



MAKING CHILDREN MOTOR-MINDED

A School Curriculum of Motor
Training Made Possible

ALTHOUGH bijou motorcars are no new thing, the introduction announced in *The Motor* to-day of a one-horse-powered car specially designed for the instruction of children is a new conception. Designed for use in private gardens, school playgrounds and special training grounds, the Atco Junior Safety-first Trainer, to give it its official name, opens a new prospect of making the nation motor-minded.

If every owner of a car to-day had been driving since the age of six, road sense, quick reflexes and mastery of control would be intuitive. It will be much to the good of the nation if parents and guardians, school authorities and education committees appreciate that this new departure will exert lasting influence upon future safe road use. In an age of mechanized war, this early training should benefit the nation in another and also important way.

Motor

27th June 1939



A Children's Car

A LOVELY little machine was exhibited for the first time the other day, and how I wish it had been designed when I was a boy! It is a one-h.p. two-seater car with a rear engine, capable of a maximum speed of 10 miles per hour, and introduced to teach children how to drive. It has forward and reverse gears, clutch, brake, and accelerator pedals, all in proper car fashion and is priced at £35.

The idea seems to be that motor driving could be included in the curricula of schools, and this seems a most profitable suggestion in view of the rapid expansion of the practice of motoring. Not only that, but the signs and limitations of road usage could be incorporated in miniature, and the whole be co-ordinated in the present safety propaganda.

Children learn such things rapidly; boys of 12 are almost invariably keen on car design and controls, and that would be a most suitable age to include with that thirst for knowledge the correct principles of road sense. It is to be hoped that more will be heard of this matter.

Evening Citizen

27th June 1939



A Motorcar for Teaching Juniors

A 1 h.p. Training Car Selling for £35 Which Will Do 10 m.p.h. in Complete Safety Now Marketed by the Makers of the Atco Mower

ALTHOUGH a very large proportion of accidents on British roads are inherently coupled with the density of traffic and the wholly inadequate road system, there is little doubt that a contributory factor is a lack of motor-mindedness on the part of the general population.

It is, unfortunately, still true that the great majority of people in England have no experience in handling a car. They are thus unable to appreciate as pedestrians the difficulties of the motor driver, and if and when they become drivers themselves they may find it difficult to adjust their minds to speeds and changes of speed far in excess of anything they have hitherto known.

Teaching the Young

It is a common experience that teaching of new ideas becomes increasingly difficult as the age of the pupil advances and it is with the object of giving the really young a sound basic knowledge that the Atco Junior Safety First trainer has been evolved.

Atco are, of course, well known in the motor-mower world, and Mr. J. G.

Pugh, of the makers, Charles H. Pugh, Ltd., has long been impressed by the need to do something to reduce the yearly accident rate.

The Atco trainer is a real baby car powered with a 1 h.p. two-cycle engine having a transmission consisting simply of a forward and reverse speed. The controls are, however, standard in form, there being gear lever, clutch pedal, accelerator pedal and foot brake placed exactly in accord with normal orthodox practice; additionally, there is an outside right-hand brake lever.

As can be seen from an illustration the chassis is sturdily laid out, the engine being mounted in the rear and the steering operating on the true Ackermann principle, disc wheels being employed with Dunlop 16 by 2½-in. tyres.

The car seats two children but can easily be driven by an adult for demonstration purposes.

It is claimed that with this car a child has a sense of reality in driving

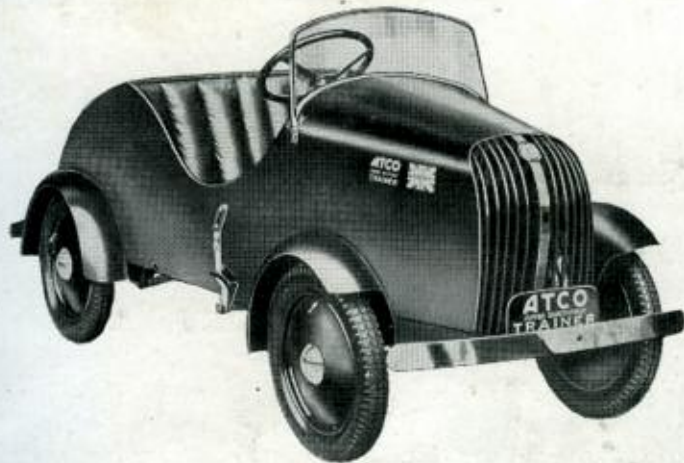


STARTING EARLY. Pictures above show how children can handle this little car in complete safety and how the training ground may be set out to teach the elementary principles of road conduct at an early age.

coupled with complete safety, the chassis and bumpers being robust enough to stand a good deal of knocking about and it being virtually impossible to overturn the car even if it is put on full lock at maximum speed.

It is emphasized, however, that the car of itself will not work miracles of education; it is necessary that a competent instructor should use it as an instrument for teaching road driving and mechanical sense. With this in view a booklet is issued with each model giving full mechanical instructions concerning its construction and use.

It is actually written so as to be understandable by the boy who is



CAR. The Atco Trainer has all the appearance of the normal car, as can be seen from the picture shown left. The windscreen is celluloid and there are two comfortable seats.

training ground and the manual, it should be possible to realize in practice the theory advocated by the Alness Committee, who, inter alia, reported as follows:—

“ Education of road users should also be thorough in private and in public schools. The conduct of all classes of adults who have been educated in road behaviour when young should gradually tend to make the whole population more ‘road-minded.’ The Committee hope that the attention of those in charge of preparatory and public

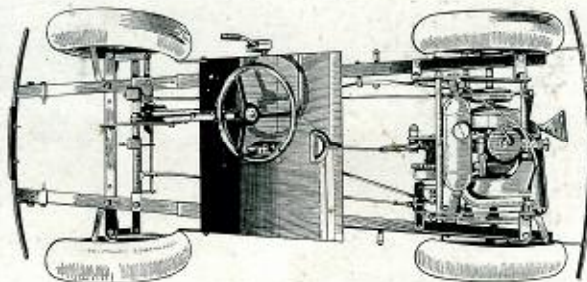
going to drive the car and, despite the manifest difficulty of the wide variation in ages which may be expected, we think the author may be congratulated on the manner in which he has tackled the job.

Driving and Maintenance Instructions

The function of the magneto, carburetter and transmission are all clearly described, and even the principle of the Ackermann steering. Full driving instructions are given and instructions as to how the car should be maintained and serviced.

In addition the Atco company are willing to advise on the laying out of small training grounds which can be

CHASSIS. The rear-engined chassis has a 98 c.c. Villiers power unit with single-speed forward and reverse, shown to the right.



used by school authorities who wish to provide this modern system of education. These can contain Belisha crossings, roundabouts and the like, and the whole thing can be placed in an area not much greater than that needed for a tennis court.

By proper application of the car,

schools will be directed towards the consideration of this important problem.”

The price of the Atco trainer is only £35, and, alternatively, may be purchased on the hire-purchase system with a deposit of £8 15s. and 12 monthly instalments of £2 7s.

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