

The Supersonic P.R.80 : the men behind the radio



Nigel «Bob» Goodridge,
electrical engineer



The Supersonic development laboratory



Dave Sharpe (left),
mechanical engineer

It all started in 2013, when the good guys at antiqueradios.com identified the Deacy audio amp board as coming from a Supersonic radio, manufactured in Southern Rhodesia in the mid-1960s. That was a real breakthrough, as no-one before them ever had a precise idea about the Deacy origins.

Supersonic has quite a unique story. Created at the beginning of the 1950s by two brothers, Jacques and Arthur Chassay, who were of Canadian origins, it became one of the main manufacturers of radios in Africa, selling its radios, radiograms, gramophones... worldwide by the end of the decade. Most of the parts they used for their radios were designed and manufactured in-house.

This was possible because they had chosen to have a strong designing team. In those days, Supersonic had about 5 electrical and 5 engineering designers from a total laboratory compliment of around 12 people. An electrical and mechanical person worked together on each product. The electrical engineer was responsible for the circuitry, schematic, layouts and component details, and the mechanical engineer did all the drawings, chassis and cabinet designs.

By the end of 2013, I have been in touch with many former Supersonic employees, many of them remembering fondly of their time in the company. We talked about the people they were remembering of, and two names were often coming up : Bob Goodridge and Dave Sharpe, who were working in the development lab in the 1960s. They knew Bob Goodridge had sadly passed away at the beginning of the 1990s, but no-one knew where Dave Sharpe was living. I was lucky to get in touch with someone who knew him, because they were running together in their Rhodesian days, and I managed to get in touch with Dave Sharpe. Dave confirmed that Bob Goodridge and himself designed the Supersonic P.R.80, the radio that was to give birth to the Deacy amp, used by Brian May in many Queen songs. This was a fantastic surprise for him, and he was happy to tell me much more about Supersonic and its history.

Fast forward 7 years. As I own many pictures of the Supersonic people and premises in the 1960s, I posted one of them on Facebook, on a Rhodesian page. I had many posts and "likes" from people having worked there across the years. But one person also posted about his Dad

: Peter Goodridge, son of Bob Goodridge. We then exchanged many e-mails about his Dad, and his design work for Supersonic. The Deacy/Supersonic P.R.80 story was such a surprise for him, but also brought back so many personal memories... because of its tone and history, the Deacy is really a unique amp !

Kind regards,

Manuel Angelini
3rd June 2020