

# F1 racers' high-octane drink-driving message

By **Pamela Paterson**

THE normally tranquil Princes Street Gardens was transformed into a motor racing track as three leading F1 drivers roared into the capital yesterday.

The park echoed with the noise of the gas guzzling super cars as they sped around an improvised track – much to the delight of hundreds of petrol heads.

However, F1 stars Mika Hakkinen, Jenson Button and Kevin Magnussen had a serious message about drink-driving to deliver.

They were in Edinburgh for an event promoting Join the Pact, a campaign by whisky company Johnnie Walker to persuade people to commit to never drinking and driving.

The campaign has seen people from around the world sign their name and swear to never get behind the wheel after drinking.

From today Scotland's drink drive will be lowered from 80mg to 50mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood – equivalent to a pint of beer or a glass of wine.

While the new rules stop at the Border, a new RAC study found that more than a third of motorists believe they should be enforced across the rest of the UK.

Yesterday, Button and Magnussen took two McLaren MP4-650S cars for a spin while Hakkinen drove an open-cockpit Caparo T1 along the leafy paths of the park.

Button said it was 'great to be in Edinburgh' and that it was good to see a big turnout of fans.

The former F1 world champion added: 'It's always great driving one of these cars.

'It's a little bit slippery out there so we were being good, we were being professional. It's also great to

see so many people here, so many fans of motor racing but also we can make a difference with Join the Pact and to never drink and drive and to make our roads safer.

'It's great to be in Edinburgh as well. I've never been here before so it's a nice experience. I'll definitely be coming back in my own time

## 'It is a very big problem'

when I'm not working."

It was the second time F1 legend Hakkinen has been in Scotland this year, after he took part in a Join the Pact event at the Ryder Cup in September.

During the golf tournament, 25,000 people vowed to never drink and drive.

In return for each commitment, Johnnie Walker is giving a kilometre of free rides home for party-goers at Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations gifted by Lothian Buses.

Hakkinen, 46, who has travelled around the world for the Johnnie Walker campaign, said: 'It's a very important message. What I have recognised all over the place, it is a very big problem.'

Button, 34, also said at the event that he is unsure about his F1 future following rumours that Fernando Alonso is to move to his F1 team, McLaren, from next season.

This leaves only one space up for grabs between the Briton and his 22-year-old team mate, Magnussen.

He said: 'You know as much as me at the moment. Hopefully we'll know soon so we can choose our next challenge whether it's in F1 or elsewhere.

'I will respect their decision whatever it is, they have their reasons.'



