

## 16. Compound anagrams

The advanced counterpart to the aforesaid "anagrams with deletions" mechanic, *compound anagram clues* indicate that the answer plus some other letters can be anagrammed into something else; the answer can then be deduced as an anagram of the something else minus the other letters, much like rearranging an equation: "X is an anagram of [answer]+Y, therefore [answer] is an anagram of X-Y". For example, in

If this could be clarified, it could be the start of something bigger (7)  
If this could be clarified, / it could be the start of something bigger (7)

we are told that IF + the answer to the clue (this) can be anagrammed to make (could be) CLARIFIED; hence, the answer must be an anagram of CLARIFIED without IF = CLARIED, which leads to RADICLE (that part of a plant embryo which becomes the root). Another example, this time from Crucible in The Guardian:

Stick with this career, building electric organ (5,2)  
Stick with / this career, building electric organ (5,2)

Here we see that CAREER + the answer can be anagrammed to make (building) ELECTRIC ORGAN, so we seek an anagram of ELECTRIC ORGAN minus CAREER = LTIC OGN, which comes out to CLING TO (stick with).

The answer is not always referred to as "this", however! It is sometimes referred to by its definition and embedded within the clue as part of the compound anagram wordplay, as in this one from the esteemed Azed in *The Observer on Sunday*:

This gunpowder component a lamp lit might have accounted for Parliament (5)  
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This one is impossible to colour or slash properly because the definition and wordplay are inextricably intertwined. The definition is "gunpowder component"; we're told that the letters of this gunpowder component plus A LAMP, when "lit" (i.e. drunk), **might account for PARLIAMENT**. The answer is thus an anagram of PARLIAMENT minus A LAMP = RIENT, which readily reveals itself to be NITRE (potassium nitrate).

Though a specialty of Azed, mentioned above, who sets the weekly Azed crossword in *The Observer on Sunday*, compound anagrams are starting to appear in daily crosswords, most notably in The Guardian.