



The Serendipity of Science: Saving Lives

Edouard Benedictus and Accidental Safety Glass

Narrator:

Edouard Benedictus, was French chemist, inventor, painter, composer, bookbinder, textile designer and all round clever clogs.

One day in 1903 – he was pursuing one of his many projects when a momentous accident happened....!

Instead of having the glass swept away...

[Voice of Benedictus - "Arrête!"]

And continuing what he was doing...

Benedictus' enquiring mind spotted that something unexpected had happened and on closer enquiry he realized that the flask had previously contained cellulose nitrate, liquid plastic!

Sometime later, immersed in more of his many activities, while keeping up with current affairs, he still hadn't forgotten about his accident with the glass, when he saw in the newspaper, just how dangerous glass could be.

Our multi-talented hero worked through the night to see if he could perfect a glass that wouldn't break – and he came up with the idea of a sandwich - a plastic sandwich - putting together two layers of glass with a thin film of plastic in-between.

Creating the world's first shatterproof windscreen.

And, all because of an accident and a bit of scientific thinking, saving thousands of lives across the world every day.