



ELEVATED
Hill running is popular over New Year



INVIGORATING
A good long cycle helps to clear the seasonal cobwebs

RUNNING

THE WEEK



NEW HIMA-LAYER

Look out for a new baselayer made from yak wool. A company called Kora have launched tops and leggings made from yaks that roam the Himalayas. And it's claimed that yak wool is 40 per cent warmer than garments made from merino wool. By the way, merino wool has, until this point, been hailed as the best fabric for making baselayers. Yak wool will keep you warm and dry, because it allows sweat to evaporate away. Prices are around £100. See www.kora.net

TAKE THREE..

Hit the slopes and surf the snow this winter on an eye-catching snowboard.

SAVE

Wed'ze Woogly Red Snowboard
Give snowboarding a try and see if you fall for the fast-moving action sport with this easy to handle snowboard. £89.99, www.decathlon.co.uk



SPEND

Burton Sweet Tooth Snowboard
One for the girl riders, this sweet-looking snowboard is also a treat to ride. £370, gb.burton.com



SPLURGE

The 2014 Nidecker Ultralight Snowboard
You'll be the envy of every rider with this super-light freeride board that floats gracefully on piste and off. £858.95, www.absolute-snow.co.uk



APPLY TO FIGHT THE INVADERS

Two nature apps are helping to fight the invasion of non-native species in Scotland. Aqualnaders and Sealife Tracker allow outdoors fans to record sightings of freshwater and marine invaders. And these records are helping conservationists such as Scottish Natural Heritage save Scotland's indigenous species. Experts reveal that non-native species – such as killer shrimp and zebra mussels – are the second most serious threat to global biodiversity after habitat loss and a threat to Scotland's wildlife. The apps can be downloaded at naturelocator.org/aqualnaders.html and naturelocator.org/sealife.html

SANDISON'S SCOTLAND

BRUCE SANDISON IS A JOURNALIST, ANGLER AND AUTHOR OF A STRING OF BEST-SELLING BOOKS ABOUT SCOTLAND'S OUTDOORS. HE LIVES IN SUTHERLAND.



OUR TERRIER HELPS THE SHOOTERS TRIUMPH IN GAME OVER CHRISTMAS

The end of the festive season. Back to normal. And it was a good one too, here at Castle Sandison.

Everything went without a hitch. Well, almost, but what else can one expect from a Yorkshire Terrier? Ann and I had planned to do some last-minute Christmas shopping in Caithness and were ready for the off by 8.30am on a cold and frosty morning.

Unfortunately for us so was our terrier Hareton, off, somewhere. I jumped in the car and went down to the village – he has been known to go calling, particularly when females are about. No sign of him.

By this time it was after 11am. We would have to abandon our trip and mount a serious search for Ann's little treasure.

As we were going over possible plans of action, Ann glanced out of the window and said: "Look, there is one of the shooters going down the hill. I'll ask him if they have seen Hareton."

They were shooting woodcock, one of the most notoriously difficult game birds to shoot because of the speed and unpredictability of their flight pattern.

When Ann returned she was holding Hareton. He was completely drenched with half a tree stuck to his back and a complete clump of gorse attached to his behind.

The hair around his face was matted with mud, straggling and flattened.

For a brief moment, very brief, I almost felt sorry for him.



EXPEDITION Hareton decided to stay with the shooters

Hareton had set off, not to join the hunt, but to say hello to the two spaniels who were accompanying the hunters – both of which just happened to be female.

He had stayed with the party for more than three hours, snuffling along at ground level and, in the process, apparently raising more woodcock than had been seen on the beat in living memory.

The shooters were delighted, but Hareton eventually tired. He simply sat down in the mud and refused to move another paw.

As such, one of the party volunteered to carry him back to the village to see if anybody knew who owned the marvellous little gun dog.

Ann thanked the man and dried Hareton out, muttering tender words of admonishment: "What a naughty little boy, did you go hunting with the girls?" sort of stuff.

Worse was to follow. My daughter's husband, who is head keeper on a local estate, cornered me a few days later. "You must be very proud, Bruce," he said. I looked at him suspiciously.

"Why?" I ventured. "Hareton," he replied. "Do you know, the day he went off with the woodcock shooters produced an all-time record bag for that beat and everyone agrees that Hareton was largely responsible for giving them such a great day."

Later, Ann, rather smugly I thought, announced: "Well, what do you think of that then? I have always told you that Hareton had hidden depths."

"Yes, Ann, yes indeed," I replied through clenched teeth. "You have told me that, often, and of course you are right. Hareton is the most wonderful little dog in the whole world."