and East India Company were over £16,000 (approx. £1.5 million today).

¹⁵ Donald F. Bond (ed), *The Spectator* (Oxford 1965), vol. 4, No. 495, Saturday, 27 September 1712, by Addison.

¹⁶ Kerry Downes, *Sir John Vanbrugh, A Biography* (London 1987), p.106.

¹⁷ 'An Essay to Restore the Kit-Cat Members to their lost Abilities, for the sake of the LADIES who admire em' in: Anon. (Jonathan Swift), *Letters, Poems and tales: Amorous, Satyrical and Gallant. Which passed between several persons of distinction. Now first published from respective originals found in the cabinet of... Mrs Anne Long* (1711).

¹⁸ John Diprose, *Some Account of the Parish of St. Clement Danes* (London 1868) vol. 2, p.82.

¹⁹ Jonathan Swift, *Vanity of Free-Thinking Expos'd in a Satyr, Dedicated to Mr C[olli]ns, Proprietor, and the rest of the Thoughtless Members of the Kitt-Katt Club* (1713).

²⁰ National Portrait Gallery archives: Private letter from G. M. Trevelyan to Sir Henry Hake, Director of the NPG on 5 March 1945: on Marlborough being 'forced into the mezzotint collection'. See also: G.M.Trevelyan, 'Kit-Cat Club Portraits, Famous Collection for the Nation, Critical Phase in British Social and Political History', *The Times*, Saturday, 10 March 1945 in which Trevelyan states that he does not believe the Duke was ever a member of the Club.

²¹ Add MSS 40,060, f.74 - 'Toast to Mademoiselle Oudenarde – A Dialogue in verse between Tonson, [Tom] Hopkins, [Richard] Topham and Lord Halifax'.

In 1697, while studying at Middle Temple, **Tom Hopkins** had been, alongside many Kit-Cats, a subscriber to Dryden's *Virgil*. Hopkins, therefore, had literary interests and must have been known to Tonson. He was also admired as a Jacobite-hunter. In September 1701, between the wars, Hopkins had been responsible for the exposure of the 'Poussineers' – three prominent Tories who were caught dining at the Blue Posts tavern with Monsieur Poussin, the French *Chargé d'Affaires*. Tom Hopkins therefore had sound Whig credentials, but more importantly he had close links to the City financiers vital to sustaining the war effort. His brother, a wealthy merchant from Coventry, died in February 1708, and Tom was also related to a wealthy moneylender, stock-jobber and scrivener, who dealt in bonds and mortgages, known as John 'The Vulture' Hopkins.

Tom's nephew Edward or 'Ned', son of the Coventry merchant, was also a member of the Kit-Cat Club. It is highly probable that he joined after his father's death in 1705 but before being appointed Envoy to Hanover in November 1709. Ned's admission may, however, have been earlier, perhaps even preceding his uncle's, since founder member Compton was Ned's university friend in the early 1690s. Ned was elected as MP for Coventry in December 1701 and inherited powerful friends among both the Whigs and Tories. In 1705, Ned joined Lord Sunderland on a trip to Hanover, and thereafter, throughout his thirties, stood on the Whig side of most questions.

Richard Topham was a translator of Demosthenes in the 1702 edition published by Tonson and edited by Somers, as well as a lawyer and politician. In 1707, Topham was made Keeper of the Records of the Tower of London for life, and given the daunting task of ordering the State archives – a project of interest to Somers and Halifax. In 1708, Topham was 37, and might easily have been the second new member, besides Hopkins, admitted to fill the spaces left by Shrimpton and Walsh.

²² Eustace Budgell, *Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Earl of Orrery and of the Family of the Boyles* (1732) p.258.

²³ Asserted by Jane Clark in: T. Barnard & J. Clark (eds.), *Lord Burlington: Architecture, Art and Life* (London 1995).

²⁴ E.g. Bonamy Dobrée, *Essays in Biography 1680-1726* (Oxford 1925), p.83-4.

²⁵ Alexander Pope, Dialogue II of *Epilogue to the Satires* (1738).

²⁶ E.g. Stuart Handley in the ODNB group entry for the Whig Junto states that Sunderland was a member of the Kit-Cat Club. Others who mistake Sunderland for a Kit-Cat include John Timbs, H.T. Swedenberg, and Geoffrey Holmes.

²⁷ The fact that **John Dennis**, who wrote more substantial critical work than any Kit-Cat (*The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* published in 1704, for example) was not admitted to the Club despite his friendship with Congreve, Dorset, Montagu and Addison, underlines the fact that the Club demanded qualifications of character beyond critical faculties. Dennis was notorious for lacking affability and flying into bulge-eyed rages during debates about literature.

²⁸ Dedication 'To Charles Earl of Sunderland' in vol. 6 of *The Spectator* published on 11 April 1713, quoted in: Rae Blanchard (ed), *The Correspondence of Richard Steele* (Oxford 1968ed), p.470 n.1.

²⁹ Jonathan Swift, *Remarks on the Characters of the Court of Queen Anne from 'Memoirs of the Secret Services of John Macky Esq...'* (1733).

³⁰ Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time* (1715), Chapter 6.