

THIS MAN IS NEWS:

Officially he is the British AirAttache in Brussels, wartime fighter ace, talented amateur jockey, a familiar figure of the Continental turf; Group Captain Peter Wooldridge Townsend, C.V.O., D.E.O., D.F.C., and her, mentioned in despatches, former Equerry to Her Majesty. But he is also the man the world has been talking about more and more over the past two years. Seldom can a man have been so widely discussed without being able to say a word for himself.

Now he comes home - and at once he is front page news; because for the first time in two years, Princess Margaret is in London too. Princess Margaret, third in line for the throne of Britain - now 25, and legally in control of her own destiny.

Reporters and cameramen crowd round Group-Captain Townsend's car as he drives away; but still he can say nothing. Outside Clarence House, where Princess Margaret and the Queen Mother are in residence, more cameras more crowds. Meanwhile Group-Captain Townsend stays with a friend in Lowndes Square.

More crowds - more cameras. Centre of interest is the Group-Captain's small Renault car, looking like any other in the Square, except for its Belgian number and diplomatic plate - and for the racing saddle on the back seat.

When he finally emerges, police have to clear the way for him. Not only the Press want to see him, whatever the answer to the question millions are asking, no one can doubt the warmth of the sympathy countless ordinary people have for him. Apart from anything else, they feel he has preserved his dignity and calm remarkably well through two difficult years of public curiosity.

A two-year visit to Clarence House - still without comment either from himself or from the Palace - sweeps everything else from the front page of most London newspapers. Whatever the outcome, the world wishes well to a very gallant gentleman.