

## Interesting Facts 1 - Percy Shaw

### Question

Every day whilst out and about we see hundreds of these things, but barely notice them. They have saved countless lives throughout the last 70 years. What are they?

### Answer

**Probably the best invention every produced in the interest of road safety – ‘Catseyes’®!**

**‘Catseyes’ were the invention of a British man called Percy Shaw.**

Percy Shaw was born in 1890 in Halifax, long before there were cars on the road.

He was always inventive; as a child he made up games, and later created a process to back carpets with rubber. After many different jobs he set up a business making and repairing roads and garden paths with tarmac.

There are many stories about how he had the idea for his amazing invention. One was when trams became obsolete and tram lines were removed from the road. Percy is said to have realised that motorists would need something other than the shiny tramline that reflected back the car lights and showed the way in the dark.

However the most commonly held belief is that one night whilst driving, Percy was having problems finding his way in fog, when he suddenly saw in the centre of the road two points of light in the glow of his headlights. It was a cat! Percy Shaw trialed several types of device and finally took out a patent in 1934.

His company Reflecting Roadstuds Ltd exported millions of these ‘Catseyes’ all over the world.

Percy lived a simple life, was awarded the OBE in 1965, but never married and he died in 1976 at the age of 86 years.