

between *RIKO* and *Acoms* began. Many people associate *Tamiya* and *Acoms* equipment as always being sold together. This is only because they have the same UK importer. Around the rest of the world this is not the case. From the earliest humble beginnings *Acoms* have progressed to offer a comprehensive range of two channel radios. The latest to come to the market is in fact the cheapest in the range. The 'Technidrive' price may be low but this outfit has some useful features.

The Transmitter

The transmitter is operated by eight (AA) dry or rechargeable cells. The transmitter is provided with a socket for battery recharging, a feature not always found on more expensive transmitters. Each of the sticks has a trim control and the throttle stick can be set to have a 30 degree neutral setting. Servo reversing switches are fitted on the front of the unit, easily accessible but recessed into the body to avoid accidental operation. A battery condition meter and an on/off switch complete the main features. The finish is almost a military olive drab and this coupled with the case having cap headed screws moulded in, makes the set look a bit 'toyish'. I found the case a little too thick for my liking and the moulded in finger grooves were of little advantage. My final criticism of the transmitter were the sticks themselves, I felt they were recessed too far into the gimbals, a purely personal view. The receiver measures 49 x 34 x 21mm (not 49 x 38 x 21 as the instructions say) and weighs a mere 37gms. These dimensions are significantly smaller than previous *Acoms* receivers and a welcome improvement. The crystal has a rubber cover to help keep out rubbish. Servo and battery leads have sockets that fit over the pins in the

receiver. These were pretty tough to get together and the very devil to take apart, in fact I rather ashamedly have to report that I needed a pair of pliers to unplug the servos' leads. Of course once installed it is unlikely that you would be separating the units very often, I suppose you could consider that the tight plugs and sockets will provide a good reliable electrical connection.

The Servos

The servos provided with the kit are designated 'AS-11'. These are also smaller than previous types measuring approximately 39 x 36 x 19 mm and weighing 34gms. According to the specification the servos develop more than 3kg/cm, which is entirely adequate for most model cars. In my opinion the servos are particularly well made considering they could be described as being in the 'economy' class. All plastic gears, which is normal in this type of servo, but the output shaft runs in a bronze bush moulded into the plastic case. This feature is a little unusual as most servos in the same price range run in the plastic case with no special bush provision. The set is complete with servo horns and rubber cushions for mounting under the servo brackets. With a stated output of 500mW the set is offering a performance much in line with other similarly priced outfits. I find it very difficult to find dramatic differences between similarly priced sets from different manufacturers. In the end it must come down to personal preference, colour, style and those little features that appeal to you, and of course the final price you pay. There is however, one point worth considering and that is servicing and repair. How much, how quick and how easy is it to repair or have serviced.

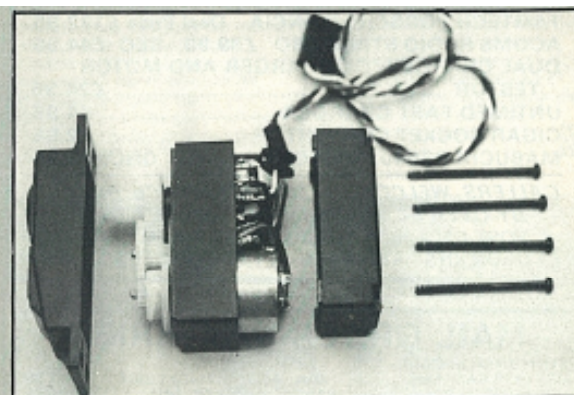
There are two items that frequently suffer on R/C sets:

The first is the aerial. With the top section lost the efficiency of the set is severely reduced. I have noticed that many aerials are broken by the over enthusiastic closing of the telescopic sections. Instead of simply pushing from the end and standing the risk of bending the aerial, try collapsing one section at a time, starting from the transmitter body first. To replace an aerial simply unscrew it from the transmitter body. The cost of a new *Acoms* aerial is around £3.80.

The next items most likely to fail are the servo gears. If you have built the car, servo gear changing is easily managed. The cost of a complete set is around £1.90. A word of warning with *Acoms* servos. Make sure when you buy the gears you specify the servo in question as the various models of servos have different gear sets. Finally if your problem is more significant and you cannot fix the problem, the importers, *RIKO*, offer an exchange service. Return the faulty item to them with the appropriate money and usually a replacement will come in the return post. I checked on the prices, but if you need the service it will be wise to get the current prices yourself. Servo £12.00, transmitter £13.00, and receiver £12.00.

Conclusion

In conclusion the outfit is well made and economically priced. On the transmitter I liked the front mounted servo reversing switches and battery charging socket. I did not like the feel of the sticks and the toy-like appearance. As far as the servos and receiver were concerned they both performed well and I could find little to criticise.



Over the past few months we have seen the battle of the two channel radio control equipment start to warm up. All the major manufacturers are retreating to their respective corners to regroup ready for the next round. One manufacturer, *Acoms* is particularly well placed to take on all competition. The relationship between *RIKO* (the UK importer) and *Tamiya* is long and successful. Almost as long is the connection between *RIKO* and *Acoms*. When *RIKO* first entered the radio control business some twelve or so years ago the company needed

an R/C manufacturer not already committed to a UK importer. *Asahi*, who manufacture a wide range of electronic products including communications equipment use the name of *ACOMS* (*Asahi - COMMUNICATIONS*) for this part of their business. In addition to running an electronics company *Asahi* have a flourishing transportation organisation. One of the contracts was to transport *Tamiya* kits.

It was perhaps inevitable that a connection should be made between *Asahi electronics* and *RIKO*. From these somewhat bizarre beginnings the alliance