



Sixty Second Adventures in Astronomy

Large Hadron Collider

David Mitchell:

60 Second Adventures in Astronomy. Number eleven, The Large Hadron Collider.

The Large Hadron Collider is a high-energy particle accelerator which is being used to help us understand the origins of the Universe.

Some people complained that by trying to recreate the Big Bang the collider could accidentally create another Universe - which could make things a bit cramped. Or worse still create a black hole into which we all disappear.

But luckily the collider isn't trying to recreate the Big Bang itself – just what happened shortly afterwards – by staging collisions that are continually produced all over the Universe quite naturally.

Some of these collisions have amazingly confirmed the presence of the mysterious Higgs Boson particle.

So is it safe? Well if you stuck your head in it, the needle-thin beam would easily kill any living tissue it passed through.

And in 1978 Russian scientist Anatoli Bugorski accidentally got shot through the head by a proton beam and even though he luckily survived - it wasn't good for him.

So it's probably best not to stick your head into a Hadron collider of any size – because at the very least you'd have to live with the fact that you'll forever be known as 'that guy who stuck his head in the Large Hadron Collider'.