

1st March 2023

Header

**“Lord Birkenhead is very clever,
but sometimes his brains go to his head.”**

Margo Asquith, *as quoted in 'The Listener', June 1953*

What is a “header”? If a “footer” is at the bottom of the pages in a *Microsoft Word* document, a “header” is at the top, that hidden place in which you can add text which will appear on every page (or in every page apart from the first one, I’ve discovered) in the document that follows. A “header” heads up a page – hence the name.

But, from my early years until now, a “header” was nothing more or less than the action of propelling a football with your head, to move it in the direction you wished it to travel. Playing “headers” was the continual heading of a ball between two people – a great way to pass the time.

In recent times, concern has been expressed about these “headers”. Research has shown that the continual heading of a ball may cause brain damage, and even lead to early-onset dementia. So much so that there is talk of banning headers in competitive matches for children, or the continuous use of headers in training. But the point is: headers, it seems, in footballing terms, can be dangerous.

My mother-in-law, an excellent teacher in her day, offered the helpful advice: “Keep the heid!” Keep the head, folks, at all times. She wasn’t, of course, instructing me in the noble art of controlling a football. But she was encouraging me, and others, to use the common-sense intelligence with which we are all endowed, to stay calm at the beginning of an exam, for example, and, above all, to do your best.

The Bible’s Book of Ecclesiastes (2:14) contains this thought:

*The wise have eyes in their heads,
while the fool walks in the darkness.*

If that’s true, then our “headers” *can* be put to good use, to make sure we don’t stumble around in the dark, but stay calm, remain sensible, and live life with purpose. “Keep your head screwed on” is an epithet we might heed too. For, after all, we want to make sure *our* headers, in all aspects of our lives, continue to work well.

A prayer for today

If my head thinks the right things, then my actions might reap the benefit. Amen