By the late 1700s and early 1800s, many new types of word puzzles had become popular in England. Charades began to rival enigmas and riddles in prevalence, and anagrams, transpositions, reversals, beheadments, and logogriphs all began to appear with greater and greater frequency.

Two puzzle books achieved a very wide sale in England during this period. The first one was The Masquerade, A Collection of New Enigmas, Logogriphs, Charades, Rebus, Queries, and Transpositions, which was first published in 1797. New volumes of puzzles in the series were put out by the same editors in 1798, 1799, 1800, and 1801. The second book was A New Collection of Enigmas, Charades, Transpositions, &c., published in 1806. Both books undoubtedly introduced types of puzzles with which many Britishers had not yet become familiar.

The Masquerade went through an impressive series of editions, so it was clearly a popular publication. In the advertisement to the third edition of the second volume, the editors wrote, "A new edition is become necessary, on account of the increasing demand for this esteemed publication: and the Editors are happy that they are thus enabled to add to various other testimonies that of an extensive sale" (The Masquerade, Volume II, Southampton, George Wilkie, 1798, p. 3). And in the advertisement to the third volume, the editors wrote, "In publications of almost every kind, an extensive sale is allowed to be the best criterion of merit. This being premised, the Editors of the Masquerade have only to observe, that the friendly reception of their first volume ... -- and their second volume (thr increased in number one half) having experienced very liberal patronage; -- they bring forward this their third volume with a considerable degree of confidence, having now printed more than double the number of the preceding year" (The Masquerade, Volume III, 1799, p. 3). The editors also claimed that all of their puzzles were original.

Two enigmas from the first volume of The Masquerade follow. The first one is fairly tricky but not very difficult once the reader gets the idea. The second enigma contains some interesting contradictions which the reader is asked to resolve:

"In camps about the centre I appear;  
In smiling meadows seen throughout the year;  
The silent angler views me in the streams,
And love-sick maidens in their morning dreams;
First in each mob conspicuous I stand,
Proud of the lead, and double in command;
Without my power no mercy can be shown,
Or soft compassion to their hearts be known;
Each sees me in himself, yet all agree
Their hearts and persons have no charms for me;
The chymist proves my virtue upon ore,
For touch'd by me, he changes it to more."
(The Masquerade, Volume I, 1797, pp. 13-14)

"Tho' mean and humble is my birth,
I sit enthroned on high --
My footsteps far above the earth,
My canopy the sky:
O'er laboring subjects thus in state
I hear despotic sway,
Yet on them condescend to wait,
At break and close of day."
(The Masquerade, Volume I, 1797, p. 21)

The answer to the first enigma is "the letter M", and the answer to the second is "a coachman".

Besides enigmas, The Masquerade also featured a large number of charades. That many of the charades were good ones attests to the fact that puzzles in popular publications were assuming a higher and higher quality. A simple, but interesting, charade in the first volume of The Masquerade follows:

"My first all sellers like to get,
When they a bargain make;
My next they'll tell you in a pet
That they will never take:
My whole is sure of names the worst
By which we man can call
And he that is so far accurst
Must be despised by all."
(The Masquerade, Volume I, 1797, p. 50)

The charade is answered by the word "worthless".

Two other puzzles gaining acceptance during the late 1700s and early 1800s were transpositions (rearranging the letters of one word to form another) and reversals (reversing the letters of one word to form another). An example of each follows, the first from The Masquerade, and the second from A New Collection of Enigmas, Charades, Transpositions, &c.:

"Ye riddling fair, disclose my name,
No doubt you quickly will descry it:
The self same characters proclaim
The fruit, and how you'd wish to buy it."
(The Masquerade, Volume III, 1799, p. 62)

"What skins of oranges are call'd
d If you (reverse), will show
The pow'r that seems most like to death
Of any that we know."
(A New Collection of Enigmas, Charades, Transpositions, &c.; London, Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1806, p. 191)

The answers are "peach-cheap" and "peels-sleep".

Next is a successive beheadment from the same period:

"Tho' small I am, yet, when entire,
I'll force to set the world on fire.
Take off a letter, and 'tis clear
My paunch will hold a herd of deer:
Dismiss another, and you'll find
I once contain'd all human kind."
(A New Collection of Enigmas, 1806, p. 190)

The beheadment is answered by "spark-park-ark".

The only other versified puzzle that was in vogue during the early 1800s was the logogriph. In this puzzle, the keyword was enigmatically expressed, and then clues were given to other words which were composed of letters contained in the keyword. Thus, one logogriph appeared in The Masquerade on the word "spear", which contains the letters which form ape, spar, reap, asp, ear, rap, par, pear, pare, are, as, sap, rasp, sea, pea, spa and spare. Logogriphs tended to be inordinately long, as clues had to be given to each word contained in the keyword. The logogriph was the forerunner of the numerical enigma, which gained popularity in the mid-to-late 1800s, and the numerical enigma was the forerunner of today's double acrostic.

Riddles and conundrums were just as popular as ever during the early 1800s. An example from The Masquerade: "Why is a man who has seen a young goat asleep, likely to give an account of a stolen child?" "Because he has seen the kid-napping" (The Masquerade, Volume II, 1798, pp. 65, 81).

And an easy riddle:

"Pray tell me ladies, if you can,
Who is that highly favor'd man,
Who, tho' he's married many a wife,
May still live single all his life?"
(The Masquerade, Volume III, 1799, p. 75)
Answer: "A clergyman".

And finally, anagrams to be solved were gaining great popularity. The best ones, of course, were those in which the anagrams were directly related to the transposed words. Thus, "To love ruin" could be rearranged to make REVOLUTION; "Great help" could be transposed to form TELEGRAPH; "Best in prayer" made PRESBYTERIAN; "Hard case" made CHARADES; and "There we sat" could be anagrammed into SWEETHEART. All of these anagrams are famous ones today, and all appeared in The Masquerade (The Masquerade, Volume I, 1797, p. 73 and Volume II, 1798, p. 66).

These basic types of word puzzles, with the addition of a few other types, remained popular in Britain through the first half of the nineteenth century. A number of popular British magazines, such as The Penny Satirist, printed regular puzzle columns, and achieved good reader response. Puzzle books of excellent quality continued to appear, such as Riddles, Charades and Conundrums (1822) by John Winter Jones, and A Choice Collection of Riddles, Charades, and Conundrums (1834).

Just as many British writers and people of renown composed puzzles during the eighteenth century, so it was during the first half of the nineteenth century. A number of noted men and women constructed and solved puzzles for their amusement. Mrs. Anna Barbauld (1743-1825), a well-known English poet and miscellaneous writer, was a prolific composer of enigmas. One of her better works was this:

"From rosy bowers we issue forth,
From east to west, from south to north;
Unseen, unfelt, by night, by day,
Abroad we take our airy way;
We foster love and kindle strife,
The bitter and the sweet of life;
Piercing and sharp, we wound like steel --
Now, smooth as oil, those wounds we heal;
Not strings of pearl are valued more,
Or gems encased in golden ore;
Yet thousands of us every day,
Worthless and vile, are thrown away.
Ye wise, secure with bars of brass
The double doors through which we pass;
For, once escaped, back to our cell
No human art can us compel."

("Poetry, Anecdotes, &c.", Old Farmers' Almanac, 1839, pages not numbered)

The enigma is answered by "words".

George Canning (1770-1827), the British statesman who served for a short period as Prime Minister of England, was also interested
in word puzzles. His puzzle, which appears below, is one of the most
famous of all word puzzles ever made:

"A word there is of plural number,
Foe to ease and tranquil slumber;
Any other word you take
And add an s will plural make.
But if you add an s to this,
So strange the metamorphosis;
Plural is plural now no more,
And sweet what bitter was before."

(William S. Walsh, Handy-Book of Literary Curiosities, 1892, p. 301)

The answer is "cares - caress".

Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802-1839), an English author and
politician, chiefly remembered for his humorous verse, was one of
the greatest of all writers of enigmas and charades. The poetic style
of his puzzles was of the highest quality found anywhere. Three of
his puzzles are presented below. The first is a charade, which Wil-
liam Walsh calls "Praed's best, a really fine poem in itself":

"Come from my First, ay, come;
The battle dawn is nigh
And the screaming trump and the thundering drum
Are calling thee to die.
Fight, as thy father fought;
Fall, as thy father fell:
Thy task is taught, thy shroud is wrought;
So forward and farewell!

Toll ye my Second, toll;
Fling high the flambeau's light;
And sing the hymn for a parted soul
Beneath the silent night;
The helm upon his head,
The cross upon his breast,
Let the prayer be said, and the tear be shed:
Now take him to his rest!

Call ye my Whole, go call
The lord of lute and lay,
And let him greet the sable pall
With a noble song to-day;
Ay, call him by his name,
No fitter hand may crave
To light the flame of a soldier's fame
On the turf of a soldier's grave!"

(William S. Walsh, Handy-Book of Literary Curiosities, 1892, pp. 147-148)
The charade is answered by "Campbell".

The second is one of the most controversial charades of all time, for many answers have been suggested for it, none of which is perfect. The charade is this:

"Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt;
Sooth, 'twas an awful day!
And though in that old age of sport
The rufflers of the camp and court
Had little time to pray.
'Tis said Sir Hilary muttered there
Two syllables by way of prayer:
My First to all the brave and proud
Who see to-morrow's sun:
My Next, with her cold and quiet cloud,
To those who find their dewy shroud.
Before to-day's be done:
And both together to all blue eyes
That weep when a warrior nobly dies."


The answer generally accepted by most authorities is "Good-night".

The final puzzle is one of Praed's best enigmas. It is a story, containing an extended metaphor, written with excellent poetic style:

"A Templar kneeled at a Friar's knee;
He was a comely youth to see,
With curling locks, and forehead high,
And flushing cheek, and flashing eye;
And the Monk was as jolly and large a man
As ever laid lip to a convent can
Or called for a contribution,
As ever read at midnight hour
Confessional in lady's bower,
Ordained for a peasant the penance whip,
Or spoke for a noble's venial slip
A venial absolution.

'O Father, in the dim twilight
I have sinned a grievous sin to-night;
And I feel hot pain e'er now begun
For the fearful murder I have done.

'I rent my victim's coat of green,
I pierced his neck with my dagger keen;
The red stream mantled high:
I grasped him, Father, all the while,
With shaking hand, and feverish smile,
And said my jest, and sang my song,
And laughed my laughter, loud and long,
    Until his glass was dry!

'Though he was rich, and very old,
I did not touch a grain of gold,
But the blood I drank from the bubbling vein
    Hath left on my lip a purple stain!'

'My son! my son! for this thou hast done,
Though the sands of thy life for aye should run,'
    The merry Monk did say,
'Though thine eye be bright, and thine heart be light,
Hot spirits shall haunt thee all the night,
    Blue devils all the day!'

The thunders of the Church were ended;
Back on his way the Templar wended;
But the name of him the Templar slew
    Was more than the Inquisition knew.'

(The Poems of Winthrop Mackworth Praed, Volume II, 1877, p. 388-389)

What the Templar actually "slew" was "a bottle".

Among the many other noted men and women in England during the early 1800s who wrote enigmas and charades, we might mention the following: Lord Macaulay, the English historian, essayist and politician; Miss Hannah Moore, popular poetess; Charles S. Calverley, well-known poet; and the Rev. Richard Barham, author of the Ingoldsby Legends. The list is impressive, and indicates the extent to which word puzzles had gained popularity in Britain in the early nineteenth century.

What place did word puzzles hold in British society during this period? John Winter Jones, in the introduction to his book Riddles, Charades, and Conundrums, gives us a glimpse of the answer to that question. Even though many learned Englishmen, as we have already seen, enjoyed word puzzles and constructed them for their own amusement, word puzzles were generally under attack for being a childish diversion. John Winter Jones seemed to take the defensive in upholding the value of puzzles when he wrote, "...this species of writing...not withstanding the laugh that may be raised against it, is still cherished by the lively and the young. None can dispute that riddles are at least an innocent amusement; and when tolerably well chosen, they prove an exercise of ingenuity, and must have a tendency to teach the mind to compare and judge. It has, perhaps, been owing to the trash commonly disseminated under the name of enigmas, that they have fallen into disrepute!" (John Winter Jones, Riddles, Charades, and Conundrums, the Greater Part of Which Have Never Been Published, London, F. Marshall, 1822, pp. v-vi). Thus, puzzles in many popular publications were of poor quality and were, perhaps, rightly considered childish amusements. The best puzzles, however, were far from childish.
This article and its predecessor, published in the August 1973 Word Ways, have examined the development of word puzzles in Great Britain from 1700 to 1850. As we have seen, this period was one of gradual growth in popularity of word puzzles, as well as gradual diversification of types being made and solved. From the riddle and enigma popular during the early 1700s, British puzzledom grew as the charade, beheading, transposition and logogriph came into vogue. Although word-play of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not as advanced as that of today, its study is interesting, for it gives us a special picture of British society of the period and provides us with a fascinating historical background to the word puzzles popular during the present century.

SAM ERVIN VS. XEROX

Lawyers for large corporations zealously guard the way that trade names are used, lest certain legal rights be invalidated. The British journal Computing recently noted that the Xerox Corporation found it necessary to admonish Senator Sam Ervin for his indiscriminate use of the term Xerox as a synonym for photocopy during the Watergate hearings. Ervin subsequently made a sustained effort and for a whole day managed to refer to photocopies and not use the offending word. However, in a heated exchange the next day, Ervin replied to a question with "I would have given you a photocopy but our Xerorping machine wasn't working".

The question arises: Is the Xerox Corporation aware that since 1966 the Random House Unabridged Dictionary has sanctioned the spelling of Xerox with a lower-case X?

A SYLLABIC PANGRAM

The Japanese equivalent of a pangrammatic sentence is a poem in which each syllable is used exactly once. Such a poem is in Nelson's Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary:

I-ro ha ni-ho-he-to  U-(w)i no o-ku-ya-ma
Chi-ri-nu-ru (w) o  Ko-fu ko-e-te
Wa-ka yo ta-re so  A-sa-ki yu-me mi-shi
Tsue ne na-ra-mu (W)e-hi mo se-su

A free translation: Colors are fragrant, but they fade away; in this world none last forever. Rise above this physical world, and then there will be no more uneasiness or temptation.