



Goodwood

Model T Ford inspired a duke's need for speed

The Goodwood Festival of Speed has become more than an important date in the motoring calendar; it is now the largest event of its kind in the world, writes David Williams.

But while most show-goers probably know that the celebrated Nineties renaissance of the West Sussex circuit and hill climb is largely down to the vision of Lord Charles March, what is less well known is the huge influence of his grandfather more than seven decades ago.

"Freddie", Duke of Richmond, was born in 1905, the youngest of four children and the second son of Lord Settrington. He shared his

brother Charles's interest in aircraft, cars and motorcycles but his obsession seems to have been sparked by his parents' first car, a Ford Model T Laundelette, bought in 1912. He later wrote: "I was unable to concentrate for days on much else."

After Eton, Freddie went to Oxford to study agriculture but spent most of his time with the university motor club, winning sprints on his motorcycle. He was also a regular at the Brooklands Motor Course in Surrey.

The clash of interests saw him abandoning university before his finals and – to the outrage of his parents – finding a job as a mechanic with Bentley Motors, at

Cricklewood, north London, where he was "Mr Settrington". He stuck with his new job even when his parents cut off his allowance.

In 1929, his racing passion grew from winning a gold award in a Brooklands time trial in an Austin Seven.

He went on to win in the 1930 BRDC 500, then bought three MG C-type "Monthéry" Midgets before becoming

team manager, guiding his cars to victory in the 1931 Irish Grand Prix and the Tourist Trophy.

He also started a car dealership and styled coachwork, helping create the Thirties' "traditional" English sports car look. In 1934 Freddie launched March Models, offering handmade model racing cars.

In 1935, Freddie inherited

four dukedoms and the Goodwood Estate. One of his first actions was to hold a fun day at Goodwood House for the Lancia Owners' Club. A run up the now-famous hill inspired not only the first official race at the newly opened Goodwood Motor Circuit in 1948 but the Festival of Speed, 60 years later.

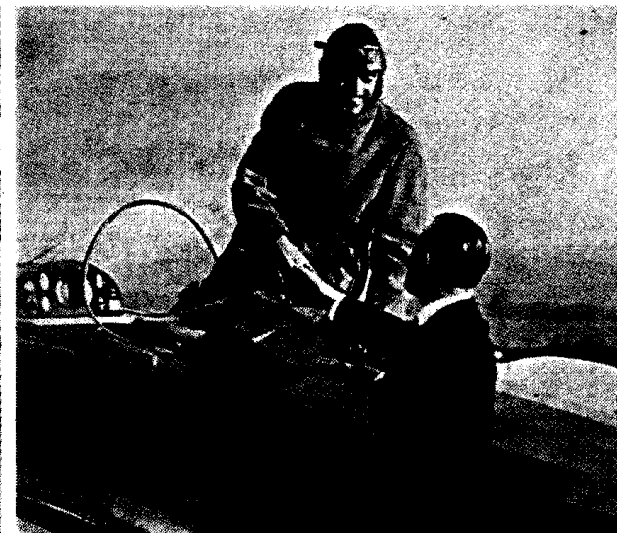
"From as far back as I can remember, motor racing at

Goodwood has been a major part of my life," the current Earl of March wrote in *The Glory of Goodwood*, the history of the circuit.

"My grandfather was a very remarkable man. It wasn't really until he died that I found out everything about his coach-building business... his model-making and his race victories. He took his driving very seriously."



GOODWOOD ARCHIVE



Addicted to speed: Freddie had a love of going fast, whether it was behind the wheel of a racing car or as a pilot