

LEDs, black holes and bankers

It looks as though we've finally been struck by the Chinese curse of living in 'interesting times'. Hardly a day goes by without some new revelation from the erstwhile Masters of the Universe, as they turn out for their local Bankers Anonymous meetings: "Hello, my name's Quentin, and I'm a complete banker."

We were on holiday in Cornwall on the day of the Great Day of Banking Nationalisation, and I was looking forward to walking into our local NatWest with clenched fist raised: "Good morning, comrades!" I was also impressed by how quickly the wallpaper had been scraped off the wall of the Dorchester branch, giving it that ineffable East-European style.

Which all makes it a tad difficult for a semi-humorous columnist writing some time ahead of the publication date. But I think it behoves me to take a look into my solar-powered crystal ball. Here are just a few of my ground-breaking developments in the industry that have happened this month.

Stratospheric rise in costs of fluorescent lamps

As a result of the global credit crunch, tribal warlords in those mountainous regions that are squeezed between countries that you've actually heard of, are finding it increasingly difficult to fund their opulent lifestyles from the sale of City-boys' white powder, and have resorted to hijacking the supply route of that other white powder, the sort that you find inside fluorescent lamps. You know the stuff I mean – no matter how hard you try, every time you take a hammer to a failed fluorescent tube to fit it into the swing-top rubbish bin, the damned powder gets everywhere, making you sneeze and getting all over the bread board.



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The resultant reduction in the supply of the white powder has caused an inevitable rise in lamp prices at the supermarket checkout. At the time of writing, a 23W self-ballasted compact fluorescent lamp is retailing at Waitrose for £7,250.00. Although it has to be noted that the rising cost of electricity means it is still a cost-effective alternative with a payback time of less than a year.

Improved safety for CFL users

After recent safety warnings about the use of fluorescent lamps and, in particular, the problems arising from using these lamps within an inch of naked skin, leading manufacturers have agreed to supply a safety head cage with all fluorescent lamps. This fits snugly over the head of the user, ensuring that all lamps are kept at least 75mm away from the face.

There is talk of a full-body safety cage for naturists, but Philips report that there has been a setback in development after unexpected problems with certain body parts inexplicably changing size, placing the cage outside EU guidelines.

LED heatsink problems solved at a stroke

After the creation of a micro-black hole at CERN's Large Hadron Collider, the entire facility has been purchased by a Chinese LED conglomerate and all LEDs are now to be fitted with a 'black hole heatsink'. All of the heat produced by an LED chip is sucked out of this universe and is delivered into a parallel world, much the same as our own, though due to a quirk of evolution, the dominant species on the planet is the kwantity surveyor. It is not known how this is possible.

Environmentalists have warned that the thoughtless disposal of such enormous quantities of heat may accelerate the melting of polar ice caps in the parallel world, though most lighting designers are secretly hoping that a suspected empathic link between kwantity surveyors throughout the universe may result in their total extinction.

And in a related development, the launch of a one gigawatt LED is expected any day now. The lamp, which produces as much light as the sun, is expected to be of interest to the ailing retail sector.

John Bullock

Read John's regular blog at www.lighting.co.uk

