



DANCE King Mswati III

38 girls killed in king trek smash

At least 38 women have died in a road crash in Swaziland as they headed to a ceremony which could have seen one of them chosen as the king's wife.

Two trucks and a car transporting scores of the young women to the Umhlanga Reed Dance collided on Friday near Matsapha, on the country's major motorway.

A spokeswoman for the Swaziland Solidarity Network said "more than 20 others" were seriously injured and the death toll is expected to rise.

Witnesses said some of the girls were thrown out of the trucks and run over.

The Umhlanga Reed Dance, a festival claiming to celebrate womanhood and virginity, involves bare-breasted women dancing and singing in beaded mini-skirts to catch the eye of King Mswati III, Africa's last absolute monarch.

The king, who already has 15 wives, traditionally picks another at the reed dance.

Thousands of young women flock to the royal residence from all over the nation for the event every year.

But due to the country's lack of car owners and infrastructure, many are squeezed into open trucks.

Koreas plan family talks

North Korea have agreed to talks with the South to discuss reuniting families split during the Korean War.

The meeting will take place on September 7 after a recent accord between the nations, who had been on the brink of armed conflict.

Nearly 130,000 South Koreans are looking for family members in the North.

Airport terror cell

Nigeria have uncovered a spy cell run by Islamist group Boko Haram. The cell at capital Abuja's airport is thought to have been used to plan passenger attacks.

SUPER-FIT MUM GETS SET FOR 95-MILE RACE

I'm taking a run at life after losing 10 stone

Picture David McNie



■ Fiona Russell

When Ruth Howie decided to lose weight, she was over 20st and could hardly walk a few yards without getting breathless.

Just a year later, the 50-year-old mum-of-two had shed 10st – more than half her body weight – and was running about 50 miles a week.

Now Ruth, from Crieff, Perthshire, regularly clocks up 60 to 80 miles every week and is a veteran of long-distance trail races.

She said: "I reached an unhealthy and uncomfortable 20st at my heaviest and I knew I was putting my life at risk.

"I couldn't sleep for more than 10 minutes at a time because my weight crushed my lungs and I had no energy.

"One day, while travelling uncomfortably on a plane to see my son run in a race, I suddenly realised I might not see my teenage children get married.

"It was like a lightbulb moment and it was what I needed to get me off the couch and pulling on a pair of trainers."

Ruth started her mammoth weight-loss campaign by joining a slimming club and, a week later, jogging very slowly downhill for 1.5 miles at five in the morning.

She said: "I kept a strict food diary – I still do – so I couldn't cheat myself and followed the Weight Watchers' points system.

"I had been a runner when I was younger and I knew exercise had to be part of slimming down but I was too embarrassed to go outdoors when it was light.

"The only person who saw me trying to jog in the early days was the milkman."

The weight came off very quickly at first, with Ruth losing 6lbs in the first week.

Three months later, in October 2013, she was 4st lighter.

One year on, Ruth tipped the scales at 9st 8lb. Today, exactly two years after deciding to change her life, she is a slight 9st 6lb.

As the weight came off, the running mileage increased and Ruth discovered a renewed passion for the sport. She joined



UNHEALTHY DIET Ruth weighed 20st before joining a slimming club

the Strathearn Harriers and bought new trainers and a GPS watch to keep track of the miles.

She said: "For too long, I had stood at the sidelines cheering on my son Zak, who is a good runner.

"I was envious of his enjoyment and I pledged, at the start, I would compete in a local hill race that I had watched him run.

"I don't think anyone believed me but, one year later, I did it. It was tough but I absolutely loved it."

Ruth is also a veteran of many other events, including 5Ks, 10Ks, half-marathons, marathons and, now, ultra-distance events.

Ruth said: "I have a new lease of life and want to take on longer and tougher trail events.

"This year, I ran the 53-mile Highland Fling on the West Highland Way and I have also run the 33-mile D33 on Deeside.

"Last weekend, I did the 36-mile Speyside Way Ultra. Then I'll run the Glencoe Marathon and 38-mile Jedburgh Three Peaks in October and the 33-mile Glen Ogle ultra in November.

"I hope to train for the 95-mile West Highland Way Race next year.

"Running has saved my life and let me swap comfort eating for a healthy diet and lots of exercise.

"I believe my weight and related illnesses would have led to an early death but now I have so much to look forward to."



ON RIGHT TRACK Ruth trains, left, and takes part in hill race



NEEDLE Pamela

Pam Hep C cure hope

Pamela Anderson could be cured from the "death sentence" of hepatitis C within a month – thanks to a new drug.

The 48-year-old former Baywatch actress revealed in 2002 that she contracted the disease from sharing a tattoo needle with ex-husband

Tommy Lee. She said: "When I found out I had Hep C 16 years ago, that was a death sentence.

"Now I could be Hep C-free within the month. I look in the mirror every day and feel like I'm getting those years back."



ILLNESS Edwyn

Collins sad for Frankie

Edwyn Collins has revealed his sadness that fellow Scot Frankie Miller is no longer able to sing.

Both singers have suffered brain haemorrhages. Collins, 56, got his voice back after suffering two brain bleeds in 2005. But Miller, 65, known

for his cover of Dougie MacLean's Caledonia, has struggled with his speech after being struck down in 1994.

Former Orange Juice front-man Collins said: "Music's my life but I'm sad about Frankie's loss of singing. He's got no speech but he's contented."